Business Communication Written by High School Students: Complicating Emig's Self-Motivated/School-Sponsored Dichotomy and Exploring Writer Engagement

DISSERTATION

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With sincere thanks to Tim Brockman and our three children: Ann Marie, Katie, and Andy
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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Published research provides no evidence suggesting that adolescents write business and professional communication. Surveys beginning with the first issue and ending with January, 1995 of the two journals sponsored by The Association for Business Communication (ABC)—The Journal of Business Communication and Business Communication Quarterly (previously known as The Bulletin of the Association of Business Communication)—produced not one article examining the writing processes and/or products of adolescents. Surveys of other business and professional communication periodicals, including The Journal of Business and Technical Communication, The Journal of Technical Writing and Communication, Management Communication Quarterly, Technical Communication Quarterly (formerly known as The Technical Writing Teacher), and Technical Communication, yielded identical results. In addition, not a single article regarding adolescent business communication has ever been published in journals sponsored by the National Council for the Teachers of English (NCTE), including College English, College
Composition and Communication, The English Journal or Research in the Teaching of English.

Background for the Study

In spite of an absence in the research literature, adolescents do, indeed, write business and professional communication, a fact I personally learned in 1989 during my first year teaching English at Bexley High School (BHS), a small suburban public school in central Ohio. That year, a student whom I will call Avi Porterman* asked to conference with me about a business letter he was drafting to convince his boss, the local theater manager, to promote him from theater usher to concession stand worker primarily because the pay was better. Months later, a Dutch exchange student in my American literature class came to The Write Place, the BHS writing center, for assistance with a cover letter for his application forms to business schools back in The Netherlands.

By fulfilling my teaching and extra-curricular responsibilities between 1989 and 1995, I inadvertently learned of many other BHS students writing nonacademic documents. A student council president named Catherine Harr wrote a letter to the president of another student
council to suggest an exchange day between our schools, and National Honor Society President Samuel Bitnerwell composed a speech he read at an induction ceremony. Ollie Danford, a remedial math student, wrote a letter to his teacher explaining why he deserved additional time to finish her 6th period test—in spite of her belief to the contrary. Alice Warrent, a senior learning American Sign Language (ASL) at Columbus State Community College, wrote an ASL dictionary designed for the parents of the children at the pre-school where she worked on a part-time basis, and David Quint, who helped organize the junior/senior prom, wrote an apology letter to BHS faculty for forgetting to send them invitations to the dance as past school practice dictated. Joe Heintz, Sarah Tyler, and Liz Smit (among countless others) wrote college application essays, while Alisa Stein, Sharon Myers, and Maggie Dente—all members of the Holocaust Remembrance Committee—generated two sets of letters to local Holocaust survivors, first inviting and second thanking them for sharing their stories at a cultural arts day. Most recently, Aaron Beal, a baseball player with college potential, wrote prospecting letters to university coaches in the hope of receiving an athletic scholarship.
Though as I later show, BHS is a "privileged" high school, none of the students mentioned above wrote their documents as an outgrowth of social status or economic background. Their documents are, instead, extensions of school and community activities typical of adolescents attending public high schools in this country. These students and their documents suggest that a "knowledge gap" currently exists because, as I previously mentioned, adolescent business writers and their documents have never been examined in journals associated with the fields of composition studies or business communication.

I conducted a research project regarding business and professional communication written by adolescents to fill that gap in two different, but complementary, ways. First, I tell seven stories about adolescent writers. In wanting to share stories, North would argue I do nothing more than continue a long-standing tradition among high school English teachers who he argues swap stories as their primary means of "making knowledge" or "knowing." Bridwell-Bowles, however, would argue differently. She would say that my stories represent a fruitful attempt at "diverse" discourse, an option afforded as a result of feminist compositionists', and in turn, the field of composition's, valuing
experimentation with discourse forms. Though this experimentation often takes the shape of first-person narratives, like Bloom's "Teaching College English as a Woman," Brodkey's "Writing on the Bias," Rose's Lives on the Boundary, or Sommers' "I Stand Here Writing," the seven stories in this study more closely resemble "the snapshots" of collaborative writers at work found in Ede and Lunsford's Singular Texts/Plural Authors. In fact, I refer to my stories as "snapshots" because they, too, provide "alternate images" of writers.

Departures from the norm regarding discourse forms, however, can be, as Olano notes, "frightening stuff to . . . doctoral students . . . who are not sure as to their 'welcome' into the fold" (352). Elbow also notes that a "difference [exists] between the discourse of people who are established in the profession and those who are not" ("Academic Discourse" 139). With that in mind, I complement the seven snapshots with a case study, a research methodology Emig had to justify twenty-five years ago but which is now generally considered by those in the field of composition an acceptable method of researching—either on its own or in conjunction with quantitative studies. The case study for this project has as its subjects three adolescents who wrote a proposal to their principal for
a school-sponsored ski trip. Even though the writers were cognizant of multiple audiences for their document, they ignored the needs of an important segment of their audience, a newly-formed faculty/administrative committee.

Initially, the purpose behind the study is to document unreported information in the field of composition studies by introducing a new kind of writing, business communication written by adolescents. The study also complicates existing literature regarding the writing processes and products of adolescent writers by suggesting that adolescent writing is too complex to be defined as either "self-motivated" or "school-sponsored." Rather than binary categories, my project suggests that a self-initiated/other-initiated continuum better describes the vast array of reasons adolescents write. The study also suggests that a direct relationship doesn't exist between impetus for writing and writer engagement, and it explores rhetorical variables which could prompt engagement. The study complicates business communication research in two ways. First, it challenges a tacit assumption in the field, that only adults are business writers. Second, the study suggests that the strategies some adult
business writers use to adapt for multiple audiences may not be options for writers with very low status.

Literature Review

Because no work exists specifically regarding adolescent business writers, studies about adolescent writing in general provide the most obvious context for this study given the age of my subjects. Given the nature of the writers' documents (especially the ski trip proposal examined in the case study), however, business communication studies regarding multiple audiences also provide a context. Throughout the dissertation, I also mention other relevant composition studies and business communication research, including studies regarding collaboration, the recursivity of writing, and relative writer/audience status, as well as studies generally associated with expressive, cognitive, and social views of composing.

Studies of Adolescent Writing

In her 1971 landmark study, Emig conducted case studies of eight twelfth graders from six different Chicago-area high schools, which was at the time an expedition into new territory, an investigation of the writing "process," . . . an area hitherto
almost untouched by researchers in written composition who by and large [had] focused their attention upon the "written product." (v)

Although Voss has attacked Emig's pedagogical implications (especially for indicting American secondary English teachers, in general, as illiterate) and North has criticized Emig's research methodology (especially for conducting "think aloud protocols"), Emig's contributions to the field of composition are immense.

The contributions of The Composing Processes range from a change in attitudes toward writing processes to more specific understanding of the nature of these processes, from a greater respect for research in composition to specific techniques for accomplishing that research. (Nelms, "Reassessing Janet Emig" 108)

Especially relevant to this study is Emig's report that adolescents' writing processes are contingent upon one rhetorical variable: impetus for writing. Even though she recognized all adolescent writing "emanates from an expressive impulse," Emig argued it then "bifurcates into two major modes" (37): the reflexive mode for self-motivated projects and the extensive mode for school-sponsored ones.

Reflexive writing has a far longer prewriting period; starting, stopping, and contemplating the product are more discernable moments and reformulation occurs more frequently. Reflexive writing occurs often as poetry; the engagement with the field of discourse is at once committed and exploratory. The self is the chief audience—or, occasionally, a trusted peer.
Extensive writing occurs chiefly as prose; the attitude toward the field of discourse is often detached and reportorial. Adult others, notably teachers, are the chief audience for extensive writing. (91)

Because Emig eliminated from her schema "mid-modes or transitional writing as a needless complexity--for now" (37), her study indicated at the time that adolescents generate two mutually exclusive kinds of writing: academic documents, such as essays or papers for teachers, and creative projects, such as poems or stories, for themselves.

James Britton's 1975 study reinforced Emig's binary view of adolescent writers. He classified over 2,000 school-sponsored documents written by British high school students and found some had the hallmarks of being generated by an engaged adolescent writer, or one Emig would say had fulfilled the assignments by writing a self-motivated document in the "reflexive" mode.

In terms of the school situation it is the problem of the set task and the extent to which the writer accepts it and makes it his own. When, and if, he makes it his own it would appear not to differ from a self-imposed task, that is writing that is voluntarily undertaken. . . . When involved, the writer made the task his own and began to write to satisfy himself as well as his teacher; in perfunctory writing he seemed to satisfy only the minimum demands of the task. When a writer wrote to satisfy himself as well as to fulfill the task, he seemed better able to bring the full force of his knowledge, attitudes and language experience to bear on the writing . . . (7)

Though Britton showed school-sponsored assignments
Though Britton showed school-sponsored assignments might have prompted writer engagement, he still implied that adolescent documents fall into only two potentially overlapping, but more commonly separate, categories.

In 1981, Arthur Applebee acknowledged the need for "a broader study of [adolescent] writing unrelated to school" (33) but didn't indicate if he were referring to business and professional communication or creative projects. Regardless, however, like Britton, Applebee reinforced Emig's self-motivated/school-sponsored dichotomy by conducting a large-scale descriptive study of only school-sponsored adolescent writing. Having made 259 observations of ninth and eleventh grade classrooms in two midwestern schools and having conducted a national questionnaire regarding teachers' attitudes, Applebee reported that high school teachers (both those in English classes and the content areas) didn't assign enough writing, and when they did, they did it poorly with little emphasis on writing process and too much emphasis on mechanical "correctness."

As important as these studies were and are today in terms of both content and historical significance, they don't account for the kind of writing students generate as a result of part-time jobs, volunteer/service positions, or school/community clubs and activities. In
short, they don't account for business and professional communication. That statement, however, is far more descriptive than it is evaluative. After all, Odell and Goswami didn't publish their ground-breaking business communication study, *Writing in Nonacademic Settings*, until 1985--more than a decade after Emig, Britton, and Applebee published their studies. It's no small wonder, consequently, that these early studies of adolescent writers didn't account for business and professional communication.

Shuman's 1986 study of urban teenagers, however, does. In fact, she mentions three different kinds of business communication written by adolescents: forged notes "documenting" student absenteeism from school, a petition advocating an act banned from a school talent show, and governmental forms completed by adolescents at the request of their non-English-speaking parents. Nevertheless, Shuman's focus isn't business and professional communication. In fact, she never even uses the phrase. Her focus instead is literacy and authority. Having examined primarily informal collaborative documents written to manipulate, and even to negate, adult authority or to reproduce adult discourse, Shuman argues that literacy is contingent upon not skill but "standardization, entitlement to
rights and appropriations of power" because "the kind of writing that often stands for literacy is only one kind of writing, a privileged form" ("Collaborative" 247).

In March of 1993, the *English Journal*--the NCTE publication designed specifically for English teachers at the junior or high school level--published a section called "Working: English and Employability." The four essays in this section, however, don't examine business and professional communication written by adolescents. Instead, the essays address curriculum. Pope's essay is a call to action: if high school English teachers apply principles emphasized in current composition research and theory, such as audience analysis, collaboration, and multicultural awareness, in their classrooms, today's adolescents will be prepared for the business writing which will be required for jobs in the twenty-first century. Cox and Firpo's essay, on the other hand, is grounded even more firmly in classroom procedures. They explain the steps for and advantages of transforming their traditional classroom into a workshop environment which included classroom assignments addressed to real-world audiences, while Fennick, Peters, and Guyon report how they examined three real-world documents--a police report, a press release and a cruise invitation for a local business
council membership drive—and then created writing assignments for their students requiring the same kinds of rhetorical skills. Last, Cintorino explains how her senior-level British literature class participated in a program sponsored as part of Clemson University's "Writing in the Schools" project which allowed students to revise documents designed for real-world audiences. Though many of the assignments mentioned in "Working: English and Employability" have a "business and professional communication flavor" by virtue primarily of real-world audience member(s), the documents were written as a classroom requirement in response to a teacher's request. In such assignments, Mansfield argues the teacher's role is tantamount to that of a employee's supervisor, but she reports that her students vehemently disagreed: they argued that the resulting documents, which were graded by Mansfield, were still school-sponsored assignments, making them ultimately and inherently different from the business and professional communication documents I encountered during the first six years of teaching English at BHS. After all, the letter Avi Porterman wrote, the speech Samuel Bitnerwell delivered, and the dictionary Alicia Warrent designed were not related to classroom assignments but instead extended from part-time jobs or volunteer positions.
In 1995, McGinty published an essay regarding the writing of college application essays. Though as McGinty notes, seniors often ask English teachers for advice regarding these essays, the documents are not written in response to a teacher's request or a classroom assignment but as a result of a real-world application process in which the student chooses to participate. Rather than focusing on these essays as business communication documents, however, McGinty defines them as an academic bridge between high school and university writing. More central to the essay is McGinty's contention that the college application essay is a difficult, if not impossible, "cognitive hurdle" (71) for high school seniors because it requires them to think objectively about a subjective experience without the cognitive maturity to do so. In fact, she compares the task to "asking 3-year-olds to make volume/number distinctions or 7-year-olds to make moral judgments" (71)—before providing classroom tips for teachers to help them prepare their students for the reflection and cognitive distance required in writing a college application essay.

A study of adolescent business communication would complicate our current understanding of adolescent writing in two ways. First, it would provide a more
comprehensive and accurate picture of the adolescent writer simply by introducing a kind of writing which has never before been examined and is too complex to fit the self-motivated/school-sponsored binary. This study could explain how the writers define these rhetorical tasks and what strategies they use to tackle them. Second, it could complicate what researchers and teachers currently assume is true regarding the relationship between the impetus for writing and writer engagement, ultimately providing new information about what prompts engagement among adolescent writers.

Studies of Multiple Audiences

Business communication research about multiple audiences suggests (A) multiple audiences often have differing or even conflicting needs, (B) writers often ignore entire segments of their audience, and (C) writers can successfully adapt for multiple audiences by adopting certain strategies.

Research suggests, first of all, that multiple audiences may have different needs. In a study examining the writing of a cover letter for an insurance company's annual report, for example, Cross explains that company agents and competitors "needed" to hear a success story if the company were to remain viable,
while policyholders "needed" to hear a recovery story to justify rate increases. Similarly, Tyler reports that after the Valdez spill, Exxon stockholders wanted the company to distance itself from the catastrophe, while the general public and environmental advocates wanted Exxon to take responsibility. Though their data is based upon responses to hypothetical questions, Harcourt and Krizan report that personnel directors and hiring officials from the same company may have different resume preferences, from page length and content choices to paper texture and print font.

Research suggests that writers often ignore entire segments of their multiple audiences. In the Cross and Tyler studies mentioned in the previous paragraph, for example, the writers ignored literally thousands of people in their multiple audiences. The insurance company president ignored 500,000 policyholders by reporting a respectable year-end profit and simultaneously announcing a large rate increase. Similarly, Exxon officials angered the country—if not the world—in written statements by not apologizing for an oil spill that devastated an entire ecosystem along the Alaskan coastline.

In spite of the difficulty writers experience when adapting for multiple audiences, research also suggests
strategies exist for doing so. Spilka reports, for example, that engineers who talked with other people (superiors/subordinates, in-house and outside personnel) as part of their writing processes were more likely to adapt successfully for multiple audiences than were those who wrote in isolation. Dautermann reports that fourteen hospital nurses representing different departments served as potential, or front-line, multiple audience members for a collaborative document. Locker reports similar results in her study of lawyers and social service workers writing a class action suit in a state agency.

A study regarding multiple audiences for a document written by adolescents is a natural extension of currently existing research. Unlike their adult counterparts who should ostensibly understand the "total" rhetorical equation for their documents, adolescent business writers might not be fully cognizant of multiple audiences by virtue of their limited roles and rhetorical expertise. Adolescent writers who are aware of multiple audience may not have the status or power to use successful strategies adult writers use when adapting for audience members.
The Study

The Setting

Bexley, Ohio is a suburban community comprised of roughly 13,500 individuals. Most of the adults in the community have college degrees and "white collar" jobs. According to 1995 US census materials, the average household income is $89,000.

Bexley High School's 1994-95 "School Profile" explains why it is often compared to private schools.

[BHS] is a four-year public high school accredited by the State of Ohio and the North Central Association of colleges and schools. The school population is comprised of students from surprisingly diverse cultural and economic backgrounds. Since the inception of Ohio's mandated freshman proficiency testing, Bexley's scores have ranked in the top 2% of high schools in Ohio regardless of school size. [In the first cycle of Ohio's mandated senior proficiency testing in 1994-95, BHS's overall rate of passage in all four tests ranked 2nd in the state, and 12% of the seniors scored at the honors level (compared to the state average of 1%).] The September, 1994 enrollment of 680 includes a senior class of 167, which creates a student/counselor ratio of 226:1. A student/faculty ratio of 14:1 affords students the academic support opportunities that characterize a highly personalized education experience. The 1992-93 [per] pupil expenditure was $5,831.00. Community and school library facilities provide resources totaling over 300,000 volumes.

Bexley's faculty is composed of 46 certificated teachers, 35 of whom hold at least a Master's Degree and two of whom hold a PhD. The faculty averages 16.7 years of teaching experience, and many teach or have taught courses at one of the several nearby colleges or universities. (1)
The "School Profile" provides impressive statistics regarding college admissions and BHS students.


The top quarter of Bexley's 1994 graduating class were admitted to . . . the following institutions this year:

Baldwin Wallace College          Swarthmore College
Boston University                Southern Methodist
Univ. Bradley University          St. Olaf College
Brandeis University              Tulane University
Brigham Young University          Univ. of Arizona
Carleton College                  Univ. of Cincinnati
Case Western University           Univ. of Colorado
Clemson University                Univ. of Florida
College of Charleston            Univ. of Hartford
Cornell University                Univ. of Illinois
Denison University                Univ. of Kentucky
Emory University                  Univ. of Maryland
Georgia Tech                      Univ. of Mass.
George Washington University      Univ. of Maine
Indiana University                Univ. of Michigan
Ithaca College                    Univ. of Nebraska
James Madison University          Univ. of Notre Dame
Kent State University             Univ. of Penn.
Lehigh University                 Univ. of Texas
Marietta College                  Univ. of Toledo
Miami University                  Univ. of Utah
Middlebury College               Univ. of Vermont
New College USF                   Univ. of Wisconsin
New York University               Vanderbilt University
Northwestern University           Vassar College
Ohio State University             Washington University
Ohio University                   Vanderbilt University
Point Park College                Washington and Lee
Purdue University                 Williams College
Rhodes College                    Wittenberg University
Rice University                   Xavier University
                             Yale University (2)
The Writing Program

From a distance—or perhaps even to a composition researcher who is not a BHS "native but [instead] a casual tourist or a temporary intruder" (Brown, "Gaining Access" 43)—BHS writing classes might initially reinforce images of outdated high school writing instruction. After all, the 9th-grade program includes various patterns of organization for different kinds of paragraphs which conventional wisdom suggests is "passe" and the 10th-grade program includes what is generally known as a five-paragraph essay or what Emig called "'the Fifty-Star Theme' [because it is so thoroughly embedded in writing instruction at the secondary level in this country that one] . . . might imagine . . . Kate Smith singing 'God Bless America' or the piccolo obbligato from 'The Stars and Stripes Forever'" (97). These two kinds of assignments, however, don't summarize or represent the total picture. Instead, the following four features help to provide a more accurate picture of BHS's Writing Program. Even then, however, the description serves only as an overview.

"Writing as a Process" Assignments. Even though conventional wisdom suggests that "writing as a process," a phrase Brown says was first used by Rohman and Weck, is now highly-cliched among composition
Researchers and professors, BHS writing teachers know that writing is a recursive process requiring more than a single draft—or even a series of drafts—in a linear fashion. Inherent in most assignments, consequently, is the time (anywhere between two and four weeks) to plan and reformulate writing, and class sessions are often designed as writing workshops held in the school's IBM or MAC computer rooms to make peer and/or teacher responses a natural extension of writing—while it takes place.

Writing Contests/Publications. BHS writing teachers often encourage their students to enter writing contests and to publish essays—and many writers are successful. BHS students have won local writing contests, such as those sponsored by the Bexley Public Library and the Leo Yassenoff Jewish Center. They have written award-winning essays for NCTE competitions, and one student was granted a 1995 student-research grant sponsored by the National Endowment for the Humanities as a result of the proposal he composed. Student publications over the last few years include articles in English Journal, Merlin's Pen, Outside Kids, Scholastic Choices, and Word on Business.

Though not always a requirement in every course, entering writing contests and submitting manuscripts for
publication builds writers' self-esteem and confidence. It also reinforces that writing is an authentic means of communication and not just a classroom practice. In other words, it also the concept that writing is an authentic means of communication and not just a classroom practice. In other words, it reinforces social views of composing by displacing teacher authority.

**The Write Place.** At the request of the BHS principal and English Department in 1987, the Bexley Board of Education approved a writing center, known both affectionately and officially as The Write Place. Unlike most university writing centers, the Write Place is staffed solely by English Department members who simultaneously play dual roles as teacher and tutor, responding to both the work of their own students and that of others. According to a BHS "Writer's Guide," students may come to The Write Place on their own or at the request of their teacher. They should bring any appropriate information (papers, class handouts or writing assignments, etc.) and ask specific questions about their writing.

It's significant to all English Department members that their daily "Write Place" responsibility provides release time from a 5th course each semester. In other
words, English Department members teach four classes and while members of other departments teach five.

**Teachers Who Are Writers.** Unlike university faculty members, high school teachers are not required to write or publish for tenure or promotion—and a heavy teaching load makes writing understandably difficult. Nevertheless, at a reception in 1993 honoring (and attended solely by) published BHS faculty authors, over twenty-five out of fifty teachers were recognized for single- and multi-authored publications ranging from book reviews to a very well-respected chemistry textbook. Not every member of the English Department attended the event, but I still argue BHS English teachers are all writers. Though they may not be "writing their way [with articles in professional journals] to the center of a discourse community" (Belanger and Brockman), they write nonetheless. They submit manuscripts to magazines and essay contests. They write personal and professional correspondence and letters to the editor. They write poems and short stories or speeches and conference presentations. Some even write collaboratively with students in ungraded courses whose curricular focus is publication in the shape of BHS's newspaper, yearbook, or literary magazine.
In Roger's interview with two elementary-school "teacher researchers," the teacher researchers argue that teachers who write place themselves in a "learner mode" ("Teacher Researchers" 45) characterized by both positive and negative stresses. This view strongly reinforces Morris and Haight's belief that a "funny thing" (25) happens when teachers write for public audiences: they teach writing more effectively having been automatically sensitized to the struggles student writers face. Moreover, McClure argues that high school teachers who write (especially complex rhetorical tasks, like dissertations) know in both theory and practice that writing is a recursive process, and so "[d]rafting, writing to learn, revising, and all the other practices associated with the process approach [will] become more than concepts to guide [their] teaching" (7). Though BHS students (some of whom are subjects in this study!) may complain about teachers' grading standards or classroom practices, I believe the student body as a whole benefits from their teachers who write.

Research Questions

To begin learning about adolescent business and professional writing, I posed three sets of questions:
1. What are some of the writing processes and products of adolescent business writers? How do they define their rhetorical task in terms of purpose, audience, and/or form? What strategies do they use to tackle those tasks, and how do they evaluate their work?

2. Is the impetus for adolescent business writing too complex to be defined as either self-motivated or school-sponsored? What's the relationship between impetus for writing and writer engagement?

3. How do multiple audiences influence the writing processes and products of adolescent business writers?

The Subjects

To begin answering these questions, I conducted a two-part study. First, I studied the work of the eight writers listed alphabetically by name and pseudonym:

1. Adam. As a high school senior, he wrote an college application essay for the University of Michigan.

2. Bram. He wrote a cover letter to his teacher regarding an assigned paper for a class.

3. Charlie. As an Episcopal Church youth group president, he wrote two sets of fund-raising letters to raise money to attend summer work camps.

4. Dana. As the BHS Environmental Club Vice President, she wrote two letters to faculty members regarding a school recycling program.

5. Emily/Ellen. As committee members for a Student of the Month Award, they wrote guidelines for members serving on the same committee the next year.

6. Fran. As a Lutheran Youth Organization president, she wrote a monthly newsletter to members.

7. Gregory. He wrote an application letter for a research apprentice position at a hospital.
Second, I extended the study by focusing on a single writing group, comprised of Heath, Irv, and Jack, and which I called affectionately the "Colorado or Bust" Writing Team. This group of club members wrote a letter to their principal proposing that a school-sponsored ski trip to Colorado take place during spring break of 1994.

Data Collection and Analysis

To complete the project, I collected data in two parts, both of which included three- to five-hour discourse-based interviews (DBIs), a research methodology introduced by Odell, Goswami, and Herrington as a way of "get[ting] at the tacit knowledge of people who write in nonacademic settings [by helping them] make explicit the knowledge or strategies that previously may have been only implicit" (223). As Locker notes, DBIs are an effective research method because writers are unlikely to have . . . the knowledge about writing to say (for example), "I used formal diction to appeal to my primary audience." However, if we [conduct DBIs and] ask them about the choices they've made, we may learn the concerns—audience, purpose, style—that led them to use specific language. ("Discourse-Based Interviews" 1).

Bird and Puglisi reinforce this contention. Though they focus upon flaws inherent in studies based upon only questionnaire or survey data, their point reinforces
Locker's: writers may lack insight to understand or to describe their own rhetorical choices.

According to Locker, three kinds of DBIs exist. The first, and the most time-consuming, involve initially conducting rhetorical analyses of a writer's previous documents and then--based upon the writer's repertoire of, for example, word choices, sentence structures, or persuasive appeals found in previous documents--the researcher provides sentence variations to which the writer responds and, in turn, provides evidence of his/her tacit rhetorical choices. A second type of DBI provides writers with sentence variations written by the researcher to test rhetorical choices that may not be a part of the writer's repertoire. A third kind of DBI doesn't provide sentence variations but simply asks writers retrospective questions about their documents.

For the first part of the study, I examined the students' business communication documents described in the "Subjects" section and conducted the second kind of DBI described by Locker. As a "wrap-up" for each interview, I posed an open-ended, retrospective question regarding each subject's overall evaluation of his/her document. The data collection for Adam, however, was different. His snapshot is based upon my recollection
of the several writing sessions we spent together.

For the second part of the study, I (A) audio-taped while being a participant/observer at every session during which documents were planned, written, critiqued, and revised, (B) conducted the second kind of DBI, and (C) participated as a member in a faculty/administrative meeting where the ski trip proposal was evaluated.

Many different methods of data analysis exist. Some are formal. It is possible, for example, to examine the words used in documents and the responses in discourse-based interviews lexically, syntactically, and semantically. Other methods are ideological. A feminist analysis might examine differences in the products, processes, or engagement of adolescent writers based on gender. A Marxist analysis might examine the extent to which these adolescents are imbricated in the capitalist system.

I have elected none of these methods, choosing instead to conduct a rhetorical analysis. Subject responses were transcribed and then analyzed primarily by culling them for relevance in three categories: the rhetorical context for the documents, the writers' understanding of their rhetorical tasks in terms of purpose, audience, and form, and the writers' strategies for their work. Certainly a more detailed linguistic
analysis could be conducted. However, my project is merely to establish that adolescent business communication exists, not to try to compare and contrast it to that of adult business writers. My general methods are appropriate given the ground-breaking nature of my study: I demonstrate the existence of a kind of writing formerly absent from the literature, and complicate one of the major theories that has been used to understand adolescent writing, the binary of "self-motivated" and "school-sponsored."

*Every person's name (except mine) mentioned in this study is a pseudonym.*
CHAPTER II
THE SNAPSHOTS

In this chapter, I challenge and complicate the generally-accepted images of adolescents writing either academic essays or creative projects by providing other images, known here as snapshots.

Initially and perhaps most readily for this research project, the snapshots serve as an introduction to the case study in Chapter IV in which I examine the writing processes and products of three BHS Ski Club members who proposed the idea of a school-sponsored ski trip to their principal. The snapshots in this chapter provide evidence that the ski trip proposal is not what Heath might call a rhetorical "curiosit[y]" ("Response to Gere" 98) or an isolated, one-of-a-kind document and that the three members of The "Colorado or Bust" Writing Team are not anomalies among adolescent writers.

In short, then, the snapshots provide evidence adolescents do, indeed, write business and professional communication. Like adult business writers, the adolescents in this chapter wrote to inform, to request or persuade, and to promote goodwill (Locker, Business and Administrative Communication 9). Of the seven
snapshots, four portray adolescents writing some kind of business letter: an application letter for a research apprenticeship, a fund-raising letter for a church youth group, a cover letter for a class assignment, and an informative letter regarding a recycling program with a follow-up letter. The remaining three snapshots depict adolescents writing a newsletter for a church youth group, a college application essay, and a set of committee guidelines for a school award. Though the documents may collectively lack the rhetorical sophistication one might expect to find in the business and professional communication of adult writers, their alternate images challenge research regarding the writing processes and products of adolescents by suggesting the following:

1. Adolescent writing is too complex to be fit into the binary categories, "self-motivated" and "school-sponsored."

2. A direct relationship between impetus for writing and writer engagement doesn't necessarily exist. Other rhetorical variables can help to account for writer engagement.

Kirsch and Ritchie warn composition researchers "to recognize the impossibility of ever fully understanding another's experiences and to question their [own] motives in gathering, selecting, and presenting those stories" (13), so it seems important to emphasize that, like Ede and Lunsford's snapshots of collaborative
writers at work, the alternate images of adolescent writers found in this chapter "are crafted visions, not slices of life, or raw moments of reality" (Singular Texts/Plural Authors 43). They are based not upon case studies or ethnographies but on three- to five-hour discourse-based interviews, combined with my on-the-job knowledge of the BHS community—and a social perspective of composing.

Social views of composing focus on the writer not in isolation but within the context of a larger group whose influence can't be ignored if the researcher's goal is to understand the writer. That's why Heath conducted an ethnographic study of two side-by-side communities representing different social/ethnic backgrounds but sharing one school to understand the writing processes and products of a group of elementary-age children. In doing so, she learned that

First, patterns of language use in any community are in accord with and mutually reinforce other cultural patterns, such as space and time orderings, problem-solving techniques, group loyalties, and preferred patterns of recreation. . . . Second, . . . the language socialization process in all its complexity is more powerful than such single-factor explanations in accounting for academic success. . . . Third, the patterns of interactions between oral and written uses of language are varied and complex, and the traditional oral-literate dichotomy does not capture the ways other cultural patterns in each community affect the uses of oral and written language. (Ways with Words 344)
Using a social perspective of writing, Bartholomae argues that writing deficiencies of undergraduates can't be resolved by teaching them "how to use language [in the general sense of the word]. They . . . need to learn to command a particular variety of language--the language of a written, academic discourse" (312), or in other words, the languages of the different university communities.

To provide a social perspective of composing, the snapshots all begin with a social context for the writer and all conclude with the writers' evaluations of their work--but not necessarily in terms of grades or other traditional measures for the standards the eight subjects might have internalized (or rejected) from their BHS English classes. Instead, the evaluations are based upon writers' perceptions of how well their documents functioned as vehicles for negotiating or maneuvering within the social context. The focus of each snapshot is also the same: the way each writer defined his/her rhetorical task--primarily in terms of purpose, audience, and/or genre--and the strategies the writer said were useful in tackling that task. For the sake of variety, I chose to write snapshots of writers who differed from each other individually in terms of their social contexts, as well as their documents'
purposes, audiences, and genres. Even so, the snapshots found here don't collectively cover comprehensively the entire spectrum of documents or the vast array of writer/reader relationships theoretically possible in business and professional communication.

The following seven snapshots could have been organized in a number of different categories or listed in a variety of different orders to privilege a specific research question or concern. Because my purpose in including the snapshots is initially to describe alternate images of adolescents writing and because a number of different rhetorical issues--none of which I want to privilege--emerge in the snapshots, I have opted to arrange them in alphabetical order by the writer's real first name and pseudonym.

Adam: Writing an Application Essay for Admission to The University of Michigan

When Adam started applying to colleges in 1993, he was interested primarily in The Ohio State University, The University of Wisconsin, and The University of Michigan. By virtue of a 3.5 cumulative GPA, respectable standardized test scores, and his in-state status, Adam "just knew" Ohio State would admit him and that Wisconsin would not be a problem. Michigan,
however, was another story. It was his "reach school."
Like many other BHS seniors, Adam had applied to an
institution where he believed admission was only the
slightest possibility, just to see if he might be accepted.

I know my grades are good and all, and my test
scores are okay too. It's just, you know, the
applicant pool will be so competitive, especially
for Pre-Med. If I was from Michigan and applying
in-state, there probably wouldn't be a problem, but
I'm not, so there is.

Of all the items in his application packet
(comprised of two recommendation letters, Adam's high
school transcripts, and a completed application form),
Adam said he believed the application form was the most
important document because it included a full-length
essay he speculated might "make or break" his chances
for admission. Even though the possibility of
acceptance to Michigan seemed slim to Adam, he still
hoped his application would not be automatically
rejected but instead placed in a "maybe stack" where, he
presumed, those full-length essays would be read and
carefully analyzed by members of a selection committee.
If his essay were poorly done, Adam believed he'd never
be accepted: if it were good, though, perhaps he would.

The problem for Adam (as it is for every graduating
senior) was that he didn't have an accurate, fool proof
profile for the selection committee. Consequently, he was "writing blind" to an unknown audience who would evaluate the quality of his work with criteria he didn't know. Who exactly were the members of the selection committee, and what would they value in an essay? He wondered if they were interested primarily in the content. If that were true, he assumed certain topics might make his application more persuasive. If so, however, which topics? How could he possibly know what criteria his audience would use to define a "good" or "bad" topic? On the other hand, he knew the committee members might not care about content at all for its own sake. Instead, they might use Adam's document as a means of gauging if he could write an essay--any essay--solely to predict if he could write successfully in university-level classes. Ultimately, Adam recognized that he couldn't know the answers to his questions regarding his audience.

As an initial step in writing his application essay, Adam focused on topic selection. He decided to explain the reason he wanted to study medicine, so he told about his grandfather, a respected local physician, who had inspired Adam as a very young boy. In choosing this topic, Adam said his assumption was admission officials would believe he wanted to enter the medical
field for the "right" reasons, thereby making his application more persuasive.

After writing a first draft, Adam followed-up with a strategy emphasized in his BHS writing classes: he sought out a reader, in this case, in The Write Place, the writing center at Bexley High School, which he knew I, one of his former English teachers, supervised during his study hall period. Although Harris argues that "in a worst case scenario, [writers in university writing centers] can silently count the cracks in the ceiling while the tutor talks" ("Why Writers Need Writing Tutors" 29), BHS students are expected to "set their own agenda" for the tutoring session at the Write Place, and Adam was ready. He asked if I would help him make sure his essay was "good" in terms of organization and sentence-level issues, two of the many issues identified as important in his English classes.

After addressing those two issues and writing a second draft, however, Adam returned to The Write Place and admitted his college essay wasn't very good. His criterion for saying so was a surprise to me, even though I had assisted him with the revision work.

... it's mostly BS, but I thought that was what they wanted, right? What else am I suppose to write anyway? Anything will be pretty cheesy.
Adam identified his paper as "BS" because it wasn't a completely truthful explanation of why he wanted to study medicine. Instead, the essay was based in part upon what he believed admission officials "wanted to hear." While his grandfather had influenced Adam, other factors had too. Because he didn't even mention those factors, however, Adam must have felt the need to augment, even romanticize, memories of his grandfather to make his rationale plausible for readers.

At least initially, however, Adam's essay must have seemed valid to him because it was consistent with two basic rhetorical strategies emphasized in his BHS English classes. After selecting a broad topic for his application essay, he had been taught to "narrow the focus" so he could discuss his ideas in enough detail given the space constraints, in this case a one-single-spaced-page limitation imposed by admission officials. In addition, Adam had been taught in all his English classes to be "reader-focused," and so by selecting a reason he perceived admission officials would value, he was attempting to adapt for audience.

Although Adam didn't explicitly say so, he apparently resorted to "BS" because he believed his real reasons for wanting to study medicine were too complex for even him to unpack and articulate, so how could he
possibly explain them to others? Even if he could have broken that decision into its components, I speculate his strategy for organizing the information would have been a list of reasons in paragraph form. Had he actually generated that list, however, the individual items he haltingly mentioned might have appeared unbelievable (seemingly insignificant personal experiences at medical clinics, for example) or even negative (social status, for example, or monetary rewards generally associated with individuals in the medical field). Worse yet, all those items "stacked," one on top of the other, would have been reminiscent of a very predictable, very unoriginal five-paragraph essay ("These are the three important reasons I want to study medicine").

I speculate Adam's struggle in writing the first version of his application essay was based in part on a lack of confidence in his ability--or even an inability--in "truth telling" (Macrorie, Telling 7), that is, to explain honestly how his grandfather had--and had not--influenced him. Adam could have candidly admitted in his essay that his reasons for entering the medical field were too elusive to articulate but that his grandfather had been an early influence, one which had been both complicated and reinforced over the past
decade. Perhaps Adam didn't have the cognitive maturity to distance himself properly in order to reflect objectively about such a subjective topic (McGinty 70-1), and even if he did, perhaps he didn't have the rhetorical skills to make such a claim. Just as likely, however, perhaps Adam believed it wasn't an option based upon what I speculate was a misconception regarding his audience. More specifically, Adam may have predicted that Michigan admission officials would not value college applicants who couldn't reach definitive answers or complete closure in their college essays—when conventional wisdom suggests that element would not have been perceived as problematic.

Once Adam decided his first essay wouldn't work, we brainstormed other possibilities until the conversation digressed to issues I no longer remember. It was in the midst of that lengthy conversation, though, that we stumbled upon what Adam believed was a truly persuasive topic: his first honors course at BHS during his junior year. The essay Adam eventually wrote about that experience (See Appendix A) explained how class members—many of them national merit scholars, all of them honors students since their first year at BHS—initially doubted Adam's credibility as a classmate in Honors Chemistry. In fact, nobody would even agree to
hastily selected a focus (why he wanted to study medicine) and then immediately launched into writing and revising vigorously towards the final draft without truly considering even to himself why he wanted to study medicine. The second version, in contrast, was born of that free-flowing, rambling conversation in which Adam metaphorically closed his eyes and ignored his audience (Elbow, "Closing My Eyes") while exploring more creative and genuine rhetorical options for his essay.

Though tempting, this explanation misrepresents Adam's writing process by providing a falsely linear portrayal of his work. After all, Adam's final draft of his first version prompted his own self-analysis, a reassessment of his rhetorical task, the brainstorming session, a potentially new topic, and further speculation about audience, all of which played a role in the second version. This interpretation of Adam's writing process transforms our free-flowing conversation from a back-to-the-drawing-board-kind-of experience to what Flower and Hayes call a "long, pregnant pause [which occurs] during writing" ("The Pregnant Pause" 229) which provides evidence of recursivity. Even though all the subjects in the Flower and Hayes' study paused alone in silent reflection during writing--while Adam and I gregariously dialogued--the end result is
be his lab partner until the teacher finally assigned one, a 4.0 student who had recently been awarded a trip to Japan after placing third in an international math competition. By the end of the school year, however, Adam reported in his essay that he had proven his classmates, including his lab partner, all wrong. With hard work, he earned straight "As" on tests and quizzes, participated actively in class discussions, helped others with difficult concepts, and even set the curve on the final exam at the end of the year.

In contrast to the first, Adam liked the second version of his college essay, and he said "it wasn't BS."

The kids in Honors Chemistry will all go to big deal schools. They're the kind of people Michigan will accept, even if they are from out of state, and so my essay shows I can be competitive and successful with excellent students. It's a good essay.

Perhaps Adam believed the second version wasn't "BS" because it provided a "telling fact" (MacCrorie, Telling 42) about himself which Adam believed admission officials would value as much as he did.

If asked, Adam might argue the difference between the first and second versions of his essay took place during invention, or what he would probably call "topic selection." With the first version, he must have
still the same. The recursivity of Adam's writing process makes his first and second versions of his essay not separate entities but extensions of each other.

After submitting his application, Adam waited several weeks before receiving word from Michigan personnel that they had "wait listed" him for further consideration. Later, when Adam was officially rejected (and his lab partner was accepted), he still considered his essay a successful one. Because the University of Michigan was only his "reach school," he reported that acceptance wasn't his criterion for evaluation; instead, serious consideration by admission officials was.

Sure, I wanted to be accepted by Michigan, but I don't know for certain if I would have gone anyway because of the expense involved. It would have cost a bunch, you know. Mostly, I just wanted them to take me seriously, and they obviously did. That's not all bad.

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Bram: Writing a Cover Letter to a Teacher Regarding a Class Assignment

By the end of the first semester during the 1993-94 school year, Bram was worried about his junior-level writing course at BHS. Given his hard work during both marking periods, he "just knew" he deserved an "A" for a semester grade. He wasn't convinced, however, that his teacher (who happened to be me) would agree. After all,
I had already given him "B's" on a number of his essays. Even worse, for one piece, I "had had the nerve" to give him a "D."

To help bolster his class standing, Bram had worked especially hard on one of the final papers. The assignment required that he survey the same featured column in a magazine for twelve consecutive issues, keep a personal-response journal based upon his reading, and then write a paper based upon the conclusions in the journal. The assignment as a whole--but especially the research journal--was like too many other school assignments from Bram's perspective: it required "way too much busy work." Nevertheless, Bram was pleased with the fourth and final draft of the essay, so pleased, in fact, that he wrote a short letter to me on a piece of notepad paper advertising his parents' business and attached it to his paper (see Appendix B).

Bram's sole purpose in writing the note was to influence how his essay would be graded. He hoped to persuade me to give him a high grade for the assignment which, in turn, would raise both his marking period and semester grades.

My grade was on the line basically, and you know, I thought I deserved a good grade. . . . I didn't want an "A-." I wanted an "A" or even an "A+". . . . I wanted to get the best possible.

Bram's strategy for persuading me he deserved a
good grade was twofold. First, he wanted to show he had worked very hard on the assignment, something he perceived any teacher would automatically value in students.

I really thought that I really worked hard on the paper. It was the best work I could have possibly done, and I just wanted [the teacher] to know that in case [she] didn't. . . . [The note] would be the first thing that the teacher would see and [she would then] take into account how much work I did.

The second strategy was to remind me how difficult it was to be a hard-working student. According to Bram, this strategy was based upon his belief that teachers don't appreciate how vulnerable students are when it comes to having their work--and especially their writing--evaluated.

I don't think teachers these days have the feeling of what it is like to really work hard on a paper and then have [someone] just throw it back in your face and say, "No, it's not good enough," even if it's the best you could have done. . . .

In choosing these two strategies, Bram set himself apart from any student I had ever known at BHS: no other student had ever written a letter or note to me in the hope of raising his/her grade. Among the multitudes who try "talking me" into raising their grades, many are belligerent, some even combative. Bram, in contrast, was very polite. That may be because of social norms he had internalized regarding his communication with adults in authority. Equally as probable, he may have
recognized that a nasty note might have fostered ill will and, consequently, would not have been perceived as persuasive.

In spite of his purpose and attention to audience, however, Bram reported his document was written in an "off-the-cuff" sort of way, particularly at the sentence level.

My whole thing in writing this wasn't my choice of words . . . I just said [things] because I said [them]. I didn't think about it . . . . I wanted to get my point across [so] I wrote it and that was it.

Bram's comments strongly suggest his document was a first and final draft, one which he believed required very little forethought and virtually no rhetorical choices on his part. Regardless of his own self-analysis, however, I argue that Bram's writing was guided by rules he had internalized to such an extent they were no longer visible to him. In particular, I believe he was influenced by the rules he associated with informal documents and/or those he deemed appropriate for himself personally as a writer.

When asked about it in our interview, for example, Bram admitted typing the document was not a strategy he would have incorporated, even if it had made his document more visually appealing. Perhaps as a result of his parents' business, however, Bram recognized that
a corporate setting could automatically alter his beliefs and choices as a writer.

Why would I never type it? Because it's not a formal thing [my emphasis]. . . . If you're working in a business or something . . . and you want to leave a message, you want to leave something and let's say, you're handing in a big report to, say, shareholders or somebody like that . . . . You're not going to write something like this [note], but you're going to write a letter which is very formal and to-the-point and is typed, of course by your secretary. . . . [If I had typed the letter] it would not have made a difference [except maybe to show] I had a lot of time on my hands. . . . No, I would not have typed it. It's just not me.

In that same interview, Bram also balked at the idea of using certain words or phrases because they wouldn't fit his informal document or writing style.

"Worked like the dickens?" No I would never have said that. . . . "Intrigued?" No, no, no. Intrigued is not in my [everyday] vocabulary. You could say what you [want] to get across without sounding . . . See, this is a formal letter. Maybe if I were writing a formal letter [my emphasis], I would write something like that.

Even so, some phrases were too informal for even Bram because they violated norms regarding language use he believed were valid for most people but especially in light of the rhetorical context for his note.

I could have said . . . "I busted my you-know-what," but if I say [that,] I'm going to use the word. But that's not proper. . . . You say that maybe among friends but not when you're turning in a paper or something. It's not really proper anytime. . . . You don't say something like that. There's no point. You get the same point across by [using different language].
When Bram submitted his essay, I recall chuckling over his note and then disregarding it due to a "Teacher as Grader" bias I have internalized: grades may not reflect the time and/or energy students exert to write. After all, I have read excellent documents composed in single writing workshop sessions, and I have read wretched pieces culminating from several drafts and countless conferences. Even with that bias, however, it is plausible that Bram's note somehow influenced my evaluation—as Bram predicted it would. Though he wasn't convinced his note was worth a rhetorical analysis ("It's just a note I put at the top"), he did believe it was successful in helping to raise his grade.

[When she] read the letter, it [probably put her] in a different frame of mind. . . . [She probably took] satisfaction [in] knowing that I really care. . . . [She probably thought] he's interested, he wants to do good.

Charlie: Writing Two Sets of Fund-Raising Letters to Attend Summer Work Camps

Attending summer work camps is becoming a tradition for the youth group at St. Alban's Episcopal Church in Bexley, Ohio. Members spent a week working on a Navajo Reservation in Arizona helping to restore substandard housing during 1992, in a poverty-stricken neighborhood in southwestern Georgia during 1993, and in a low-income
housing project in southern Louisiana during 1994.
Attending week-long work camps takes more than time and energy. It costs big bucks: roughly $1500 per camper.
To raise the funds for the first two years, Charlie, who was the president of the group at the time, spearheaded two successful fund-raising campaigns which raised enough money for every work camper in the youth group.

According to Charlie, the fund-raising letter was somewhat difficult to create the first year (see Appendix C1) because he could not talk about the work camps in specific terms, a criteria for "good" writing he had most likely internalized as a result of his BHS English classes.

We had never been to a camp before . . . [and so] part of the problem was that I didn't know exactly what I [was] talking about . . . the information that the organization gave us was actually fairly brief. I mean basically when I said that we would be fixing up dilapidated buildings, I didn't know how many houses we would be working on, I didn't know if we would be in a group, I didn't know what type of work we'd be doing, whether it would be in a community center, whether we'd paint the houses in need. I had no clue and that's why [I only said] we're going to be fixing up dilapidated houses.

This lack of information meant Charlie had to fill in some gaps, but adding filler wasn't a big problem because, according to Charlie, he's "good at BSing." In fact, he used that strategy in two different ways in the first letter. The first strategy—which he had
apparently practiced to perfection in some of his BHS literature-based classes—was to amplify the information he had regarding the work camps primarily through repetition.

[Let's say] on a test, you've read a chapter or two . . . [when you should have read four chapters or the whole book]. . . . I'm capable of playing off those things, sometimes repeating things in different sentences. To a point, that's what I've done [in the first letter].

Another way Charlie "BSed his way through the document" was by writing unoriginal sentences, a fact which didn't make him very proud. In fact, he seemed to believe some of his sentences were excellent models for what NOT to say in fund-raising letters.

I do feel like . . . a shyster when I say . . . 'Your firm won't just be helping us: it will be helping hundreds of others.' . . . [It's true] they will be helping someone else, but it just feels like one of those generic lines that you hear on the Easter Seals Telethon. . . . It's a [cliche] . . . I could use . . . in hundreds of thousands of different [letters].

Although the first year's letter raised enough money for group members to attend the work camp, the second year's letter (see Appendix C2) was, according to Charlie, an improvement because he could rely on the group's experience at a work camp and, consequently, "could eliminate the 'BS.'"

The first couple of lines are basically the same. [I said that our youth group] is going to be planning a trip. . . . It explains the work group, basically what it is and what we'd be doing,
renovating dilapidated houses. Where it starts to vary . . . is that I was able to be more specific. [The year before] we [had] worked on approximately 100 houses [but] we did not know that with the first letter.

The second year's letter was different for other reasons too. Most important, the group's fund-raising strategy had changed from soliciting funds to holding (among other activities) a celebrity auction, Charlie had to include a new section in the letter.

(In) the first letter, we asked for money, you know, we need donations . . . [but in the second letter,] I [also] described our fund raising events, like the luncheons and the car wash [as a lead in to] the celebrity auction [and when] the auction would be and if they could donate.

Another new feature (one he had learned in a BHS class) of the second letter was a revised signature block. Rather than including only his name, Charlie added both his title and organization. Though Charlie speculated that these additions might seem like minor details to others, he reported they were part of an important rhetorical strategy, one providing his audience with essential information which, in turn, potentially helped to achieve his purpose in writing.

[In the first letter, the signature block and letterhead says] I'm from St. Alban's Episcopal Church and my name is [Charlie Jones]. Whoopdeedoo. . . . They have no clue that I'm a youth. . . . I could be the advisor. I could be anyone. . . . [In the second letter, though,] they know I'm a youth. . . . If they know a kid has . . . put the time and effort into [the
letter], they might be more willing to give the donation.

Overall, Charlie reported he had done "a good job" writing the two fund-raising letters. Although he recognized other people might use different standards, he believed the only appropriate criterion for evaluating the documents was in terms of purpose: that is, raising money. Because his letters had raised the money to send his youth group to camps for two years in a row at the time of the interview, he judged the documents as successful.

If someone was grading [them], they might find problems. . . . [Maybe they are] not specific [enough, or] I don't have my supports and everything in the right place. . . . Considering we've made it [to work camps] for the past two years, and these letters [have raised] . . . $12,000 in the last two years, I don't think anyone can complain. I think they're successful.

Dana: Writing Two Letters to Faculty Members about a New Recycling Program

Dana, the 1993-94 BHS Environmental Club Vice President for Internal Affairs, reported the recycling program had been in serious trouble during the previous school year.

Last year, . . . [a district administrator] said this program [was] horrible [and that] it [wasn't] working. There [was even] trash in the recycling bins. . . . I don't even know who [had been] taking care of [the recycling program the year]
before, but then me and [one other student, Karen Fee], we started doing it. We would empty all 80 bins—there are over 80 now, but at the time there were roughly 80—and we were doing it by ourselves. . . . It was way too much work for [two people.]

When Dana was elected as vice-president that spring, she decided to overhaul the school's recycling program. Over the summer, she created what she proudly reported was hard work: a complex schedule coordinating all faculty members' planning periods with Environmental Club member's study halls so each Environmental Club member would be accountable for the recycling bins in a specific classroom but could empty them without disrupting any class. Then, the week before school started, Dana wrote an ostensibly informative letter to the faculty to let them know about the new program (see Appendix D1). Months later, she sent another letter (see Appendix D2) to learn how the program was working.

Although the first letter appeared to be "all about how we're going to handle the recycling program," Dana indicated the letter had a far more important agenda: to show BHS faculty an important change in leadership had taken place in the Environmental Club from the previous year. Establishing that change and promoting good will were important to Dana and all the other officers because of how ineffectively the club had been organized the previous year. Although one might speculate the new
officers were laying the groundwork for good letters of
recommendation from faculty members, Dana's comments
show they were committed to the recycling program and
knew it would be shut down if poorly administered.

. . . when we got elected into office, we decided
that our responsibility . . . was . . . to start
. . . the year off with a new program that was
going to work, and so the first letter for August
23 was just, you know, saying hi, we're the club,
we're the new officers, and we're going to do this
right this year. . . . [The subject of the letter
was] the 1994 Environmental Club. . . . [I]
need(ed) to say [in the letter that] it was [going
to be] a new type of organization . . . with five
new officers. . . . It was going to be different.

Given the purpose of the letter, Dana included each
officer's name at the end of the document. Including
their names was also important because the document had
been planned collaboratively.

When we had our first meeting, [the officers] . . .
decided it would be neat [to write the letter] and
I said I'd do it. . . . we really generally said
what we wanted to write about and then--it was so
long ago--but I'm sure I talked [afterward with]
[Jan and Karen, the two other officers,] and just
made a quick jot of things to say. . . . [I didn't
show it afterwards to anyone, not even to Bill, the
president] because . . . he's not the official
type of person. He's very easy going, and he
wouldn't care . . . he does stuff, but he doesn't
do administrative stuff. . . He's not the type . . .
to sit down and write a letter or make
corrections to this letter. It's not bad; it's
just [Bill].

Although Dana recognized the first letter was a
single-authored document, she didn't take complete
ownership because she was writing on behalf of all the
officers. In contrast, Dana perceived the second letter as entirely singular in nature.

The first letter was ... about the five new officers. That was a general letter but in [the second letter,] I'm centering down focusing down [to the recycling program,] and so it[']s mine. ... None of the other officers knew about this letter.] This is my work.

Although the ostensible purpose of the second letter was "to find out if the program was working," it had another more important purpose. It documented that Dana was fulfilling her responsibilities as an Environmental Club officer.

... [Jay] and I are co-vice, [but] I'm internal affairs and that's basically the recycling thing and so for like a few months I really wasn't doing that much [because the program was running itself] and I ... kinda felt like I wasn't doing anything ... [so I wrote this letter] ... to let [people] know that I am doing stuff. You know, some officers don't do anything ... especially in the Environmental Club. ... This year, [for example, the secretary] ... empties a bin. That's her involvement. ... She takes notes at the meetings, but most everyone else has some sort of project that they take on ... like [the president] takes on everything basically and [the other vice] does a lot of outer work and [the treasurer] does all the fund raisers and the recycling program I do.

In spite of how important the two letters were to Dana in terms of purpose, she reported she spent very little time writing them. In fact, she said that for both documents, she generated a single draft in a perfunctory way—unlike the way she reported she wrote for her BHS classes.
These [two letters] . . . are things I put together real quick. The first letter took the longest, but this one [the follow-up letter] took me two seconds. . . . I could do better . . . but I needed to get them out . . . so I just sat down and wrote, . . . read them once and spellchecked. . . . [But for school assignments,] I have separate drafts. . . . I think you need to do that [for classes]. . . . These [letters, though,] are more informal . . . and I'm not getting graded. . . . I'm a grade-oriented person which I think [is] bad sometimes. . . . I should try to do these [letters as if I were working on a school assignment and wanted] an "A" . . . but there's not as much pressure.

Being "grade oriented," however, didn't keep Dana from paying special attention to another rhetorical task associated with the Environmental Club.

[These letters were] . . . addressed to [club members, for example, Brian Brick], Homeroom 201, here's how you do it--and I explained how to empty a bin--here's your room, what period you do it and with who. . . . They [were] all handwritten and then xeroxed and then on each one--this is an added touch I liked--I wrote a handwritten message because that personalized it. Like, I'd say, "this room isn't very . . . hard. That's why you're doing it by yourself. If you don't want to do it by yourself, come see me." . . . those took a long time and I was very happy with them. . . . I think [that kind of personalization helps to] make the club much closer. If [the officers the previous year] had ever done that, it would have . . . made me feel a part of something . . .

Dana believed "personalizing" the letters was only appropriate when she knew her audience members or perceived them as equal in status. That's why she felt comfortable adding a different handwritten message to each of the club members' letters. In contrast, she
said personalizing the two letters to faculty members would have been impossible.

I could have . . . maybe to . . . a few teachers that I know but I don't know very many. . . . I really don't think I would have been comfortable writing a letter to, you know, like Mr. [Bansol]. . . . Some of [the students] I didn't know but [I could personalize their letters] just because they were closer to my age.

Even so, Dana had a sense of audience in faculty letters because she evaluated her work by predicting how they would respond to her documents. She believed all the faculty members would value the club members' hard work and an effective school recycling program. Consequently, she imagined that both letters built goodwill—an important criterion for Dana—among her audience members, and so they were successful.

[The first letter] was good because it was the beginning of the year. We introduced [the club], and . . . I hoped the teachers kind of looked up and said, "Oh good. They're doing something." When teachers looked at th[e second letter,] . . . they [might have said], "They're working really hard . . . That's nice. They're doing something this year.

Emily and Ellen: Writing the Guidelines for Membership on a Student Committee

In the fall of 1992, the Bexley High School Chapter of National Honor Society (NHS) accepted the responsibility for the Student of the Month Award to
fulfill part of its school-service component. To fulfill that obligation, NHS members elected a committee whose responsibilities included initially selecting the monthly recipient(s) and then honoring each winner with a bulletin board displaying both a picture and a write-up highlighting winner accomplishments.

The responsibilities associated with the award were more time-consuming than the committee anticipated, especially during the first few months when members were struggling to get organized. More than once during the first semester, consequently, recipients were notified of their award at least two weeks late, and no recipient at all was named in November. Because of these mistakes, students—and even teachers—were critical of the committee, but even when recipients were notified on time, the committee still fielded complaints.

It's a drag because [the bulletin board] is something that everyone . . . walks by. . . . It's right in the center of the hall . . . and kids make it known when they're disappointed. . . . People are like, oh you picked him because he was cute or him because he was a football player [or her because she was] a cheerleader . . . [or] why would you put up some guy who goes around in tights?

In general, the committee believed the school community was so unfairly negative towards their work that they considered asking others to assist "to see if someone else could do a better job."

After such a difficult start for what eventually
turned out to be a successfully administered award, as the NHS advisor, I asked Emily and Ellen, the two members remaining on the committee after first semester, to write guidelines (see Appendix E) explaining what committee membership entailed. Although they were under no obligation to do so as graduating seniors, both girls agreed and then seemed to internalize the request. In fact, they reported their primary purpose in generating the guidelines was altruistic: they hoped the document would assist the committee elected to administer the Student of the Month Award the following school year so the job would be done correctly from the very beginning of first semester.

[Last fall,] we came into it cold turkey and . . . formulated our own way . . . [We wrote] the guidelines because [otherwise] next year they’d just be starting from scratch. They would just basically go back to the beginning and it would get nowhere.

Emily and Ellen reported that they collaboratively brainstormed to plan their committee guidelines.

Well, we had a meeting. We sat down and we came up with all the ideas that we have done and that we thought people doing this job next year should do or would want to know how to do. . . . There are basically three different things that we did, like three main categories. . . . It’s all part of one job, Student of the Month, but . . . what committee members should be is different than how [they’re] going to do it and how [they’re] going to present it to the public.
After brainstorming together, Emily took the document home "to type it up," but that task wasn't completely clerical in nature because she didn't merely transcribe. Instead, Emily modeled the guidelines after her summer job description as a Bexley Public Pool lifeguard. She reported that this format would be easy for new committee members to follow.

I know [our document] kind of resembles the manual we get for the pool . . . [which explains] life guard duty and all the things that you're supposed to do in the course of your duties and in case of an emergency. . . . I guess I used numbers [for all the different items in each of the three sections] rather than letters because I thought there really are certain steps [in being on this committee]. When I think of steps, I think of first step, second step, third step rather than A, B, C.

Emily admitted she didn't take the time to proof the document carefully after she finished working--even though she reported that mechanical correctness was a criteria she used to judge other writers' work.

. . . I don't know whether that kind of thing matters to other people, but when I [see] a wrong word [or some other kind of mistake] there, it makes me feel like [the writer] is incompetent. . . . I'm not incompetent. I guess I'm just lazy. By the time I typed it out, I didn't feel like going back and checking it. . . . I was in a hurry to finish [the guidelines].

Emily didn't articulate why she was in such a hurry to finish the guidelines, but I speculate it was closely related to the timing of the project during the final week of classes at the end of second semester. As
graduating seniors in 1993, the girls' exams were automatically waived by a school policy, but both girls would have been busy with graduation plans. Being in a hurry, however, doesn't explain Emily's double standard in evaluating others' work--but not her own--in terms of mechanical correctness, but Horn documented a similar double standard in a study of personnel administrators' responses regarding the importance of correctness in application documents. Horn reported that many respondents who said mechanical correctness was an important criterion in evaluating others' work wrote marginal comments including grammar and usage mistakes. Similarly, I reported in a case study that a hospital nurse said she believed mechanical correctness in documents was important in screening job applicants, even though she had "missed" mistakes on the letter submitted by the person offered a job (Brockman "Mechanical Correctness"). Emily said she could justify her mechanical mistakes in terms of audience: she doubted students elected to the committee for the following year wouldn't notice the mistakes, so what difference did a few mistakes really make?

Although Emily and Ellen took care in the planning and creating their document and believed it would be useful for future committee members, they down played
their work simply because the document format was so
straightforward.

[With this kind of document] you . . . have an
outline, something you don't need any real
creativity to do. . . . You put it all down on
paper . . . in a logical order, and . . . it will
make sense to most people . . . People generally
look at it and know what you're talking about.

Fran: Writing a Monthly Newsletter for Church
Youth Group Members

Fran reported the Lutheran Youth Organization (LYO)
in Bexley, Ohio was one of hundreds of Lutheran youth
groups located across America. Each year, the group
elected a president, vice-president, secretary, and
treasurer. These officers, combined with one of the
church pastors and a youth advisory board comprised of
parents and other interested adults, were the governing
body of the organization. Throughout the year, Fran's
chapter of LYO kept busy with a variety of primarily
social activities, everything from white water rafting
to weekend retreats.

In addition to these social activities, Fran
reported that LYO members played a more serious role in
the life of the church, especially for "lapsed" parish
families. Fran agreed with the adults active in LYO who
argue that if high school-age children become active LYO
members, they might inspire their parents to become active parish members once again. In addition, LYO members participated in Sunday worship services by being ushers, readers, and even organists. They fulfilled these responsibilities regularly as opposed to once a year at a "Youth Sunday" service, an option which, church officials believe, would trivialize youth involvement in the church.

For the 1991-92 school year, Fran was elected by her peers as LYO President, an office with responsibilities including overseeing youth advisory sessions where group activities were planned and then informing members about those plans so they would be more likely to participate. From experience in LYO, Fran knew telephoning members would be far too time-consuming, and so in order to carry out her responsibilities as efficiently as possible, she continued with an LYO tradition, writing monthly newsletters to club members (see Appendices F1 and F2).

Fran described her rhetorical task as primarily inscription.

I attend the advisory meetings and then organize the information that was discussed. I obviously know how to write a letter and it seems logical to organize the events within the letter in chronological order. That way, people can go directly to their calendars and mark down events, month by month, straight from the letter.
In spite of her ease in organizing the documents, Fran gave special attention to the humorous tone of her writing. She was convinced her editorial side comments, typically found in parentheses throughout the newsletters, were what made her writing so funny.

The jokes are often private ones written with specific people in mind, but I want everyone to think the letters are funny, and so after finishing each newsletter, I ask my younger sister[,] a new member of LYO that year[,] to read it aloud. If she laughs in all the right places, I know I'm on track. If not, I revise.

Fran's comments reveal an effective revision strategy which helped her to adapt for multiple audiences, even though she never used that term. Given the size of LYO during Fran's tenure as president, it is understandable she would be better friends with some members than others. Even so, she believed all her audience members, even those she didn't know well, should find humor in the newsletter. By asking her sister to read her documents, Fran had a perfect front-line audience member. As a new LYO member, Fran's younger sister wasn't part of the club's inner circle, and so she wasn't "in" on any of the private jokes.

In addition to her humor, Fran reported another hallmark of Fran's newsletter writing style was her informal, conversational tone. She believed this informality, though inappropriate for other writing
tasks, was perfect for the newsletter by virtue of her audience. After all, it was comprised primarily of teenagers approximately her own age who would think Fran "was crazy" if she used formal language. Luckily for Fran, adult audience members--Fran's mother, for example, who helped proof the newsletter for grammar and usage, and Pastor Dain, who made sure the newsletter was copied and distributed--found Fran's conversational tone appropriate too.

Even as a high school student, Fran considered herself an effective writer. That belief came, in part, from what she perceived was an especially successful BHS writing course (one I had taught) during her junior year. In addition, one of her essays from class, a personal narrative recreating her anxious feelings just before playing her first solo at a church service, was published in a national magazine called The American Organist. Of all her writing, though, Fran took greatest pleasure in her LYO newsletter:

The writing I do for LYO really matters. There are real people reading it, and so there is a real reason for writing. It's weird, but all that makes it easier for me to write.
Gregory: Writing an Application Letter for a Research Apprenticeship at a Hospital

Gregory learned about The Minority High School Student Research Apprentice Program at a local hospital during the 1991-92 school year from his chemistry teacher who recommended he apply by virtue of his both science grades and Hispanic background. By requesting information explaining the program, Gregory learned it was established to encourage minority students to pursue careers in biomedical research and health-related professions. For the summer of 1992, sixteen positions were available in the following eleven fields:

- Ophthalmology
- Pediatrics
- Cytogenetics
- Neurosurgery
- Neonatology
- Adolescent Health
- Hematology
- Maternal-Child Health
- Dentistry
- Gastroenterology
- Nursing Research

Regardless of field or specific study, research apprentices work roughly 40 hours weekly from June to August for $5.00 an hour or a total of $1600 per summer.

Although Gregory said being a research apprentice interested him because he wanted "a unique summer job," he felt tension in applying because he believed doing so was at least partially unethical.

[First], when I see the word, "minority," . . . I feel like I'm riding a bandwagon. . . . [Next,] I have to basically say [in my application] I am really interested in [pursuing a career] in research or science so that they think they are investing something in me. . . . One other thing.
It said when you (apply,) . . . also be sure to mention, you know, your needs, sort of like poverty, no home, and things like that so that you can be prioritized. . . . That's when my [conscience] kicks in. You know, where I think . . . isn't there somebody . . . it would help more than it would help me? . . . [I know] it's relative [because] . . . I need this job. I'm not denying that fact, but how much do I need it?

In spite of his reservations, Gregory decided to apply. As part of the selection process, he needed to submit an application form, a school transcript, two letters of recommendation from teachers, and a two-page, double-spaced essay explaining why he wanted to work in a research lab. Although he followed the instructions regarding the application form, school transcriptions, and letters of recommendation, Gregory didn't write the required essay for his application file. Instead, he submitted a formal application letter. In choosing to write a letter addressed specifically to the director of the program (see Appendix G), Gregory showed his ability to take authority over the rhetorical task at hand.

[I wrote a letter] to be more focused [as opposed to writing about] the already blah topic of why I wanted to be a research apprentice. . . . [By stating] Dear Dr. [Jensont], . . . anybody reading . . . would know that I was focusing on Dr. [Jensont], so anything that I had written in the document . . . would be accounted for.

Although Gregory's comment suggests writing a letter was his strategy for "focusing" in response to a poor writing prompt, I speculate much more is taking
place in terms of audience. After all, with minor revision to his letter, Gregory could have written an essay with Dr. Jensont in mind, but he didn't. Writing to Dr. Jensont as a real-world, or "addressed," audience (Ede and Lunsford, "Audience Addressed/Audience Invoked") was Gregory's way of accounting for multiple audiences, even though he never used that phrase. By addressing specifically Dr. Jensont, Gregory limits his audience for his own purposes as a writer but also for the benefit of any other potential audience members.

Even with an addressed audience, however, Gregory struggled writing the application letter because of his religious background.

[I] had a hard time writing about my qualifications and why I deserved this position because of my background. I'm a Catholic, a recovering Catholic, and part of my upbringing was to feel that you aren't worthy because being proud is an offense. [Now] I know it's not a sin[, but] that [was] one of the things I internalized when I was five years old.

Even if Gregory had possessed the rhetorical strategies and skills to make his paper less "I" centered, he would have probably still been uncomfortable writing the application letter because of its inherent purpose. He simply didn't like explaining why he--among all the other candidates--would be the best person for a position because he couldn't help believe that doing so somehow contradicted his religious training.
Nevertheless, Gregory understood the purpose of his application letter and was highly cognizant, too, of his desire for success. In my interview with him, he made that fact very clear—perhaps paradoxically given his initial ethical and religious concerns.

-Do you want this job? ... Do you want the final outcome of this [your application letter] to be that you are offered a job?

-Yes.

-Will you feel guilty if you get it?

-No.

-At that point, you won't feel guilty?

-No. [Dr. Jensont must be] a fairly intelligent man ... [and so] I ... trust his judgement.

Gregory eventually produced a two-page, double-spaced application letter which included an indented list of his science grades, mentioned a working knowledge of three different languages, and highlighted his unusual learning experiences, including his position as a nanny in the home of a single mother with three children, one of whom was autistic. After interviewing with a researcher "working with families of a child with spina bifida, developing bowel control, teaching self-catheterization, and learning how the family copes," Gregory reported the interviewer was especially impressed with his experience as a nanny because it showed an ability to work with "special needs" children.
After being offered the position, Gregory explained what role he perceived the letter played in the application process. His comments strongly suggest he perceived his document as being merely a first step in obtaining the research apprentice position. Even so, he judged the document as successful because it had been instrumental in gaining an interview.

... It opened the door. Sort of like you stuck your foot in the door before it could close just to keep it open. What opened the whole door for me was the interview.
CHAPTER III
REPLACING THE SELF-MOTIVATED/SCHOOL-SPONSORED
DICHTOMY WITH A CONTINUUM

The snapshots, which depict adolescents writing business communication, provide alternate images of adolescents, ones quite different than the more common images of them writing self-motivated creative projects or school-sponsored academic essays (Applebee, Britton, Emig). Though business communication differs from "creative" writing and academic prose in important ways, I don't advocate introducing business communication as a third--and separate--category of adolescent writing. I propose instead placing business communication, along with all adolescent writing, on a self-initiated/other-initiated continuum whose middle section is determined by the rhetorical context in which writers and their documents are found.

Although the label, "self-initiated," to describe one end of the continuum is an obvious choice, "other-initiated" may appear too general, but "school-sponsored," which Emig, Britton, and Applebee used to describe documents in their studies, simply doesn't apply to the documents examined in this study. Although

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some derivation of Gere's label, "extracurriculum composition," (75) may seem promising given my subjects' participation in the extracurricular activities which, in fact, prompted their work, the label would ultimately be confusing in light of Gere's study: the writing processes and products of "nonacademic" writing groups most of whose members create "self-motivated" documents. Moreover, as Miller notes in a response to Gere's use of the label, "... terms[, like 'extracurricular,'] 'unmarried' and 'non-Western culture,' ... imply that their opposites ... [are] privileged" (106). As a label, "other-initiated" has the advantages of appearing bias-free and of being general enough to describe the reasons students are explicitly asked or tacitly expected to write. Because the seven snapshots found in Chapter Two of this study represent neither end of the continuum, they illustrate a wide and often complex range.

Arranging the Documents on the Continuum

Of all the documents examined in this chapter, Bram's persuasive cover letter regarding his English paper and Dana's follow-up letter for the Environmental Club are nearest the self-initiated end of the continuum
because no one explicitly asked or tacitly expected them to write. Instead, both adolescents wrote in response to pressure they placed upon themselves. Bram had internalized the value his school and community placed upon grades, and so he wrote because he felt pressured to raise his grades in his junior-level English class. Similarly, Dana had internalized an organizational norm for the Environmental Club—that each officer should be actively involved in a specific club task—and so she wrote the follow-up letter out of concern that club members would otherwise perceive her as negligent. Even though Bram's and Dana's reasons for writing were not self-motivated in the manner a poem or short story might be written for the sake of art, both adolescents generated the idea of writing on their own. For this reason alone, their documents were more self-initiated than any of the others examined in this chapter.

Charlie's fund-raising letters for the summer work camps are next on the continuum. Like Bram and Dana, Charlie wasn't asked or expected to write. Unlike them, however, he did not generate the idea of writing. Instead, he volunteered for the task at a meeting where youth group members collaboratively decided to send the fund-raising letters. Although Charlie's role as president may have influenced him, I speculate two other
factors made an equally great or even greater impact in his decision to volunteer. First, Charlie reported he had always been a self-appointed leader and spokesperson among members—even as a new member before assuming an official office—and so volunteering to write the letters seems consistent with his own pattern of behavior for this particular organization. Perhaps even more significant, as a graduating senior, Charlie was the 1994 recipient of a $1000 scholarship offered by the National Association of Fund Raising Executives; upon college graduation in 1999, he said he hopes to work for a charitable organization, such as United Way or Habitat for Humanity. Even if Charlie later pursues another career path, he still volunteered to write the fund-raising letters because the task interested him at the time.

Fran's newsletters for LYO members and Dana's letter introducing the new recycling program to BHS faculty follow Charlie's fund-raising letters on the continuum. Like Charlie, Dana volunteered to write at a meeting. Unlike him, volunteering to write was an obvious extension of her elected position due to the letter's topic, the recycling program. As Vice President for Internal Affairs, Dana's primary function was administering BHS recycling, and so as a result of
her elected position, she had little choice, even though no one specifically asked her to write. No one asked Fran to write either. She began sending newsletters because previous LYO presidents had sent them for years, and so an organizational norm was firmly in place when Fran assumed office. This organizational norm tacitly obligated her to write.

In one respect, then, Fran's newsletters are inherently different from all the other documents examined so far in this chapter, none of which were created in response to a precedent set by previous writers. In another way, however, Fran's newsletters have a similar quality to that of Bram's cover letter and Dana's follow-up letter. Fran chose to write a newsletter each month, which, according to her mother who was an LYO youth advisor, was a departure from the norm of past presidents who wrote only once every six to nine weeks. Although it's impossible to predict if Fran would have generated the idea of writing the newsletter on her own, her work has a self-initiated quality because of the frequency with which she opted to write.

The next document on the continuum is the committee guidelines by Emily and Ellen. Unlike any document mentioned in this section, the guidelines were written in response to an explicit request. As a personal
favor, the girls' NHS advisor informally asked them to write. What keeps this document from being the most other-initiated in this chapter is its timing: after Emily and Ellen had posted the Student of the Month for June. In contrast to every other writer in this study, Emily and Ellen wrote their document after completing their responsibilities, and so the rhetorical task was not mandatory—particularly given their graduating senior status.

Adam's college application essay and Gregory's apprenticeship application letter are the last two documents on the continuum, though the rhetorical contexts for both documents are complicated by the circumstances of each writer. One might argue, for example, that Adam's essay has a self-initiated quality because he wrote as a result of applying to college or, at the very least, to The University of Michigan, his "reach" school. Similarly, Gregory applied for a research apprenticeship when he could have applied for a fast food position or some other summer job requiring only an application form. Nevertheless, both documents were generated in response to explicit and formal demands which could not be refused if the boys wanted to achieve their goals. That required aspect of the request—in contrast to, for example, the more informal
request made of Emily and Ellen--moves Adam's college essay and Gregory's application letter towards the other-initiated end of the continuum.

Implications of the Continuum

Most important, the continuum provides evidence that the mutually exclusive categories, "self-motivated" and "school-sponsored," limit our understanding of adolescent writing as a whole. Like adults, adolescents write in response to a variety of reasons which can't be accurately or fully understood if associated with one of only two labels. After all, Charlie's fund-raising letters were self-initiated, but not to the degree to which Dana's follow-up letter for the Environmental Club was. Similarly, Fran was expected to write newsletters for her youth group but was not as obligated to do so as were Adam and Gregory if they wished to receive, respectively, university admission and the research apprenticeship.

The question remains, however, what predictive power the continuum can provide regarding whether adolescents become engaged in their work. Before answering that question, however, it's necessary first to determine what aspect(s) of writers' processes and
products constitute evidence of writer engagement.

Emig argued that certain composing behaviors (pre-writing and planning, number and length of pauses during writing, and document reformulation) provided that evidence, and the snapshots in this study reinforce her findings—even though the subjects' accounts of their composing are retrospective in nature. Consider, for example, Adam's "pregnant pause" for his college application, Emily and Ellen's planning session for their committee guidelines, Fran's use of a second reader for her newsletters, and Gregory's inner-struggle with genre constraints of his application letter: these four composing behaviors provide evidence of engagement while, in contrast, Bram's and Dana's single drafting of, respectively, his cover letter and her follow-up letter ostensibly without any rhetorical planning before composing provide evidence of writer disengagement.

The snapshots in this study, however, also extend Emig's findings by suggesting that composing behavior isn't the only viable source of evidence for writer engagement: written discourse can be too. Twenty years ago, Britton argued similarly but with limitations he, himself, acknowledged.

This quality of involvement [,or engagement,] was distinguishable in writing which permitted expressive uses of language or was in the poetic mode, but in other kinds of writing the conventions
governing . . . school writing often made it impossible to distinguish between the perfunctory and the involved. (7-8).

Unlike the writing samples Britton studied, none of the documents examined in this project readily permitted expressive uses of language in the poetic sense of the word. Nevertheless, some exhibited strong textual evidence of writer engagement. Adam's two vastly different versions of his college essay provide evidence of engagement because, combined, they show how he reenvisioned his writing task during composing. Emily and Ellen's guidelines, which physically resemble a job description from the pool, show the writers' willingness to move outside their personal repertoire of rhetorical strategies and experiment with new organizational patterns. Fran's attempts at humor in her newsletters suggest she was engaged because being funny was "above and beyond" what was rhetorically required, while Gregory's discourse form--a letter rather than the requested essay--provides evidence of his engagement because it shows how he manipulated the writing task to make it his own.

The snapshots in this study suggest, then, that evidence for writing engagement comes in two forms: composing behaviors, including planning and revising
during compositing, and textual evidence, which varies from writer to writer and from task to task.

Based upon research from the 70s and early 80s, one would expect students creating documents located nearer the self-initiated end of the continuum to be more engaged with their writing than students creating documents near the other-initiated end, but that wasn't the case with the eight writers examined in this chapter. Beginning at the self-initiated end of the continuum with Bram's cover letter to his English teacher and Dana's follow-up letter for the Environmental Club, both writers report they spent little time, thought, or energy in planning or creating their documents. Adam and Gregory, however, whose college essay and application letter are located nearer the other-initiated end of the continuum, each participated in extensive planning activities before creating their documents and then voluntarily wrote at least four drafts afterward over a period of roughly three weeks.

The middle section of the continuum also refutes previous research about student engagement. Emily and Ellen's guidelines, for example, which were generated in response to a request, were crafted with care. They were based upon collaboratively analyzing their full,
year-long experience as committee members and applying the format of Emily's job description for her part-time job to their document. Similarly, Fran's newsletters, a requirement of her elected position, were labors of love. Regardless of how straightforward the rhetorical task seemed to her, she spent hours first taking notes and then transforming her notes into newsletters. Even Dana, who said she wrote the letter introducing the new officers to faculty members very quickly, participated in a collaborative brainstorming session to generate ideas for the letter in the first place and then opted--based upon organizational norms--not to confirm the document with the other officers.

All these examples might suggest BHS students are more engaged with other-initiated rhetorical tasks than self-initiated ones (Dana's comment about revising class assignments would further this argument), but that assertion would misrepresent the picture because this chapter focuses on only eight writers--and the results could easily shift by simply adding a few more items to the continuum. Avi Porterman's letter to his boss or Alice Warren's ASL dictionary mentioned in the "Background for the Study" found in Chapter One, for instance, are examples of self-initiated documents not unlike those written by Bram and Dana. Yet, Avi's and
Alice's documents were time-consuming projects written with care and attention. Avi conferenced with me about audience analysis and document purpose before writing at least three different drafts, and Alice's document was the culmination of a strong personal commitment to ASL and then a culling and compilation of at least a dozen relevant ASL sources. Nearer the opposite, or other-initiated, end of the continuum, one could add the thank-you notes from the Holocaust Remembrance Committee (also mentioned in Chapter One). Unlike Gregory's apprenticeship application letter or Adam's college application essay, the thank-you notes, which were formally requested more than twice by an advisor, were nearly forgotten by committee members and then hastily written.

Even with an infinite number of documents included, however, the continuum theoretically doesn't have the predictive power to determine writer engagement for two reasons. First, placement on the continuum is not absolute. In spite of the rationale in this chapter to justify document placements, the contexts for writer(s) and document(s) are rich, complex, and open for alternate interpretations. One might argue that Adam's application essay is more accurately labeled "self-initiated" because he chose to apply to a "reach school"
when he didn't have to do so or that Bram's cover letter has an "other-initiated" quality because his desire for high grades can be traced to external forces in his life. That's not to suggest that "anything goes," that an infinite range of continuum placement possibilities exist for the documents examined in this chapter. Nevertheless, other researchers examining the same documents in this study might advocate different arrangements than I propose here.

Even if the continuum placements were absolute, assuming they inherently or automatically influence writer engagement privileges one rhetorical variable—in this case, impetus for writing—over all others. Though Emig advocated that premise twenty-five years ago, conventional wisdom today indicates written documents are the culmination of a plethora of variables, any one—or, more likely, any combination—of which could greatly influence writer engagement. That's not to say the impetus for writing couldn't be an important variable. Clearly, it could. But, as I mentioned early in the chapter, many different rhetorical issues emerge from the snapshots, and continua which overlap and intersect, could be created for each and every one. The snapshots could be arranged, for example, on a continuum showing the extent to which the writing is singular or
collaborative in nature. That continuum could be complicated by considering it in light of continuums highlighting document genre, writer purpose, or audience status. And the list goes on and on and on. When so many different variables emerge from the snapshots, assuming one—whether it's impetus for writing, writer status, document purpose, etc.—is inherently the most important variable for predicting writer engagement would at best be a biased viewpoint.

Beyond the Continuum:
Speculating about Writer Engagement

Because a direct relationship doesn't theoretically exist between impetus for writing and writer engagement, speculating why individual writers approached their tasks in different ways seems useful and important.

First of all, Adam and Gregory must have become engaged in their writing at least in part because the stakes were so high. It must not have mattered, consequently, that the documents were initiated by others; what mattered were the writers' very ambitious, even potentially unobtainable, goals combined with the belief that their documents would make a difference in achieving their goals. Adam predicted graduating seniors with 4.0s "cums" and stellar SATs didn't need
excellent application essays to be accepted—but he did, so he took his writing seriously. Gregory's position varied slightly. Although he believed his application packet would be competitive to hiring officials, he also speculated a poorly written application letter would hurt his chances at being offered an apprenticeship, and he reported this apprenticeship—in terms of salary, overall summer job satisfaction, and potential references for the future—meant too much for him not to commit wholly to the application process. Gregory and Adam, then, both assumed the quality of their prose could help to determine the then unclear outcome of their applications.

In contrast, the stakes for other writers weren't as high. Take Dana, for example, in the writing of her follow-up letter to faculty members regarding the recycling program. Her goal was providing evidence she was acting responsibly as an Environmental Club officer. Though the document purpose was important, by simply distributing her letter to faculty members, Dana must have believed her purpose would be immediately achieved. In fact, she didn't even need to make a copy for the club's advisor because, as a BHS science teacher, he was already on Dana's mailing list.
A rival hypothesis explaining why Dana didn't engage takes into account her task which was, by its nature, rhetorically more simple than the tasks tackled by Adam and Gregory. Hairston, theorizing that "different products require different processes" ("Different Products" 442), would argue that Dana didn't need to engage because her recycling letters have characteristics associated with the first two of Hairston's document types--"Class I" documents, such as brief notes or short memos on simple matters to familiar audiences, and "Class II" documents, such as "extended, relatively complex writing that requires the writer's attention but . . . whose content can be retrieved from memory" (444). In contrast, Hairston would argue that Adam and Gregory needed to engage, respectively, in their college application essay and apprenticeship application letter because they were both Class III documents which are "extended, reflective writing in which the writer discovers much of his or her thought during the writing process" (445).

Like Dana, other writers had rhetorical advantages in writing their documents. More specifically, Emily and Ellen had a stored, or internalized, pattern of organization based upon a pool manual which made their committee guidelines relatively easy to write. In a
similar way, Fran used a well-known pattern of organization—chronological order—in writing her LYO newsletters. Even Gregory, who struggled with the genre constraints associated with application letters, experienced no difficulty organizing the information in his document perhaps as a result of a stored pattern of organizational taught and known at BHS as "descending order of importance."

The intrinsic value placed upon documents could have also influenced writers' approaches. Perhaps more than any other adolescent depicted in the snapshots, for example, Fran valued her newsletters. To her, they were more than simply effective vehicles for informing club members about upcoming events. They were a means of self-expression. In contrast, other writers valued different aspects of the rhetorical tasks than their documents. Charlie, for example, didn't take great pride in his fund-raising letters for their own sake because he predicted audience members would be sufficiently "wowed" by the mere thought of a high school boy organizing a fund-raising campaign for a summer work camp. Consequently, he viewed the actual letter soliciting funds as secondary. That's not to suggest Charlie didn't care about his rhetorical task. It simply means he was more interested in raising money
than writing letters. Gregory also downplayed the importance of his application letter but for a different reason than Charlie did. Gregory placed his document in the larger context of the entire application process. Though he recognized that, as Locker argues, "the purpose of a job application letter is to get an interview (Business and Administrative Communication 552), he still believed his letter's significance paled in relation to his interview. One can only speculate how his beliefs might have changed had he not been granted an interview.

Document level of formality might also have influenced writers' approaches to their work. Both Bram and Dana, for example, perceived their documents as being very informal but for different reasons. Dana reported her letters were informal because they weren't graded by a teacher, and Bram attributed his informality to document format (a note written in pencil and clipped to his paper). Though their purposes in writing negate the notion that Bram and Dana equated "informal" with "unimportant," both writers said the informal quality of their writing justified generating single drafts of their work. Though that rationale seems realistic for Bram, Dana's embarrassed demeanor suggested to me she was rationalizing--perhaps as a result of my role as BHS
writing teacher. Fran also perceived her newsletters as informal because her primary audience members were peers. In contrast to Bram and Dana, however, Fran's informality provided her with the freedom literally to play rhetorically with her newsletters--and revision work seemed to be a happy extension of the work.

Gregory and Adam, in contrast, viewed their documents as formal for two reasons. First, as I previously mentioned, each boy wrote as part of a formal selection process in which success was uncertain. Equally as important, however, the writer/reader relationship for each of their documents was elusive. Unlike Bram and Dana, who knew their teachers from daily interactions both inside and outside of the classroom, Gregory and Adam were writing as strangers to strangers, ones wielding a great deal of power. The formal nature of Adam's college essay and Gregory's application letter must have influenced them to engage in their writing.

Time constraints--either those imposed by others or those self-inflicted due to procrastination--could also help to explain why some writers didn't engage in their documents. Dana's first letter introducing the recycling program had to be distributed on the very first day of school because the Environmental Club officers wanted to establish a change in program and
leadership from the outset of the new academic school year. To have distributed the letter after the first day of school would have defeated their purpose—or, at least, greatly thwarted their efforts—of appearing organized and "on the ball." Bram did not have much time to write his cover letter either. It's safe to speculate he decided to write the note after completing the final draft of his paper the night before the assignment was due. Although Charlie had time to write his fund-raising letters, he opted for generic letters, one for men and one for women, because he reported personalizing the letters by including specific names and addresses would have been too time consuming. Emily and Ellen said they, too, were pressed for time, especially during the proofreading—even though the guidelines had been requested four months previously!

Though lack of time can legitimately keep students from becoming engaged (Emig), it might also be nothing more than a writer's excuse brought about by "cognitive dissonance, . . . [a] remarkably simple [theory]"

Elliot Aronson explains in The Social Animal:

"Cognitive dissonance" is a state of tension that occurs whenever an individual simultaneously holds two cognitions (ideas, attitudes, beliefs, opinions) that are psychologically inconsistent . . . How do we reduce cognitive dissonance? By changing one or both cognitions in such a way so as to render them more compatible (more consonant) with each other, or by adding new cognitions that
help bridge the gap between the original cognitions. (92-3)

Applying this theory to the writing processes and products of, for example, the environmental club letters, "straight 'A'" student Dana could have two disparate beliefs: "I am a good writer" and "My letters aren't 'A' quality." To "bridge the gap" between these dissonant ideas, Dana could add a "new cognition," that she didn't have the time to do a good job. The same theory could explain Emily and Ellen's guidelines. Their cognitions, "Writers who make usage mistakes are incompetent" and "Our document has usage mistakes," become more consonant by saying they were in too much of a hurry to proofread.

Other variables than those listed in this section could have influenced the extent to which the writers in this chapter became engaged in their documents. To understand more fully those variables—and, equally important, to recognize how they might have been complicated by other rhetorical variables—a case study is necessary.
CHAPTER IV
WRITING A LETTER PROPOSING A SCHOOL-SPONSORED SKI TRIP

This case study was accessible as a result of my teaching position at BHS and my role there as a ski club chaperone beginning in the 1989-90. That year, I learned three members who were friends---Heath, Irv, and Jack---wanted to "ski the bumps" in Colorado during spring break of 1993-94, but none of their parents would allow an unchaperoned trip. Because they said a school-sponsored ski trip was a possibility, I asked if they were willing to participate in this study. In exchange for observing, taping, and interviewing the boys as they proposed the trip to Mr. Gratner, the school principal, I would be a trip chaperone, a responsibility which entailed organizing the financial/travel arrangements for the trip, "giving up" my spring break during the 1993-94 school year, and being legally responsible for a group of adolescents as they skied. A tacit assumption among all teachers willing to chaperone school-sponsored BHS trips seems relevant: though teachers aren't paid for their time, most expenses associated with the trip, including entrance fees/tickets, meals, lodging, and
transportation, are always covered. We all agreed, and the work began.

An Overview of the Composing Process

Unlike the snapshots in Chapter Two, this chapter is not based upon only discourse-based interviews but also upon my observations and transcribed audio-tapes of the boys as they worked during each writing session. Consequently, the images of Heath, Irv, and Jack are richer and more complex than the Chapter Two snapshots, making it possible to understand more completely the boys' writing process and product.

This chapter is also different from the snapshots in Chapter Two because my role places me more squarely "in the picture." Like Vincent Brown in his study at a research company where he worked as a writer, I felt obligated to my subjects. Consequently, I mentioned twice information I knew as a BHS faculty member regarding other school-sponsored trips—and how that information might influence responses to the proposed ski trip, though I didn't force the issue for the writing of the proposal. At times, too, I admit the laughter among the boys was "catchy," and I could not help joining them. My primary purpose, however, was to
observe. Although I didn't assume—as Odell, Goswami, and Herrington did in their study of how job status influenced the rhetorical choices of social service workers in a state agency—that my subjects were necessarily "correct" in all matters pertaining to their writing processes and products ("Studying Writing"), I did tell Heath, Irv, and Jack that my task as researcher was NOT to critique their work but to learn from it.

The Context for the Ski Trip Proposal

The school's past practice of offering a wide range of trips to students made a school-sponsored trip to Colorado within the realm of possibility.

First, individual departments sponsor major trips during spring break each year. The Science Department, for example, offers a trip to Andros Island in the Bahamas to study marine life, and the Foreign Language Department augments its curriculum with trips on alternating years to Madrid and Paris. In the 1993-94 school year, the English Department sponsored its first trip to study theater in London, an excursion which, pending administrative approval, would be offered again every other year.

Second, shorter excursions enhancing the curriculum also take place. Students enrolled in a senior-level
humanities class, for example, travel to Pittsburgh each semester to visit Frank Lloyd Wright's *Falling Water*, and marching band members typically play in the half-time performances and parades for football bowl games every other year. During the 1994-95 school year, students selected for Vocal Ensemble, the most advanced BHS choir, spent a weekend in New York City to perform with other high school groups nationwide at Carnegie Hall.

The BHS Ski Club offers school-sponsored trips too. Immediately following winter break each year, for example, club members participate on six consecutive Friday-night trips to Clear Fork Mountain, a ski resort located one and a half hours north of Bexley, and a group of BHS skiers travel annually to Seven Springs, a ski resort located in Champion, Pennsylvania, on a school-sponsored weekend in February.

In spite of obvious differences among the trips offered to BHS students, Heath, Irv, and Jack perceived them all as basically the same, each primarily social in nature. Although their view was certainly skewed, it reflected a not-completely inaccurate understanding of the trips, even the major ones offered during spring break. While each of those trips is curriculum-driven because students receive class credit for participating,
most BHS students perceive them primarily as vacations because they provide the chance for international travel with friends instead of family. Even the teachers organizing the trips know they must be fun for students. Otherwise, nobody would participate. Consequently, even a modicum of learning about marine life or the French language, as examples, might seem like nothing more than a bogus excuse for a school-sponsored trip, particularly to students like Heath, Irv, and Jack who had never participated on a spring break trip.

Perhaps not surprisingly, then, the boys merely laughed over what an academic justification could be for their proposal when the topic spontaneously arose during conversation. Jack suggested that trip participants conduct experiments slope-side regarding temperature or measure their own velocities on ski runs. As an alternative to scientific studies, he suggested that perhaps participants could write poetry about nature on the chair lift as they rode up a scenic mountain pass. Irv said a trip Out West would be a good opportunity to study American history, perhaps thinking about the Westward Expansion during the 19th Century.

Their playfulness shows the boys placed school-sponsored ski trips--both those already established and the one they were proposing--in the same category as the
departmental trips. Indeed, the fact that the boys didn't consider aligning their proposed trip with a BHS department strongly suggests what little emphasis they believed was placed on curriculum for the spring break trips. Right or wrong, this impression gave Heath, Irv, and Jack such great confidence in their proposal that they were unable to imagine a "good reason" why Mr. Gratner would reject it.

Writing the Ski Trip Proposal

From beginning to end, writing the proposal took seven BHS school-lunch-hour sessions, each consisting of fifty-five minutes:

March 8 - Initial Meeting
March 9 - Writing the Survey
March 10 - Finishing/Typing/Distributing the Survey
March 18 - Writing the Proposal
March 19 - Finishing the Proposal
April 5 - Revising the Proposal
April 6 - Revising/Submitting the Proposal

This schedule, however, provides a falsely linear impression of the boys' work when engaged writing is more accurately described as recursive (Emig; Perl; Planko; Sommers, "Revision Strategies"). As an example, the playful talk mentioned previously didn't occur in the initial meeting where one might predict it would have taken place or even, for that matter, during a single session. Instead, the boys' bogus academic
options emerged naturally in two different sessions, one during the writing of the survey and the other during the writing of the proposal. As a further example of the boys' recursive writing process, two separate comments were made about changes to the survey during the 7th session, long after the results of the survey had been tabulated. To understand the boys' writing process, here is a closer examination of the individual sessions.

March 8. The "Colorado or Bust" Writing Team officially met for the first time on March 8, 1993, more than a year before their proposed ski trip would take place, if it were approved. I began that session by briefly mentioning the other trips currently being planned for Spring Break '94, indicating that if this trip were going to take place, this group would need to get started too. Then I left the negotiations to the boys, who readily took over. Heath spoke up first by suggesting the group begin proposing the trip with a school "hand-out or something," a phrase which Jack called "a survey." Without any discussion whatsoever, they all immediately agreed a survey was the best way to start the writing of the proposal.

That administrative decision, however, wasn't followed by the actual "pen and paper" activity of
writing the survey but instead a huge gab session primarily about how much fun they would have together, zipping through fresh powder on a snow-covered mountain in Colorado, instead of dodging morons from neighboring school districts on an ice-laden hill in Ohio. Irv, in particular, was vocal about how steep the "vertical drops" might be in Colorado and how "awesome" it would feel to "bomb a mountain." He went on at such length that Heath good naturedly told him it would feel like death because that was "what [Irv was] going to do, kill himself."

Although the boys tossed around a few ideas about the trip, most of them were rather impractical. Heath wondered, for example, if they could "ride piggy-back" with his older brother's university ski club because its members were traveling inexpensively to Vermont. In making the suggestion, Heath never considered the potential problems, especially those related to alcohol which could result from high school students traveling with college students. Irv suggested making reservations at two resorts, so if ski conditions were bad at one location, the group could cancel and take the second choice instead—apparently from Irv's perspective at no extra cost to the ski group.
Although the enthusiasm characterizing the March 8 session suggested all three boys enjoyed the session, they dismissed it as a waste of time when the first lunch bell rang, warning that their lunch hour was nearly over. In fact, Jack said they had "basically gotten nowhere," apparently because they had side-tracked themselves with all their friendly chatter. In spite of countless pre-writing activities included as part of their BHS writing assignments, the boys didn't recognize the rhetorical significance of their first session because they had nothing tangible, such as a fully-, or at least partially-, completed survey, to show for their time.

Nevertheless, the session served two purposes. First, the session reinforced the boys' commitment to organizing a school-sponsored ski trip and their strong "sense of group." Unlike, for example, Hillebrand's first-year students who wrote collaboratively (and resentfully) with strangers in a very large high school or Belanger and Greer's undergraduates who wrote collaboratively (and happily) in a university business writing class as a result of group-enhancing activities, Heath, Irv, and Jack came to the collaborative table as a trio, their "groupness" intact because of their friendship and years of taking classes together.
Second, the session provided the boys with a vehicle to articulate a belief in the "power of the pen," not unlike the "marked appreciation, and at times even reverence, for language and its power" among the subjects in Ede and Lunsford's snapshots (Singular Texts/Plural Authors 43). As Heath and Irv nodded in agreement, Jack speculated that an oral request to Mr. Gratner--either in an informal hallway encounter or a scheduled office meeting--about organizing the ski trip could prompt an immediate, face-to-face rejection, and that would be the end of the trip. Period. A written request in their view, however, couldn't prompt an immediate rejection because the writers would not be present to receive it. More important, even if Mr. Gratner wasn't initially delighted by the idea of a school-sponsored ski trip, he would surely recognize the boys' hard work in writing the proposal and, in turn, be impressed, perhaps enough to approve their proposal.

March 9-10. Perhaps because the boys were disappointed over the first session, but more likely because the first session had "primed" them, the boys' March 9-10 sessions were targeted more directly on writing the survey. Even so, the friendly chatter characterizing the first session continued. In fact, one could describe the majority of the sessions as one
rambling conversation. Although Question #1, for example, was a straight-forward issue to write (Are you interested in taking a big ski trip with the school?), Question #2 regarding ski resort location options prompted a mini-brainstorming session to determine which states offered "good" skiing. To assist with that brainstorm, the boys asked me where I had skied and I mentioned Michigan and Pennsylvania, adding my desire to ski in New Mexico. A southwestern ski resort location surprised the boys, and it prompted Jack's idea that they consider an "out-of-the-way," less popular--and less expensive--resort which, in turn, led to a question from Heath about the cost of the trip. Irv's response--that he refused to spend over $500--led to lengthy debate over fund-raising opportunities and, in turn, whether that should be an issue for the survey. Although in the end Jack said they "should probably tack on [the question about fund raising] at the end [of the survey]," the boys never finalized the geographical location question until the following session when they were typing. Though not every portion of the March 9-10 sessions jumped so drastically from topic to topic, a "give-and-take," "back-and-forth" style of talking characterized the writing of the entire survey.
The March 9-10 sessions served two purposes in writing the proposal for the ski trip. First, and perhaps most obviously, the sessions resulted in a survey (see Appendix H) which eventually yielded very positive results. Over 100 BHS students out of roughly 550 reported they were interested in a school-sponsored ski trip to a major resort during Spring Break '94. Though Heath, Irv, and Jack knew not all students responding "yes" would actually participate on the trip, the high interest fueled the boys' already-great confidence in writing the proposal. Equally important, the results of the survey (everything from preferred transportation mode and geographical location to willingness to fund raise) became the basis for the content of the proposal. In other words, the majority of the ski trip proposal simply reported survey results.

Second, creating the survey helped the boys find a work place conducive for writing the proposal. Though the March 8-9 sessions took place in a classroom, the need for a computer forced the boys to consider other location options for March 10, but that wasn't easy given their student status in the school. First, Jack suggested an administrative office where he worked as an "A.V. labbie" during study hall, but the collaborative nature of their work made that impractical. How could
they talk openly about their work in progress in an office belonging to someone else, especially if he were in the room at the same time? Another potential location was the computer lab, except for one "minor" detail: lunch. To accommodate their schedules, the boys needed to work during the school lunch hour, and school rules forbade food and drink consumption in the lab. As an interested observer with some clout, I agreed when Jack asked permission to work in The Write Place, the writing center at BHS which, though closed daily during lunch, is simply not used by students as a work area. As the boys pointed out, The Write Place offered the necessary privacy and, like the lab, a computer. An added advantage the boys didn't mention was a round table (reminiscent of Atwell's dining room table), large enough to accommodate their work materials and lunches but small enough for a feeling of intimacy. Though the boys attracted some attention (teachers walking past wondered "what this 'lunch bunch' [was] doing?") , the location was a good work environment for writing the proposal.

March 18-19. During the March 18-19 sessions, the boys wrote the first version of the proposal (see Appendix I). Though they had already completed a massive pre-writing activity in the writing and
distributing of the surveys, the boys still didn't begin the session by physically writing. Instead, they talked. First, they began orally counting the number of students who said they were interested in a school-sponsored ski trip, laughing over a substitute teacher wanting to participate and then disagreeing briefly over whether to include responses from surveys with no names in the designated blank for name. After Jack convinced Heath and Irv that any "yes" response was valid, Irv stopped counting to articulate two ideas. First, he proposed plotting the results of the survey on a graph, using columns or bars to reflect the students' grade level, where they wanted to ski, how they wanted to travel, and how much they were willing to spend. The other idea was calling a travel agent immediately to begin exploring discount rates for group travel. Before anyone had the chance to reject or accept Irv's ideas, Jack finished counting the surveys and announced nearly 100 BHS students had responded "yes." The conversation based upon Irv's ideas naturally faded when, immediately thereafter, Jack turned on the computer to begin the proposal.

Even then, the boys needed time to warm up.

Although Jack began typing "To Whom It May Concern" because "this way [Mr. Gratner] can take it to the Board
and it's not like we wrote it just to him," just referring to Mr. Gratner gave Irv a funny idea. He wondered about "start[ing] with something like, 'Dear Benjamin,'" a bogus suggestion made because the boys weren't on a first-name basis with their principal and because Mr. Gratner prefers his middle name, Skip, to his first name, Benjamin. What followed thereafter was a series of not malicious jokes about "The [Skipper]," as well as speculations regarding "why a person would prefer '[Skip]' over '[Benjamin].'" When Irv referred to Mr. Gratner as "The big man, the head cheese, [and the] top dog" of BHS, Heath momentarily put an end to the joking by asking, "Okay. What do we want to say?" Irv and Jack's responses, however, perpetuated the frivolity. In a "sing song" voice, Irv said, "In the ski club, people are interested in . . .," but before he could finish, Jack suggested beginning the proposal with an anecdote about "people skiing [with] hat[s] so they can't tell if you're bald or not" (Mr. Gratner is balding). The laughter was contagious. Shaking my head and smiling, I good-naturedly added that "any one of them could be bald one day" and then both Irv and Jack looked at Heath. Suddenly Jack said what apparently all three boys knew and were thinking. "Both of his grandfathers are bald," he reported to which
Heath added, "By the time they were thirty." When Jack pointed out Heath's already-receding hairline, though, he had gone too far. "Hey, hey, hey," Heath responded, "What are we going to say [in this proposal]?"

Shortly thereafter and over the March 18-19 sessions, the boys began to generate, line-by-line, the ski trip proposal. Jack asked Heath to take over the keyboard (the station he kept in the March 19 session), but the sentences were still generated as a group, typically with Heath or Jack tossing out a beginning phrase or clause of a sentence and then asking a clarifying question, ranging from word or sentence-level issues ("These surveys ... Is that apostrophe 's' or just 'iss'?" and "Something bothers [me. These two sentences in the introduction,] they don't go together") to larger, content matters ("Shall we tell [Mr. Gratner] what the survey says or just give him a copy of the survey?") whose answers helped to finish the sentence. Though Jack and Heath wrote most of the sentences, Irv also made comments, most of which he meant as jokes ("Instead of 'a freshman,' say 'a little frosh'" and "[Meet for lunch tomorrow? Where? At] Wendy's?"). Although Irv's few serious comments primarily reinforced what Heath or Jack had already said, the three worked together, hammering out issues, including as spelling,
word, phrase, and content choices, they might have struggled with individually. The boys' experience, then, reinforces Bruffee's contention: inexperienced writers can learn from each other ("Brooklyn").

The March 18-19 sessions established the content for the ski trip proposal. That content began with facts about the writers and respondents of the survey, continued with survey results (including information regarding the proposed trip), and concluded with a request that Mr. Gratner approve the trip. Missing from the proposal—and, for that matter, any discussion taking place on March 18-19—was information regarding how a school-sponsored ski trip to a major resort might affect the departmental trips also planned for Spring Break '94.

On two separate occasions, I warned Heath, Irv, and Jack that competition among the spring break trips might be an administrative problem. First, as previously noted, I alluded to the other trips being planned for Spring Break '94 at the opening of the March 8 session. Next, late in the session during the writing of the survey on March 10, I suggested that the boys include a question about student plans for other school-sponsored trips. Part of that suggestion—the only one of its kind in any of the seven writing sessions—included a
rationale for soliciting that information. More specifically, I said:

... there are only [so many kids] out of the entire student population ... [who] have the resources, the time, the energy, the interest, whatever, to take a big trip, and so if there are two trips offered—say London and Andros—well then people will flock to those. If there are three trips offered, well, then some of those people who would have gone to Andros [and] some of the people who would have gone to London will take [this] trip instead and maybe hurt those programs. ... We might want to know [how many students currently plan to participate in other trips because] Mr. Gratner might want to know that information.

Although the boys included a question regarding potential plans for other school-sponsored trips ("If this trip doesn't occur, are you planning on going on another school related function?"), never kept track of—or even mentioned—the various responses to that question when they were tabulating survey results. I speculate they either honestly forgot about the question or didn't perceive it as truly relevant, so sure they were that Mr. Gratner would approve their proposed ski trip.

April 5-6. During the April 5-6 sessions, I conducted discoursed-based interviews with a variation on the research methodology. Typically, discourse-based interviews are retrospective in nature; that is, the document being examined is a "fait accompli." For this case study, however, I created variations for each
sentence in the document while the document was still a work-in-progress. When the boys were ready to submit their letter to Mr. Gratner on March 19, I said that by participating first in the discourse-based interview (a phrase I explained to them), my study would be completed—and their ski trip proposal could potentially improve, making it even more persuasive than it already was.

Though the discourse-based interviews prompted revision work on the boys' part, their strong sense of document ownership greatly influenced the sessions. On April 5, for example, I began by generally asking about the boys' evaluation of their proposal solely as a means of leading into my interview questions, but Jack had his own agenda, and he took over the interview before I could even begin:

... it says everything we want it to, but ... it sounds like a 3rd grader wrote it... It says, OK "For the past two weeks, surveys were passed out to the students at Bexley, excluding the seniors," right? Well, then it says, "These surveys were written by three juniors and the surveys were directed toward the skiing enthusiasts in the school...". Well, maybe we should say "These surveys, one of which is included, were written by three juniors and were directed towards the skiing enthusiasts of the school" instead of repeating "survey" after "survey" and ... then [we could] just chop off the sentence, "We have included a copy of the survey" because that just sounds like it's been thrown in.
Jack had more to say about the 2nd paragraph too:

Give me a pen, guys]. Can I write on [your copy of the proposal, Mrs. Brockman?] . . . [It says] We are hoping to get a group together to go skiing over Spring Break 1994. Over 100 students have responded "yes" to our survey." Now if we cut . . . "For instance, [Bob Gratner] and [Violet Fuller]" sentence and then [wrote instead that] "Included are two randomly selected surveys with positive responses. . . "

Even when the discourse-based interview began and I provided the boys with sentence variations of their document, they continued to be very active. In one sentence variation I proposed, "see attachment" in parentheses was an option, but the boys rejected it, suggesting "see attached" as a better variation because the former "sound[ed] like there should be something . . . stuck on the letter." Without being prompted, they were cognizant, too, that a revision in one section of the proposal might require other changes. In addition, they rejected some introductory strategy variations on the grounds that the proposal would sound "like something a teacher wrote."

Nevertheless, the discourse-based interview prompted revision far beyond the word- and sentence-level, primarily by providing Heath, Irv, and Jack with rhetorical strategies they didn't use—or even know—for the first version of the ski trip proposal. First of all, the document became more visually appealing because
the boys liked the "professional look" a conventional business letter format gave their document when I showed them that rhetorical option. Next, the introduction became more reader-focused ("It gives [Mr. Gratner] a little more idea what we're interested in doing."), and, consequently, more substantive ("It's like a thesis statement. Now [Mr. Gratner will] know what we're going to write about"). The remaining paragraphs became more focused because the boys opted to combine two previously separated sections and re-order ideas.

Most important, the April 5-6 sessions provided Heath, Irv, and Jack with a final draft of their ski trip proposal (see Appendix J), one they signed and submitted to Mr. Gratner on April 7.

A Negative Response

Understanding why the ski trip was denied requires some background information.

In 1992, an English teacher's request to sponsor a trip to London for Spring Break '93 was denied by Mr. Gratner because two other school-sponsored trips—one to Andros Island and one to Paris—were already taking place. According to the teacher, Mr. Gratner feared there might not be enough students to support three school-sponsored trips. In response, the teacher
rewrote her proposal, suggesting that her trip take place instead during Spring Break '94. After it was accepted, however, she learned later that two other trips—another one to Andros Island and one to Madrid—were also being planned for 1994. In addition, she knew about the possibility of a ski trip being organized.

Because the teacher believed the principal had a double standard in determining whose trips were approved, she met with him to complain. In response, he suggested a committee comprised of interested faculty members form to determine a process for how school-sponsored trips should be assigned. When that committee met, however, it couldn't agree either on how to resolve the conflict over the 1994 spring break trips or on any kind of a rotation system for trips proposed in the future.

After much debate, the committee simply agreed upon a very liberal policy for monitoring school-sponsored trips. A "market system from that year on" was the only equitable to resolve the currently existing and any future conflicts. Rather than administrative approval, student interest would determine whether a trip actually took place. In that way, teachers and their proposed trips would compete with each other, but that wasn't perceived as a problem because the teachers all felt
certain their trips would be competitive among other departmental trips.

The policy, however, was complicated by the proposed ski trip to Colorado because the teachers serving on the committee predicted it would be so popular among students it would draw a disproportionate number of individuals interested in or financially capable of taking a school-sponsored trip. They predicted, too, that the proposed ski trip would "open the door" to other social trips, such as cruises, beach vacations, or Disney Land excursions, reminiscent of senior trips of previous decades, being offered during spring break. Given the school's mission, the committee decided the new policy should eliminate any spring break trip not augmenting a curriculum, so that departmental trips would not be jeopardized. In making this addendum to the policy, the committee members weren't, however, setting a precedent against all school-sponsored trips organized for fun. With the new policy, for example, the Friday-night ski trips and the weekend excursion to Pennsylvania could remain BHS traditions. Any other recreational trip would be approved too—as long as it didn't take place during spring break and, in turn, compete with the departmental trips.
The Writers' Evaluation of Their Document

After the faculty/administrative committee rejected the ski trip proposal, The "Colorado or Bust" Writing Team agreed to meet for one final lunch-hour session, but the boys made it clear from the beginning they didn't want to be interviewed. The friendly chatter and laughter characterizing their previous work sessions had been replaced with fidgeting and not-so-subtle glances at their watches. At one point, Heath even blurted out, "A year from now, you'll have your PhD, but we won't be skiing in Colorado."

Heath's accusatory comment reinforces what Kirsch and Ritchie argue: "Relations between researcher and participants will always retain the potential for misunderstandings, even exploitation—much like other human relationships do" (16). Though the boys weren't exploited, they may have felt manipulated by the research process—and I did feel guilty, enough so to apply on their behalf to a newly-established BAS memorial grant designed to fund "student adventures."

Though my grant proposal was unsuccessful (for reasons I still don't fully understand), I wrote in the hope of sending the boys as a trio on the school-sponsored ski weekend to Pennsylvania in 1993.
In spite of the boys' negative attitude during the vast majority of the final interview, they did ultimately evaluate their ski trip proposal in positive terms. Was that positive evaluation genuine or the result of cognitive dissonance? It's impossible to know for certain. Regardless, however, Jack (speaking on behalf of all three boys) stoically admitted,

When you think about it, the letter was successful. Even if we don't get to organize the ski trip, we were taken seriously. We were considered. When you think about it, the whole point of the letter was for them to consider the possibility of a trip. Just because it didn't go our way doesn't take that away.

Multiple Audiences and the Ski Trip Proposal

The ski trip proposal reinforces conventional wisdom in the field of business communication regarding multiple audiences. Although documents may be addressed to a specific person(s), they may be read and then acted upon by others never even mentioned. Locker places the the five kinds of multiple audiences in potentially overlapping categories:

1. The primary audience will decide whether to accept your recommendations and will act on the basis of your message. You must reach the primary audience to fulfill your purpose in any message.
2. The secondary audience may be asked to comment on your message or to implement your ideas after they've been approved.

3. The initial audience routes the message to other audiences. Sometimes the initial audience also assigns the message.

4. A gatekeeper has the power to stop your message instead of sending it on to other audiences. The gatekeeper therefore controls whether your message even gets to the primary audience. Sometimes the supervisor who assigns the message is also the gatekeeper; sometimes the gatekeeper is higher in the organization. In some cases, gatekeepers may exist outside of the organization.

5. A watchdog audience, though it does not have the power to stop the message and will not act directly on it, has political, social, or economic power. The watchdog pays close attention to the transaction between you and the primary audience and may base future actions on its evaluation of your message. (Business and Administrative Communication 58)

Using Locker's taxonomy, the writers thought Dr. Tippin, Superintendent of Schools, was their primary audience because they thought his position as top school administrator gave him the authority to make the final decision regarding the proposed trip. Mr. Gratner--to whom the document was addressed--was the gatekeeper from the boys' perspective because they believed he had the power to stop their proposal from ever reaching Dr. Tippin's desk if he rejected the idea of a school-sponsored ski trip. Assigning Mr. Gratner the gatekeeper role may incorrectly imply the writers believed he was not as important an audience member as
Dr. Tippin. As Locker notes, however, gatekeepers are always powerful, but Mr. Gratner was especially so because the writers believed that if he approved the proposal, Dr. Tippin would "rubber stamp" the trip. In essence, then, the boys believed approval from their gatekeeper would mean automatic approval from their primary audience.

Adapting to Multiple Audiences

Because of their belief regarding their primary and gatekeeper audiences, the boys focused on Mr. Gratner, assuming they were simultaneously catering to the needs of Dr. Tippin. Though, as I mentioned earlier, the boys believed the mere act of writing would be perceived as persuasive, they adapted their document by trying to raise their status to account at least initially for the difference in roles inherent between students and their principals in any high school hierarchy.

In addition, however, the boys hoped to offset a renegade image they perceived Mr. Gratner had of them, especially Irv and Jack, a belief about which I can only speculate. Irv seemed to believe that Mr. Gratner associated the boys with Irv's older brother, a recent Army recruit named Larry who had nearly flunked out of BHS before graduating as a fifth-year senior. Though
Irv didn't report that he had flunked any of his classes, he might have assumed his lower-than-average grades would reinforce a negative family stereotype, especially at such a small school. Though he never said so, Jack might have assumed his "bad boy" reputation resulted from the freedom afforded to him by his "A.V. labbie" position. In a conversation unrelated to this study, Mr. Gratner once told me he was critical of Jack's supervisor for allowing Jack to "roam the halls during class time" and for giving him his own set of building keys to carry out A.V. responsibilities for weekend musical and/or drama performances.

Regardless of whether Mr. Gratner had a negative view of the boys or not, they tried to raise their status in two differing, but obviously complementary, ways. First, they wrote their ski trip proposal. As I mentioned in my analysis of their initial meeting on March 8, the boys believed a written document--as opposed to an oral request--would be more persuasive because they believed in the "power of the pen." In addition, they focused on stylistic matters, especially those dealing with word, content, timing/format choices they believed Mr. Gratner would value--even as they self-consciously tried not "to overstep boundaries."
**Word Choices.** The writers tried to raise their status at the word-level by choosing certain words over others. In the opening sentence, for example, they revised the phrase, "passed out the surveys" to read "distributed the surveys." Similarly, in the first sentence of the second paragraph, the writers said over 100 students had "responded 'yes' to the first question of our survey" as opposed to "said 'yes.'" In both cases, Heath, Irv, and Jack believed they had selected the better, more sophisticated, verb. Though the boys didn't articulate why they defined their choices as better, I suspect it had something to do with word length--even though I am aware of no BHS English teacher stressing the importance of "big" words. After all, "to distribute" and "to respond" are respectively longer verbs than "to pass out," and "to say." The boys may also have perceived their choices as more formal without articulating why. Regardless of the reason, however, the writers believed they had selected words that would impress Mr. Gratner, so he would take them--and their document--more seriously.

Another word-level choice was including middle initials in the signature block, a convention the boys might have learned as a result of seeing their parents' legal documents. Although when I asked them about the
choice, each writer scoffed at the notion that middle initials somehow formalized the ski trip proposal—and, in turn, raised their status—they also admitted to rarely, if ever, using middle initials when signing their names. Consequently, I believe it was an indirect way the writers could show how seriously they viewed the ski trip proposal.

**Content Choices.** Heath, Irv, and Jack "name dropped" primarily because they believed doing so automatically aligned their documents with individuals whose opinions they perceived Mr. Gratner would value. First, they mentioned in the second paragraph that "two randomly selected surveys" were enclosed for the principal to review, but the surveys had been completed by his own son and the vice-principal's daughter! Though the writers hoped including these two surveys would be perceived by Mr. Gratner as humorous, they perceived the content choice as "sly." Though they didn't use the phrase, "emotional appeal," the boys did say that they hoped that mentioning the administrators' children's interest in the ski trip would make Mr. Gratner take the proposal more seriously. The writers also name dropped in the final paragraph by stating ". . . Mrs. Brockman and Dr. Botte have already agreed to chaperone [the ski trip]." The writers believed
simply mentioning that chaperones were already lined up for the trip made them appear more credible, especially since the two faculty members were both long-term ski club chaperones.

Another content choice took place in the last sentence of the second paragraph. Here, the writers emphasized that students would miss no school as a result of participating on the trip, a fact they believed Mr. Gratner would value. By noting that students would not miss school, however, the writers also believed they personally would appear more credible and more persuasive to Mr. Gratner. After all, as Jack pointed out, most BHS students "will do anything to try to get out of school," especially the day or two before and after spring break. By organizing a trip that would not require missing any school, the writers were trying to show Mr. Gratner just how responsible they were trying to be.

Format/Timing Choices. The boys chose a block-style business letter format for their proposal. Using this format, they believed, made their proposal—and, in turn, them—look more professional, but they didn't articulate specifically why except for one reason: length. Although BHS English teachers had, no doubt, told them the clearly-cliched, but generally-accepted,
axiom about "quality not equaling quantity" in writing, the boys were still pleased by "how long the proposal looked" which was a direct result of the format they selected.

The timing of the document after the survey was also a strategy the boys used to raise their status. Though not a direct part of the proposal, the boys believed the survey was crucial to its success. That's why they opted to conduct the survey first and then write the proposal as a follow-up. As Jack said, by surveying the student body the boys could speak with credibility in their proposal about a topic they perceived any student-focused administrator would value: the number of students wanting to participate on the trip. The survey had an added advantage. The boys believed in "the power of the pen," assuming the mere act of writing the ski trip proposal would impress Mr. Gratner. By extension, they also assumed he would value the survey. By writing the proposal after conducting the survey, the boys could mention the survey in the proposal, and Mr. Gratner would have reason to be twice as impressed by the boys' hard work.

Monitoring Status. Although interested in raising their status, Heath, Irv, and Jack had no desire to "overstep their boundaries."
The writers opted, for example, to address their ski trip proposal to their principal instead of their school superintendent, even though they believed the higher ranking administrator would make the final decision regarding the trip because they knew intuitively "Mr. [Gratner] would be angry . . . if [they] went over his head." Though it's impossible to know precisely, this intuition regarding language and its hierarchical structure may have stemmed from the boys' parents' positions, TV shows, or even gender socialization. As Tannen argues, males are more likely to think of language as hierarchical *(You Just Don't Understand* 24).

Next, Heath, Irv, and Jack decided to put their proposal in the form of a business letter instead of a memo which they knew—perhaps from a general business course they had taken at BHS—was a form reserved for people in the same organization. Although they recognized they were members of the BHS community, Jack explained that using a memo would probably appear negative to Mr. Gratner because it would imply they were placing themselves on an equal level with a faculty member or even a school administrator. Even further, he said that a letter was a good format for their proposal because it was a request, not unlike purchase orders
which I speculate Jack had seen in his position as "A.V. labbie."

The writers also paid special attention to the phrasing of the final sentence of the document. They wrote "We hope you will approve this trip" because they believed the first two words, "We hope," were the appropriate way for students to address their principal.

The boys' careful attention in adapting their document for what they perceived were Mr. Grater's needs complicates Flower and Hayes' contention that young writers don't have the cognitive maturity to adapt documents for audience ("Reader-Based Prose"). That reason, according to Flower and Hayes, accounts for young writers' tenancies to ignore audience and create "writer-based" instead of "reader-based" prose. Sommers reinforces those findings by reporting that adult business writers revised by focusing on audience while first-year undergraduates revised at the word and sentence level ("Revision Strategies"). Nevertheless, the writing processes and products of Heath, Irv, and Jack don't entirely contradict Sommers' or Flower and Hayes' findings because the proposal has a "writer-based" element given its narrative quality (how the boys conducted the survey) and, more important, the primary bent of the boys' audience analysis: relative status
between writer and audience. In other words, Heath, Irv, and Jack adapted for audience solely by considering Mr. Gratner's role in relation to their own. They didn't acknowledge, most obviously for example, that Mr. Gratner was obligated to his teachers who were interested in sponsoring departmental trips. Neither did the boys account for legal ramifications or community pressures Mr. Gratner might consider in approving a trip designed solely for pleasure. Although The "Colorado or Bust" Writing Team members adapted for their perceived multiple audiences, they misunderstood, or at the very least oversimplified, the rhetorical equation by focusing especially upon relative status between writer and reader.

That's not, however, to minimize the importance of relative status between writer and audience as a rhetorical variable in business communication. As Paret notes in his study of Canadian social workers whose rhetorical choices/options were tightly regulated by the judicial system monitoring court cases involving adolescents, "[s]et roles and relationships among writers and readers may determine who says what to whom, as well as when, where, why, and how it is said" (111).
Understanding the Multiple Audiences

Returning once again to Locker's taxonomy, a more accurate understanding of the boys' multiple audiences must include the teachers sponsoring the departmental trips as the primary audience and Mr. Gratner as their gatekeeper. Even though to my knowledge none of the faculty members actually read the document, Mr. Gratner let the committee make the final decision regarding the proposed trip. Though it's impossible to know how the committee would have reacted, the writers could have adapted for the faculty members simply by limiting the number of students able to participate on the trip. Another option would have been to offer the trip during winter break. This option, however, might not have been perceived as persuasive in light of a departmental trip to Rome offered for winter break of the 1995-96 school year. Although the trip obviously doesn't coincide with the spring break trips, teachers chaperoning spring break trips during the same academic school year believe the Rome trip competes for students' interest and dollars--just as much as any spring break trip would.

The "Colorado or Bust" Writing Team members aren't the first business writers to ignore an entire segment of their audience. Tyler reports that Exxon officials ignored environmental advocates and the general public
by trying to limit liability in their written statements after the Valdez spill to appease stockholders ("Ecological Diaster"). In addition, Cross reports that an insurance company president ignored 500,000 policy holders in the cover letter of the annual report by announcing both a year-end profit margin and a rate increase. In doing so, however, the president had adapted for company agents and other insurance companies similar in size and prestige ("The Interrelation of Genre, Context, and Process").

Although Tyler's and Cross' studies relate to this case study, two important differences exist. First, unlike the audience members in Tyler's and Cross's studies, Mr. Gratner and his faculty committee didn't have differing opinions regarding the Spring Break '94 trips. In fact, they all agreed at least on one level: nobody wanted any of the already-approved departmental spring break trips to be jeopardized from lack of student interest. Second, one might argue that the job status of Exxon officials and insurance company presidents should have provided them with a more global perspective of their multiple audiences—unlike Heath, Irv, and Jack whose student status limited their perspective. Even though I cautioned the boys about the other departmental trips being offered, they were, in
essence, writing in isolation from the more elite faculty/administrative circle.

Rachel Spilka addresses the relationship between writer isolation and multiple audiences in her study, "Interacting with Multiple Readers: A Significant Component of Document Design in Corporate Environments." In that project, she reports that engineers who planned, wrote, and revised in isolation had difficulty adapting documents for the needs of multiple audiences. Her findings imply, however, that writers have a choice regarding whether they isolate themselves. While that may be true in her study, the members of the "Colorado or Bust" Writing Team didn't believe they had the option of talking with audience members. Talking, for example, with Dr. Tippin about the ski trip proposal wasn't a perceived option. As I mentioned earlier, the writers believed their low status prohibited any direct communication with him—regardless of whether their belief was true or not. Talking with Mr. Gratner wasn't an option from the writers' perspective either because, as I mentioned earlier, they believed a conversation with him regarding the ski trip—as opposed to a written document—risked a swift and automatic rejection. In light of that speculation, it seems relevant that Mr. Gratner has a reputation among faculty for being more
likely to approve teacher requests which explain the steps/consequences of the request. In addition, Mr. Gratner has a reputation for not reversing a decision once he has SAID "no." That's one of the reasons I, as NHS advisor, insist that NHS members put requests to Mr. Gratner for school programs or assemblies in a written document clearly explaining their requests. Given what I believe is Mr. Gratner's genuine respect for students, I speculate doing so helps to ensure he'll understand the entire picture of the student request before responding. Although he has never rejected an NHS request during my tenure as advisor, I'm not suggesting a written request to Mr. Gratner ensures automatic approval. Even so, I intuitively--but cautiously--agree with The "Colorado or Bust" Writing Team: Mr. Gratner probably would not have even considered the possibility of a ski trip had the boys talked with him about the trip during the writing of the proposal. Last, Heath, Irv, and Jack could have met to discuss their proposal with the faculty members proposing the school-sponsored departmental trips, but they didn't, most obviously because they didn't recognize--or chose not to recognize--the role those teachers would play in determining the success or failure of their document.
Research suggests that collaborative writing provides an effective way to adapt for multiple audiences because it provides readers with "front-line" audience members. Dautermann reports that fourteen nurses representing different departments were both writers and readers, so that writers from Maternity or Major Surgery, for example, confirmed during composing sessions if procedural changes proposed in the document were consistent with their own department's objectives. Locker reports that her subjects, who were either lawyers or social service workers in a state agency, acted as potential audience members ("What Makes"). In their large-scale study, Ede and Lunsford report that "a number of respondents . . . [said] the group-writing process can increase sensitivity to audience (Singular Texts/Plural Authors 62). Heath, Irv, and Jack, however, didn't function as front-line audience members in the way the subjects in the Dautermann, Locker, and Ede/Lunsford studies did. That's not to suggest that they were afraid to disagree with each other or were somehow silenced as a result of group dynamics. On the contrary, their strong friendship and lively dialogue throughout the writing sessions would disprove that theory. Instead, the boys were either too much alike to provide different perspectives and opinions or too
confident that their proposal would be approved even to play "devil's advocate" with each other--except perhaps at the word-or sentence-level. Consequently, "substantive conflict," which Burnett argues delays group consensus and, consequently, fosters complex and fruitful discussion about the rhetorical choices collaborative writers make, was not an element of the boys' writing process.

According to Smart, a common practice among business writers, known as "document cycling," can be a good strategy in adapting for multiple audiences. He reports that lower-level bank managers asked other managers of equal or higher status to respond to several drafts of their documents, and, as a result of doing so, the documents became better adapted for a complex audience comprised of immediate supervisors, an executive committee, and a board of directors. Though The "Colorado or Bust" Writing Team revised their document extensively as a result of the discourse-based interview, the boys asked no one to respond to their ski trip proposal in the way Smart's subjects did. Perhaps the boys didn't recognize document cycling as an effective strategy (in spite of their teachers suggesting otherwise in probably every BHS English course they had ever taken), or more likely, the boys
might not have believed it was an option given the research project: I had told them from the outset that my goal was to learn from them, and so they might have assumed a second opinion would ruin the case study.

This study reinforces literature regarding multiple audiences because, like their adult counterparts, the adolescent writers ignored important members of their audience and suffered the consequences of their oversight. The study also challenges existing research: Strategies for successfully adapting for multiple audiences may not be available to writers with low status.

The Self-Initiated/Other-Initiated Continuum and the Ski Trip Proposal

The ski trip proposal reinforces what the Chapter Two Snapshots suggest about adolescent writing: it's too complex to be categorized as either self-motivated or school-sponsored.

Although the boys wanted to take a big ski trip together and talked informally with me about their wish that BHS would sponsor one, they did not actually generate the idea of proposing the trip to Mr. Gratner. I did. Though the idea sprouted only as a result of the boys' strong interest, the impetus for writing the
proposal was not self-motivated in the manner in which Bram wrote his cover letter regarding his research paper or Dana wrote her follow-up letter about the recycling program.

Nevertheless, the ski trip proposal wasn't purely other-initiated either. After all, when I asked the boys if they were interested in writing the ski trip proposal, it was not a formal request (like those made of Adam for his college application essay and Gregory for his apprenticeship application letter) or even a personal favor (like the one asked of Emily and Ellen for their committee guidelines). Instead, it was a deal. In exchange for attending/taping their sessions and then interviewing the boys about ski trip proposal, I would serve as a chaperone—if the proposal were approved.

Even if the deal was, as the cliche goes, "an offer too good to refuse," the boys still had a choice, making their document not unlike the fund-raising letters Charlie chose to write for his church youth group. However, the impetuses for writing the ski trip proposal and the fund-raising letters were clearly not identical: Charlie volunteered to write at a meeting, while Heath, Irv, and Jack were sought out for the task by an adult authority figure (me). Nevertheless, the boys could
have refused, unlike Fran, for example, or Dana, both of whose elected positions obligated them to write, respectively, the church youth group newsletters and the first recycling program letter.

Taking into account the rhetorical contexts for the ski trip proposal and the other documents examined in the Chapter Two snapshots, the proposal's location on the continuum falls somewhere between Charlie's fund-raising letters and Fran's LYO newsletters (see "Arranging the Documents on the Continuum" in Chapter III for a full discussion of the continuum location of the snapshot documents).

Conclusion

Dautermann reports that a document created by fourteen nurses had inherent importance--in spite of the writers' low status and limited power. She says:

. . . any writing is a social act influenced by contextual factors and holds the potential for influencing the social fabric of the environment, in return. (100)

Like the subjects in Dautermann's study, The "Colorado or Bust" Writing Team had low status and limited power in their work environment. Even so, their ski trip proposal is inherently important because it prompted a discussion among members of an administrative/faculty
committee which, in turn, effected a new school policy regulating the timing of school-sponsored trips not organized by departments to augment curriculum. Although the proposal didn't result in a ski trip, it influenced the social fabric of Bexley High School.
CHAPTER V
WRITER ENGAGEMENT AND THE SKI TRIP PROPOSAL

The "Colorado or Bust" Writing Team were engaged in their ski trip proposal. Their composing behavior, including planning, writing, distributing, and interpreting of the survey, as well as extensively revising the ski trip proposal, provide evidence of their engagement. The ski trip proposal, itself, also physically provides evidence of engagement: their careful attention to Mr. Gratner's needs as their supervisor provides evidence of engagement. More significant than THAT the writers became engaged with their document, however, is WHY they became engaged.

The Rhetorical Variables Prompting Engagement

Based upon the case study of The "Colorado or Bust" Writing Team, I argue the writers became engaged with their ski trip proposal as a result of six variables: writer interest, outside intervention, ample time, relative status between writer and reader, a collaborative writing process, and cognitive dissonance.
Writer Interest

Long before a school-sponsored ski trip was suggested to them, Heath, Irv, and Jack dreamed of taking a big ski trip together. Their desire for such a trip—and the knowledge that their proposal to Mr. Gratner could turn the trip into a reality for spring break of the following year—powerfully fueled their writing, making writer interest an obvious variable helping to prompt engagement.

Though conventional wisdom now reinforces what Emig and Britton first argued twenty-five years ago—that writer interest is more likely to promote engagement than writer disinterest—this case study and the Chapter Two snapshots suggest writer interest may not be enough. Consider initially, for example, the writing processes and products of Bram (the student in a writing course) and Dana (the 1994-95 BHS Environmental Club Vice President) which were examined in the Chapter Two. Both of these adolescents were highly interested in the outcome of their documents (Bram wanted an "A" for his research paper, and Dana wanted to document she was fulfilling her club responsibilities). Nevertheless, both writers composed single drafts of their documents in minutes. Consider, as well, the following variables
which also played an important role in accounting for Heath, Irv, and Jack's engagement.

Outside Intervention

The boys indicated that months before the first official meeting on March 8, they were together after school one afternoon and began informally talking about organizing their ski trip proposal. They also reported that nothing materialized from this preliminary session apparently because the boys never scheduled subsequent meetings and/or because they misplaced whatever work was generated. It seems important to note, too, that the boys didn't schedule the March 8 meeting solely on their own. Instead, I coaxed, even nudged, them into it--but only after waiting four months for them to act on their own volition.

These two facts don't detract from the strong ownership Heath, Irv, and Jack immediately established over the writing sessions where I was present or the two documents they generated. Nor do the facts suggest that adolescent writers inherently need outside intervention to begin writing. The facts do provide evidence, however, that my outside intervention as a researcher or teacher may have prompted this particular group of adolescents to get started--not unlike the way my role
as NHS advisor most likely prompted Emily and Ellen to follow through with their committee guidelines.

Ample Time

Although BHS's 55-minute lunch hour limited the number of minutes the boys could daily work during each of their writing sessions, they were in no other way curtailed by time constraints. In fact, without ever discussing time as a procedural issue, they worked for seven sessions, or nearly six hours, before submitting the document to Mr. Gratner. Not unlike Adam (in his college application essay) and Gregory (in his apprenticeship application) who both allotted themselves ample time to write, The "Colorado or Bust" Writing Team members' writing process as a whole wasn't truncated; the boys took as much time as they needed—which provided them the time to engage in their document.

It does seem important to note, of course, that ample time alone may not prompt engagement: it could prompt procrastination! Nevertheless, Atwell argues that people need three "basic" elements to become writers: the second and third elements are "ownership" and "response," but the first element she lists is "time" (In the Middle 54-74).
Relative Status of Writer and Audience

Although the boys perceived their document's purpose as straightforward, their low status in relation to Mr. Gratner made their proposal a rhetorical challenge. First, the boys seemed to know intuitively that their document should reflect conventions associated with communication between adolescents and adults in authority. In conforming to those conventions, however, the boys tried to do more than account for the roles inherent among students and principals in any high school hierarchy. They also hoped to offset the renegade image they perceived Mr. Gratner had of them, a phenomenon about which I speculated in the previous chapter.

Regardless, however, of whether Mr. Gratner's perception of the boys was good, bad, or neutral, the writers' beliefs regarding their low status represented a rhetorical challenge, one which they embraced. Though I'm not suggesting that hard tasks automatically prompt writer engagement among students (or that easy tasks automatically prompt disengagement), these writers were inspired to write carefully as a result of their low status.
Collaborative Writing Process

In "Writing Our Way into a Discourse Community," Belanger and I indicate we collaborated "primarily because of our friendship. The majority of our work sessions [were] face-to-face encounters . . . [with an] enjoyable mixture of hard work, light conversations, and deep discussions" (55) and that "working individually . . . would have been slower, more painful--and certainly less fun" (56). While the members of The "Colorado or Bust" Writing Team didn't articulate in any of the seven writing sessions how much or even that they enjoyed writing together, it's clear they did. Why else did they laugh and talk and never engage in what Burnett calls "disruptive" collaborative conflict--such as "affective" conflicts stemming from interpersonal biases and prejudices among group members or "procedural" conflicts resulting from disagreements over group organizational issues--even once? Why else did the atmosphere during every writing session feel more like a friendly social hour than a serious work session?

Though collaborative projects can be painful and even unsuccessful writing experiences (Locke, "What Makes a Collaborative Writing Team Successful?")
the collaborative nature of Heath, Irv, and Jack's work seems to have made writing more palatable which, in
turn, motivated the boys to move more steadily towards the final draft of their ski trip proposal.

The boys' collaborative writing process helped to prompt writer engagement in another significant way. Like the students in Dale's study who couldn't—as a result of writing collaboratively—jot down "the first thing that came to mind and sett[e] for that, which is what 9th graders sometimes do, . . . [Heath, Irv, and Jack had to] plan" (68) which is an activity providing evidence of writer engagement. As a comparison to the four minutes Perl's subjects spent planning in a 1979 study, Dale says her subjects spent 25% of their time planning, but The "Colorado or Bust" Writing Team boasts an even higher record. Taking into account their initial meeting, their planning, writing, distributing, and interpreting of the survey, as well as their "warm-up" time on March 18 when the boys joked about their principal, they spent more than 50% of their time planning the ski trip proposal. Though that high percentage of time spent planning stems at least in part from the nature of the boys' rhetorical task, the collaborative element of their work also played a crucial role. Because they shared equal responsibility for the document and because their work sessions were face-to-face encounters, the boys had to talk before
they could write. Moreover, Heath, Irv, and Jack talked about their document as they wrote it, just like the subjects in Dale's study, so reformulating, another behavior associated with engaged writers, was a natural extension of their work.

Cognitive Dissonance

As Aronson points out, "the more a person is committed to an action, . . . the more he[/she] will attempt to bolster his[/her] action" (95). In this case study, the writers believed in the idea of writing a ski trip proposal, and--though they briefly entertained the possibility of rejection during their first session--convinced themselves that Mr. Gratner would respond positively to their proposal. Using Aronson's theory, one might argue the boys were so committed to the idea of proposing the trip, they bolstered their actions by becoming engaged as writers in their document, their assumption being the harder they worked, the more justified their belief that Mr. Gratner would automatically say yes.

Having argued that these six variables--writer interest, outside intervention, ample time, relative status between writer and reader, collaborative writing process, and cognitive dissonance--prompted writer
engagement for The "Colorado or Bust" Writing Team, it would be tempting to assume that including one--or a combination--of the variables would prompt automatic engagement among other writers working on other rhetorical tasks. That contention, however, would misrepresent the variables.

The Nature of the Variables Prompting Engagement

To understand the complex nature of rhetorical variables prompting writer engagement, I invoke O'Hare and Memering and their explanation of "The [five] Writer's Choices." Though their purpose is different from mine--they seek to explain how writers' choices culminate in a written document--their three-dimensional model still provides a useful introduction.

[Think of] . . . the writing process . . . as consisting of . . . five interrelated components [and] . . . visualize . . . a three-dimensional figure around which flow considerations of purpose, audience, code, experience, and self. As each element flows in various directions around this three-dimensional figure, it encounters the other elements, influencing and being influenced by them in nonlinear and unpredictable ways. It is . . . not a scientific diagram designed to represent any physical reality, but a visual, cognitive metaphor. (7-8)

Like the variables in O'Hare and Memering's model, the six variables prompting engagement for Heath, Irv, and Jack worked in conjunction with each other. In
other words, if any one were eliminated from the rhetorical equation, I propose that engagement might not have taken place among the writers. For example, had the document not been multi-authored, an important rhetorical variable would have been gone. Similarly, had the writers not been so interested in the ski trip proposal—perhaps if they had been writing the document for a class assignment rather than an actual request or perhaps if they doubted whether Mr. Gratner would truly consider their request—they might not have engaged in their work. Given the length of time—roughly four months—it took The "Colorado or Bust" Writing Team to schedule a meeting, it's even possible to speculate cautiously that the document might not have been written at all without the outside intervention I provided.

Unlike O'Hare and Memering, however, I'm not suggesting that this particular combination of variables (writer interest, outside intervention, relative status of writer and reader, collaborative writing process, and cognitive dissonance) or any single one of the variables will automatically prompt engagement among all adolescent writers in any given rhetorical task. On the contrary, this case study and the snapshots in Chapter Two, strongly suggest that writer engagement (or lack thereof) is a complex
phenomena, one that doesn't depend directly on any one or any set of rhetorical variables.

Consider, for example, the general belief that writer interest—especially an interest stemming from a real exigence in writing to an "addressed" or real audience—will prompt automatic writer engagement. Although it helped inspire the members of The "Colorado or Bust" Writing Team to engage in their ski trip proposal, other variables also influenced their writing. Moreover, a real-world element didn't motivate Bram or Dana to engage in their documents, no matter how interested they were, respectively, in the outcome of the cover letter regarding an English paper and the Environmental Club letters regarding BHS recycling. It seems significant, too, that both writers reported, in general, extensive planning and reformulating of their school-sponsored assignments. Though comparing the writing processes required for what Bram and Dana might have perceived as complex "Class III" school assignments with what they might have perceived as simple, "Class II" letters may be an unbalanced comparison ("Different Purposes" Hairston), the original premise is still the same: writer interest stemming from real-world documents may not prompt automatic writer engagement.
And it may not prompt rhetorical excellence either, even though, as Balderman argues, it may be tempting to believe so.

... a host of composition theorists have claimed that students need to write for real audiences [and Balderman's] experience is that when [students] taste the power that writing can provide, [they] pay attention to presentation, spelling, usage, and style. They have always been taught that to be taken seriously they must master these concepts, but they have rarely used their writing to communicate with others. Writing with a purpose to real audiences offers them this opportunity. (61)

Although Balderman's rationale may seem to "ring true," findings from the case study of The "Colorado or Bust" Writing Team suggests otherwise. After all, Heath, Irv, and Jack were engaged in the work of writing their ski trip proposal at least in part because it was a real-world document. Even so, the proposal wasn't "excellent" because the writers didn't adapt it to meet the multiple needs of Mr. Gratner, their principal.

Two recent studies provide similar details. Grant reports, for example, that her 7th grade students were excited to write real-world letters to company presidents in the hope that they would donate used computer equipment to the school. Although the letters resulted in fourteen "new" computers for student use, Grant reports that one of the company presidents mentioned a "minor" rhetorical mistake.
Travis[, the letter writer] . . . had implied that if [the school] didn't have enough computers to help him become a better writer, he might have to purchase a "Ford" rather than a "Chevy" when he grew up. [The company president] probably suspected that Travis had written a similar letter to Ford Motor Company. (Grant 62)

Similarly, Marsden reports that his undergraduates designing brochures in a desktop publishing course didn't always create excellent documents, even though the students planned and revised by working closely with university and/or business personnel who actually distributed the brochures after they were completed. Because his findings may raise questions about an inherently controversial and elusive topic--standards regarding writing assessment--it's important to note that Marsden didn't disagree with clients who liked the brochures: he simply believed the documents could have been even more effective.

. . . perhaps more common than either a client's complete dissatisfaction or a client's happiness with imposed mediocrity, is that of a client quite pleased with the brochure even though, without his or her influence, it fails to meet well the established criteria (required in the course). In this case I do not hesitate to grade according to the criteria, and if the students complains I point out that had those criteria been better fulfilled, the client would have been even more pleased. (35)

The findings in these studies don't suggest that secondary- or university-level teachers should stop providing their students with writing assignments addressed to real audiences. On the contrary, I judge
both Grant's and Marsden's assignments (and others like them) as good invitations for students to write primarily because they meet the five criteria Lindemann argues are necessary in making effective assignments:

All writing assignments must account for more variables than a phrase or even one sentence can identify. If we omit some of the factors which, in real life, help us define rhetorical contexts, we've sentenced students to performing poorly on assignments. Even if we give students complete freedom in defining some elements of the assignment, in some way we must account for all of the following variables:

1. The students' interest in and understanding of the subject
2. The purpose or aim of the composition
3. The audience (which needn't always be the teacher)
4. A role for the student to take with respect to the subject and audience.
5. The form of discourse (which needn't always be an essay) (194)

Though Lindemann's five criteria may, indeed, help to provide students with a rhetorical context, her use of the phrase, "sentenced students to performing poorly (my emphasis)," is problematic because of its implications. After all, the assertion that NOT including a real-life context prompts automatic failure among writers may reinforce assumptions like Balderman's: that including a real-life context will prompt automatic success—when this study strongly suggests there is no guarantee regarding writer engagement and rhetorical excellence.
Collaborative Writing as a Variable

Having claimed that no guarantee exists in prompting writer engagement or rhetorical excellence, I nonetheless return momentarily to the collaborative nature of Heath, Irv, and Jack's ski trip proposal—and the power of collaborative writing may have, in general.

Before doing so, however, it seems important first to note that collaborative writing isn't necessarily the friendly, egalitarian, face-to-face encounter which Heath, Irv, and Jack experienced: it takes different forms, styles, and modes—and it doesn't always result in pleasant writing experiences. Having surveyed twenty experienced collaborative business writers using a "structured interview form" followed by taped, open-ended interviews which were later analyzed, Allen, Atkinson, Morgan, Moore, and Snow describe five different forms of collaborative writing.

1. a supervisor's assignment of a document that is researched and drafted by a staff member but carefully edited by the supervisor (Paradis, Dobrin, and Miller)
2. collaborative planning of a document that is drafted and revised by an individual (Orell)
3. individual planning and drafting of a document that is revised collaboratively (Doheny-Farina)
4. a peer's critiquing of a co-worker's draft (Anderson)
5. the coauthoring of a document (Ede and Lunsford) (71)
In my account of adolescents and collaborative writing assignments, the members of writing groups working side-by-side in a computer lab used different styles:

For some [groups], the most efficient typist . . . controlled the keyboard as the other writers barked orders. Other groups . . . rotated the responsibility of typing. Another possibility [was] for individual group members to work separately and simultaneously . . . and then merge ideas. (Brockman, "Writing Isn't a Team Sport" 60)

As a result of their long-term, three-tiered study of collaborative writing of nearly 1,500 members in seven professional organizations, Ede and Lunsford argue two modes of collaborative writing exist: hierarchical and dialogic.

[The hierarchical mode] . . . is carefully . . . structured, driven by highly specific goals, and carried out by people playing clearly defined and delimited roles. These goals are most often designated by someone outside of and hierarchically superior . . . Because productivity and efficiency are of the essence in this mode of collaboration, . . . multiple voices and shifting authority are seen as difficulties to be overcome . . .

[The] dialogic mode is loosely structured and [writers'] roles . . . are fluid: . . . the process of articulating goals is often as important as the goals themselves . . . [Dialogic collaborators] . . . value . . . multivoiced and multivalent ventures . . . as a strength. (133)

It's also relevant to reiterate what Locker notes: "not all collaborative efforts succeed" ("What Makes a Collaborative Writing Team Successful?" 37). As support, she cites Ede and Lunsford's survey indicating
over 40% of the respondents called collaborative writing not very productive and then makes note of Cross' ethnographic study which shows that a flawed two-page collaborative collaborative document took over seventy-five days to write. Locker's own case study documents how a group of social service workers and lawyers wrote thirteen drafts of an ineffective class action suit primarily as a result of a flawed collaborative writing process.

In spite of collaborative writing's various forms, styles, or modes and even its potential for failure, Dautermann reports that "[c]ollaborative writing makes composition forces visible by exposing . . . [what] may be present in the work of individual writers [but is] . . . inaccessible, internalized and silent" (101). Having conducted a case study of The "Colorado or Bust" Writing Team, however, I would like to complicate Dautermann's assertion. While collaborative writing exposed rhetorical choices the boys made, they might not have even considered the choices if the ski trip had been a single-authored documents. As I previously explain, a collaborative writing process was a rhetorical variable helping to prompt writer engagement because Heath, Irv, and Jack--like the subjects in Dale's study--had to talk both to plan and to generate
their document. My study of high school students experimenting with collaborative assignments reports similar findings:

... collaborative writing takes time because students must talk in order to write. The conversations, however, are remarkably different from those involving peer responding (because) "peer editors" have no authority over the documents they are reading; fellow collaborators do, and so students talk, negotiate, debate, even argue before finally reaching consensus ... from topic selection to final revision. (Brockman "English Isn't a Team Sport" 60)

Research in composition studies and business communication also suggests that collaborative writing is a means for teaching and learning about writing which, though not a guarantee of excellence, one might argue is a "step in the right direction."

Paradis, Dobrin, and Miller report that experienced Exxon supervisors helped new R & D department members learn about the organization's rhetorical standards by responding to their multiple drafts, an activity generally known in business settings as "document cycling" ("Writing at Exxon"). Similarly, MacKinnon reports that the feedback ten new executives at the Bank of Canada received as a result of drafting with both supervisors and peers helped them to become better writers. In fact, twenty months after being hired, the ten participants were described by managers as being
better able to write first drafts, for example, and to articulate more clearly document purpose and adapt for audience needs ("Becoming a Rhetor").

In their snapshot of Albert Bernstein, a clinical psychologist, Ede and Lunsford provide evidence that writing collaboratively as co-authors is a means of learning about writing.

I didn't really learn to write in school. I have a good friend—a poet and newspaper editor. He and I wrote things together . . . at a mental health center. He was trying to find out something about mental health, and I was essentially teaching him about therapy . . . (but in doing so) he taught me about writing. (Singular Texts/Plural Authors 30)

The account of my long-term collaborative researching and writing relationship which Belanger provides similar results.

Even though we were colleagues and peers, our work together at times took the form of a teacher-student relationship with the roles shifting depending on the circumstances. (Belanger and Brockman 56)

If the writing experiences described by Bernstein in Ede and Lunsford's study and by Belanger and me provided an opportunity for improving rhetorical skills, it's not hard to understand why. Collaboration provided writers with an opportunity to see another "writer's mind at work," to use a phrase used by O'Hare and Memering. In their textbook, The Writer’s Work, O’Hare and Memering include student writers' "focused freewrites" showing
how they literally wrote their way through specific rhetorical hurdles associated with a writing assignment (everything from considering peer editors' comments to analyzing audience's needs). O'Hare and Memering's "Writer's Mind at Work" sections provide readers with useful models for tackling their own rhetorical problems, but by writing collaboratively, writers move beyond any limitation associated with merely reading about a writer's mind (as useful as that might be): they actually participate with that writer in an interactive way:

[Kelly] was the more advanced graduate student [so] . . . she knew the . . . conventions for proposals, abstracts, and articles . . . simply by working with her Elizabeth learned those conventions . . . [but] after attending an editors' session and talking with other participants . . . Elizabeth showed Kelly ways to make . . . [our] manuscript more appropriate for our intended audience. (Belanger and Brockman 56)

Dale, in her study of 9th grade collaborative writers, complicates the "writer's mind in action" theory in an important and powerful way. Although she acknowledges that "students [in her study] not only learned their own strengths, but also modeled those strengths for others" (67) by writing collaboratively, she recognizes that the rhetorical benefits may not be readily or immediately discernable.

[Collaborative] writing may lead to new ways of thinking about writing . . . that may not show
[themselves] in the collaborative product. If we pay too much attention to product rather than process, we may miss growth in student writers that is real though not immediately apparent . . . (67).

Conclusion

Composition history echoes itself thirty years after Emig's landmark study, The Composing Process of Twelfth Graders. Like Emig—who reported that high school writing teachers (and, in turn, their students) paid too much attention to product and not process—Shwom and Hirsch, two writing consultants from Northwestern University, report a similar rhetorical problem in business settings:

When executives . . . contact us, they often assume that the best way to improve the quality of writing in their organizations is to provide workshops designed to improve the skills of individual writers. In working with these companies, however, it becomes apparent that solving the writing problems requires addressing not just skills but the drafting process as well. (1)

Though Shwom and Hirsch's drafting model may privilege two rhetorical variables—writer experience and document purpose—above others, they report (1) an increased ability to plan work schedules, (2) improved morale, (3) improved use of managers' time, and (4) increased learning curve for writers primarily because
writers drafted seriously, or in other words, because they became engaged in their writing.

In spite of the success Shwom and Hirsch report in changing the drafting behavior of business writers, this study suggests writer engagement stems not from only two variables but rather from a combination of variables which vary from writer to writer and from rhetorical task to rhetorical task. Though a collaborative writing process may help to promote behaviors associated with writer engagement, including planning and recursive revision during writing, and, consequently, improve individual writer skill-level, no guarantees exist regarding the complex rhetorical phenomenon known as writer engagement.
CHAPTER VI
CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Although case studies (and, by extension, snapshots providing alternate images) aren't designed to answer research questions unequivocally, a composition study should, according to Lauer and Asher, "discover variables that seem important for understanding the nature of writing, its contexts, [and] its development" (23), and this study does.

Conclusions

First, this study suggests that adolescents write discourse other than poetry or fiction and essays or compositions. In response to a supervisor's request, as a result of an organization's "past practices" or a collaborative brainstorming sessions, or of their own volition, many adolescents write in their volunteer positions, school clubs, youth groups, and part-time jobs. They are writing business communication.

The study, consequently, extends Emig's study by suggesting that adolescent writing as a whole is too
complex to be defined in terms of the binary categories, "self-motivated" or "school-sponsored." After all, none of the documents examined in this project--Adam's college application letter, Bram's cover letter, Charlie's fund-raising letters, Dana's BHS Environmental Club letters, Fran's LYO newsletters, Gregory's application letter, or Heath, Irv, and Jack's ski trip proposal--were written in response to a teacher's request as a class requirement, but none of them were self-motivated either. Even if we replace "school-sponsored" with "other-initiated," the categories still can't be mutually exclusive if they are meant to fully describe the impetus for adolescent writing. In this study, for example, Fran was obligated to write her newsletters, but not to the extent Adam and Gregory were obligated to write their application documents. On the other hand or, nearer the self-initiated end of the continuum, Charlie volunteered to write the fund-raising letters, but his documents weren't self-initiated to the same degree as Bram's cover note regarding his essay or Dana's second recycling letter documenting her work. In short, the study suggests that, rather than mutually exclusive categories, a self-initiated/other-initiated continuum better describes the reasons adolescents write because it can account for the complex and overlapping
range of rhetorical contexts in which writers and their documents are found.

Next, the study complicates Emig's study by showing that impetus for writing doesn't determine whether or not writers become engaged in their work. According to Emig, all adolescent writing "emanates from an expressive impulse [and then] bifurcates into two major modes"

(37): the reflexive mode for self-motivated projects and the extensive mode for school-sponsored ones.

Reflexive writing has a far longer prewriting period; starting, stopping, and contemplating the product are more discernable moments and reforumulation occurs more frequently. Reflexive writing occurs often as poetry; the engagement with the field of discourse is at once committed and exploratory. The self is the chief audience--or, occasionally, a trusted peer.

Extensive writing occurs chiefly as prose; the attitude toward the field of discourse is often detached and reportorial. Adult others, notably teachers, are the chief audience for extensive writing. (31)

One might predict that adolescents would be more likely to engage in their work--that is, to plan their documents and to revise them recursively as they compose--when their documents are located nearer the self-motivated end of the continuum, but that wasn't true in this study. In the four most extreme cases, Bram and Dana, whose cover note and first recycling letter were, respectively, located nearest the self-motivated end of the continuum, wrote single drafts in a
hurry, while Adam and Gregory, whose application documents were located nearest the other-initiated end of the continuum, extensively planned and revised their work. Looking at the writing processes and products of only these four writers—Adam, Bram, Dana, and Gregory—may seem to imply that other-initiated documents are more likely to prompt engagement than self-motivated ones, but documents like Heath, Irv, and Jack's ski trip proposal, Avi Porterman's theater letter, and Alice Warrent's ASL dictionary, which have self-motivated qualities, also evoked extensive planning and recursive writing processes.

This study suggests that, rather than impetus for writing, an interwoven combination of rhetorical variables prompts writer engagement and that the combination of variables varies from writer to writer and from rhetorical task to rhetorical task. In describing the engagement—or lack thereof—of the writers depicted in the Chapter Two snapshots, I speculated that many different rhetorical variables—everything from a document's level of formality or purpose to an author's sense of audience or internalized values— influenced the degree to which writers became engaged in their work. Having conducted a case study of The "Colorado or Bust" Writing Team, however, I moved
beyond speculation and more confidently argued that six variables worked in conjunction to help prompt writer engagement for Heath, Irv, and Jack: writer interest, outside intervention, ample time, relative status of writer and audience, a collaborative writing process, and cognitive dissonance. Further, I argued that if any one of the variables—the collaborative nature of the writing, for example, the allotted time the boys had to work, or even their cognitive dissonance—were changed, writer engagement might have taken place.

The study also suggests that writer engagement doesn't automatically prompt excellent or even effective documents. The "Colorado or Bust" Writing Team members were engaged in their ski trip proposal but still ignored members of their multiple audiences when they could have addressed their needs. That's not to predict that doing so would have prompted automatic acceptance of their proposal by Mr. Gratner. It does provide evidence, however, that writer engagement doesn't guarantee excellence. After all, by virtue of their extensive planning and reformulating, Heath, Irv, and Jack were engaged in their ski trip proposal. Even so, they could have far more effectively adapted their document to meet the needs of their multiple audiences.
At the risk of conjuring images of Miss Fidditch, the current-traditional, red-pen-wielding stereotypical English teacher or—perhaps even more nightmarish—her larger-than-life mythological sister, "Grammatica," described by Rose as "severe, . . . a large pair of pincers [in her left hand and in] her right hand . . . a bird by its neck, its mouth open as if in a gasp or a squawk" (1), I mention that some of the documents examined in this study for the snapshots were flawed—even when their writers were ostensibly engaged. Gregory's application essay, for example, contained typos and punctuation mistakes, while Emily and Ellen's committee guidelines included grammar errors. All of the engaged writers could have improved their documents by more careful attention to audience analysis or visual impact. In mentioning these flaws, I risk my reputation as being the "right kind" of high school English teacher: nevertheless, the flaws in these documents reinforce that writer engagement doesn't guarantee excellence or effectiveness.

Though no variable or combination of variables necessarily leads to writer engagement or excellence, the study suggests that collaborative writing can be an especially important variable in helping to foster both because it encourages planning and recursive revision
during composition, both of which are associated with writer engagement. In order to write, Heath, Irv, and Jack had to plan their document orally before the actual pen and paper (or keyboard) activity of writing could begin. Moreover, they talked about their ski trip proposal as they wrote, so reformulation and revision were a natural extension of their writing process. Though the nature of the boys' collaborative writing didn't prompt what Burnett refers to as "substantive" conflict, they still talked and talked and talked their way through rhetorical issues and choices--everything from the importance of written documents, in general, to the correct spelling of "surveys"--and learned as a result. As Dale notes, however, some of the lessons the boys learned may not be immediately apparent. In other words, collaborative writing may prompt important long-term growth among individual writers.

Collaboration also helped to prompt behavior associated with writer engagement for some of the adolescents depicted in the Chapter Two snapshots. Most obvious is the set of committee guidelines Emily and Ellen co-authored. As the snapshot depicting their work shows, the first step of their task was not physically writing the guidelines: it was planning them in a collaborative brainstorming session. Formatting the
guidelines had a collaborative element because in Emily's solitary act of typing, she thought back to her summer job as a life guard and then modeled the format of the girls' document after a job description the pool manager had written. Even Adam's ability to engage in his singularly-authored college application was enhanced by a collaborative element of his drafting: our rambling dialogue which I previously argued was tantamount to what Flower calls a "long pregnant pause during [Adam's] writing" ("The Pregnant Pause" 229).

Last, the study of The "Colorado or Bust" Writing Team reinforces business communication research about multiple audiences by showing that writers may ignore entire segments of their multiple audiences, especially when they work in isolation from others. However, the study also suggests that writers with very low status may not use—or be able to use—the strategies their higher-status, adult writer counterparts use for successfully adapting for multiple audiences. Heath, Irv, and Jack, for example, tried to adapt their proposal for two members of their multiple audiences (Mr. Gratner, their principal, and Dr. Tippin, their superintendent) primarily by accounting for the difference in relative status between writer and readers. More specifically, the boys made word, phrase,
content, and format choices they deemed appropriate given their low status. The boys never considered, however, Mr. Gratner's obligation to teachers, and so their proposal wasn't adapted for a administrative/faculty committee newly-formed to determine how best to monitor the number of school-sponsored trips being offered to students. If the boys had not written in isolation from others—if they had talked to Dr. Tippin, Mr. Gratner, or the faculty members planning departmental trips about their proposal—they might have done a better job adapting it for multiple audiences. Nevertheless, the boys didn't believe conferencing with Dr. Tippin was an option given his high status, and they believed mentioning the proposed ski trip to Mr. Gratner might invite automatic rejection. Moreover, the boys didn't talk with teachers because they didn't know the role they would have in the decision-making process regarding their proposal.

Implications for Researchers

This study raises four theoretical issues, the first in the field of business communication and the next three in the field of composition studies. In
addition, the study opens the door for three kinds of research projects.

Theoretical Issues

*Whose documents shall we study?* Most agree that business communication is a self-consciously emerging field. In defining the term, "business communication," (Shelby; Reinsch) and debating the most valid ways for researchers to make knowledge (Rentz; Rogers; Shaw; Smeltzer; Sucan; Yates), the field is even yet establishing its borders. This study, with its adolescent-age subjects, tugs and pushes at a never-before-questioned border, that business communication is marked "adults only." After all, surveys of business communication research reveal studies examining the writing processes and products of lawyers and company presidents, accountants and bank executives, or doctors and branch managers—all of whom are obviously over the age of twenty-one. Even if the gatekeepers for the field of business communication (the ABC conference chairs, the professional journal reviewers, and the publishing company editors) deem adolescent business communication insignificant or irrelevant—in essence, a rhetorical curiosity—their rejection has theoretical importance to the field because it would explicitly
establish a border that was before only tacitly in place.

How do we define adolescent writing? The field of composition studies has accepted as true Emig's report that adolescents generate two kinds of documents—those which are self-motivated or those which are school-sponsored. While Emig herself noted she had excluded documents which were "mid-mode . . . for now" (37), the field of composition has ignored the middle for the last twenty-five years, turning her two kinds of writing into a binary opposition. Though this binary may be clouded by those like Elbow, Macrorie, and Murray, who argue that a only blurry, even imaginary, line separates expressive and academic writing, and by Shuman and McGinty, whose studies also provide "alternate images" of adolescent writers, an assumption still exists regarding adolescent writers: they generate "creative" projects, generally in the form of poems or short stories, and school assignments, generally in the shape of essays and compositions. This study—with its emphasis on business and professional communication written by adolescents—challenges that assumption, that given. Though as I later show, the study probably won't result in the teaching of business communication courses
in our nation's high schools, it does expand knowledge for its own sake in the field of composition studies.

**What kind of writing do we value?** Even this study of adolescents writing business and professional communication demonstrate the power of expressivist ideology. Adam and Charlie both used the pejorative term, "BS," for what they saw as inauthentic prose. Gregory feared that persuasion was "manipulation," even though he wanted the research apprenticeship that a persuasive document might prompt. Emily and Ellen downplayed the importance of their guideline because its outline format didn't require creativity on their parts.

Expressivism privileges the solitary writer whose prose gushes forth from the overflowing resources of the solipsistic primordial self. This view may be contrasted with a more social view of composing, which sees the choices of individual writers as inherently shaped by the material and social circumstances in which they write. Recognizing the social component of audience and rhetorical context may seem less pure, but it may more accurately reflect the reality in which written discourse is created.

**Whose voices do we value?** Murray contends that all writing is autobiographical, and Kirsch and Ritchie remind us that "one particular emphasis [of feminist
scholarship] has been on admitting the "personal" into our public discourse, on locating ourselves . . . in our research" (7). Though the project's primary focus is adolescent business communication, it also functions in part as validation of my secondary-level teaching experience—which isn't always easy doing graduate work in a university English department. I vividly recall, for example, my introduction to Miss Fidditch in 1987 during a course preparing graduate students for teaching first-year composition. It was horrible. Though several graduate students argued from first-hand knowledge that Miss Fidditch had retired (or, at least, that her ranks were drastically reduced), the professor vehemently disagreed, silencing us in the process. Two years later at a Four C's convention, a "new" PhD told me she had been advised by faculty members to eliminate high school teaching experiences from her vita, so they wouldn't taint her otherwise remarkable credentials during a job search for university positions. Even a favorite faculty member of mine reported that graduate-level survey courses in literature were originally created at Ohio State to remediate high school English teachers who, ill-prepared then and now as a "rule of thumb," were returning in droves to school primarily to better position themselves on salary schedules. Though
I balance these anecdotes with positive memories of people showing great support—professors communicating with me via mail or in late-afternoon and weekend conferences and often in the company of at least one (if not all three) of my young children; departmental secretaries patiently explaining common procedures I couldn't recall from one summer quarter to the next—I still wanted to write a study that, though not focused upon my high school teaching, nonetheless related to personal knowledge I had gained as a direct result of my BHS experience.

To place the autobiographical element of my study within the larger context of composition studies, I turn to current research suggesting that the field is cognizant of its members marginalized by gender, race, and/or social class. These "outsiders," who, according to Cayton, are often part-time teachers, may not be taken seriously at "Burke's famous description of history and the history of ideas [as] an unending conversation" (654).

Burke's conversation presumes relative equality of status. For example, the contribution of a person employed in a subordinate capacity to the people at the party—a secretary or a servant, perhaps—would probably not be taken as seriously as that of other contributors, no matter how cogent or well-informed she or he appears. (654)
Though the marginalized university faculty members represented by "the person employed in a subordinate capacity" are hardly in enviable positions, they are at least in the picture. Where, in contrast, are the high school faculty members? Though perhaps at times the topic of discussion, I speculate that they are attending their own parties and were not invited to participate in this particular gathering. After all, even NCTE sponsors separate conventions and journals for its secondary-level members.

My study, the culmination of straddling what I contend are currently two overlapping but separate discourse communities, is a "social act . . . and holds the potential for influencing the social fabric of [its] environment[s]" (Dautermann 100). Perhaps, to continue Burke's metaphor, I can be a "party crasher" and bring some friends along. Even then, however, the theoretical question remains: whose voices do—and don't—we value?

Needed Research

First, this project suggests that we need large-scale descriptive studies of business communication written by adolescents to substantiate, challenge, or extend findings here. Quantitative studies targeting individual public and private schools or national and
even international youth organizations and based upon surveys, questionnaires, and writing samples could help determine the frequency, rhetorical contexts, and genre forms of adolescent business communication. These studies would broaden knowledge in composition studies by providing a more complex and, consequently, more accurate portrait of adolescent writers and their work.

Next, this project suggests a need for more case and ethnographic studies with research designs to study the writing processes and products of adolescent business writers. These studies might reinforce or challenge issues highlighted in this study, including impetus for writing, writer engagement, and the relationship between the two. Studies examining writer engagement or rhetorical excellence in collaborative writing contexts would be especially useful, particularly if they took into account the extent to which the group members engaged in conflict in both its positive and negative forms.

This study also suggests, however, that writer engagement needn't be the only major focus of these qualitative research regarding adolescent writers. Though data was limited, some writers in this study either implied or actually said that inherent differences existed between their academic and business
communication documents in terms of both writing process and evaluation standards. Fran, for example, mentioned a humorous and very informal writing style appropriate only in her newsletters as a result of its adolescent-age audience, Dana reported that she revised extensively for primarily school-sponsored writing tasks as a result of her being grade conscious, but Charlie indicated he could "BS his way" through academic and business communication documents alike primarily by amplifying limited information in either discourse form. Researchers might consider, then, designing studies which compare how adolescent writers approach academic and business communication documents. While these studies should be valuable to anyone interested in adolescent writing, they would be especially helpful to writing teachers because they might reveal what students accept and reject as useful and/or important in their composition classes.

Researchers might also consider examining business communication written by adolescents in light of gender studies, particularly those focusing on topic selection or document purpose. According to Flynn,

female students [write] of interaction, of connection, or of frustrated connection [while] . . . male students [write] of achievement, of separation, or of frustrated achievement. (428)
It seems significant, consequently, that the business communication documents written by female subjects in this study—Dana's Environmental Club letters, Emily and Ellen's guidelines, and Fran's newsletters—were primarily connected writers with audience members while those written by male subjects—Adam's college essay, Bram's cover letter, Charlie's fund-raising letters, and Gregory's application letter—were rhetorical attempts at achievement. Though the small number of subjects in this study limit generalizations, large-scale studies could provide a broad enough subject base to draw credible conclusions.

Last, this study could prompt qualitative research projects examining high school writing teachers. After all, a 1994 *English Journal* whose cover featured a "wish-you-were-here" postcard addressed to the infamous Abby Fidditch from an NCTE national convention participant implies that composition studies as a field still suspects she teaches in high school English departments. Though the data regarding the BHS English Department is understandably limited given the topic of this research project, its alternate images of high school writing teachers assigning Fulwilerian research journals (mentioned in Bram's snapshot), encouraging audience analysis (mentioned in Adam's snapshot),
including prewriting activities (mentioned in Chapter V), fostering revision work (mentioned in Dana's snapshot), and publishing student writing (mentioned in Fran's snapshot), as routine classroom procedures call into question the negative stereotype of the red-penning, sentence-diagraming, five-paragraph-essay lover North describes. More than twenty years after Hairston argued "the winds of change" were sweeping the field of composition, qualitative studies regarding individual, real-life high school writing teachers could help us determine if "the paradigm shift is complete" ("The Winds of Change" 15). In short, has Miss Fidditch retired?

If yes, what has replaced her curriculum? To answer that question, researchers should remember Berlin's contention: "To teach writing is to argue for a [composition theory] . . . whether or not [teachers] consciously choose to do so" (766) and that expressivism is "a theory of composition [which] . . . arose as a reaction to current-traditional rhetoric (771). At the center of expressive views of composing is the writer, an individual with creative but often unconscious energy waiting to be tapped. Not surprisingly, then, strategies generally associated with expressivism, including "freewriting" (Elbow, Writing without
Teachers; Macrorie, *Telling Writing*; Berthoff), "webbing" and "looping" (Wryick), as well as "growing" and "cooking" (Elbow, *Writing without Teachers*), are all brainstorming techniques designed to help ideas flow naturally, especially for "blocked" writers. Another strategy is ignoring audience (Murray; Elbow, "Closing My Eyes as I Talk"), so that the writer has time to write and think, think and write--alone. By the end of the composing process, writers should have more than a piece of writing which is sincere, spontaneous, and original: writers will have embarked on a voyage of self-discovery and, in process, learned something about themselves and the world worth sharing with others.

As a starting point for projects, researchers might examine the February, 1994 *English Journal*, in which expressive views of teaching composition are highlighted in a "Round Table" asking teachers to recount successful writing assignments. Of the ten published, nine ask that students write personally in various discourse forms in response to literature, including traditional choices, such as *Romeo and Juliet* (Jurgens and Clark) or "Chicago" (McGlinn) and noncanonical selections, such as Haley's "My Furthest-Back Person--'the African'" (Craden) or Lake's "An Indian Father's Plea" (Raman). All ten of the assignments suggest that writing is a
viable means for writers to discover both themselves and their worlds through "evolving assignments" (Karsten), peer response (Jenkins), dialect experimentation (Farris), and student publication (Thomas, Wolf).

Though the February, 1994 "Round Table" section may suggest that expressive views of composing are replacing "Fidditchian" approaches, the March, 1993 English Journal (mentioned in Chapter I) whose theme is "English and Employability"--and whose articles discuss assignments for real-life audiences in organizations with potentially different rhetorical standards than those advocated in high school classrooms--suggests that social views of composing may also influence the teaching of writing in secondary-level classrooms. Both sources--the February, 1994 English Journal "Round Table" and the March, 1993 English Journal highlighting "English and Employability"--provide authentic but obviously limited views of secondary-level English classes which composition researchers might reinforce, extend, or challenge.

Additional questions for further research could focus on the relationship between expressivist and social constructivist views of composing. Berlin argues that the two views of composing are two "different world[s] with different rules about what can be known,
how it can be known, and how it can be communicated" (766), but is that true both in theory and practice? To what extent—if any—do expressive and social views of composing collide or overlap with each other? Is it possible that one may extend from the other? In light of research suggesting that "writer-based" prose results from cognitive immaturity (Flower and Hayes, "Reader-Based Prose"), is it possible that expressive writing (whose focus is the writer) is a developmental stage towards social constructivist writing (whose focus is always reader-based)? Even if composition theorists, like Elbow, MacCrorie, and Murray, discredit such a notion, the field of composition still needs further research to understand the relationship between expressive and social views of writing, and how they are "played out" in secondary-level classrooms.

If qualitative research shows that Miss Fidditch hasn't retired, the field of composition—whose domain includes the training of high school English teachers—needs to know why. Using as models Brown and Herndl's study of middle management accountants and Wild's study of high-ranking military personal—which report that organizational norms thwart individuals from change and improvement even when they know better—composition researchers could try to isolate institutional norms and
practices which might could keep high school English teachers from embracing more current theories of teaching writing.

Implications for Teachers

An obvious implication for this study might be a rationale for teaching business communication in high schools either in currently-existing or new courses designed specifically with that purpose in mind. It's too early, however, to make that claim for two reasons.

First, arguing in favor of high school business communication classes thecetically implies that anybody with an English degree—or, more specifically in this case, a teaching certificate in English grades 7-12—is qualified to teach business communication. Though according to Bowman, many current business communication professors and researchers once defined themselves as "literature people," they reinvented themselves by taking business courses, opening businesses as writing consultants, and publishing in business communication journals. That's not to suggest that high school teachers couldn't train themselves to be business communication teachers: they clearly could. It does
suggest, however, that the transformation couldn't take place overnight.

Even if it could happen immediately, however, administrative biases or concerned parents might stop high school English teachers interested in business and professional communication from including it in their curriculum. To explain why, I return to Hairston's taxonomy which places rhetorical tasks in three potentially overlapping categories—"Class I" for routine maintenance tasks, "Class II" for somewhat complex tasks with a set purpose, and "Class III" for complex tasks requiring reflection and prompting discovery during writing. Even if high school administrators and community members lacked the composition knowledge to discuss—or refute—Hairston's taxonomy, they would probably still categorize business and professional writing with other kinds of "Class II" documents. Hairston acknowledges that exceptions exist.

Does a creative and persuasively-written grant proposal fit into Class II or Class III? Are all technical reports and scientific writing necessarily Class II writing? I suspect not. Rather it is probably the case that sometimes when an author is writing what clearly looks as if it is going to be a Class II document, something unexpected will emerge that moves the process to Class II... Similarly, an author could be composing at Class III and come to a section that called for a review of the literature or a summary; that would clearly be Class II writing...

("Different Products, Different Processes" 447-8)
It's doubtful, however, that noncompositionists with power in high school communities would make Hairston's distinctions, making it more likely they would advocate writing assignments more obviously grounded in "Class III."

Even if this study doesn't imply that we need business communication classes "ASAP" in high school settings, it does suggest writing teachers should promote social views of writing because the study calls into question the popular images of solitary writers and, by extension, expressive views of writing.

Writing is a social act. People write to and for other people, yet when we picture writing we see a solitary writer. We may see the writer alone in a garret, working in the small hours of the morning by thin candlelight. The shutters are closed. Or perhaps we see the writer in a well-appointed study seated at a desk, fingers poised over the keys of a typewriter (or microcomputer). The drapes are drawn. Or we may even see the writer hunched over a manuscript in a magnificent public or university library, the walls and walls of books standing between the writer and the world. Whether the scene of writing is poetic or prosaic, ... the writer writes alone. (Brodkey 54)

Suggesting that writing is a "peopled" activity and not a solitary one doesn't suggest that secondary-level teachers should abandon all assignments associated with expressive views of writing, but it does mean that they shouldn't privilege them in their classroom. The study suggests instead that teachers should create writing assignments with real-life audiences and authentic
purposes—like those described in the March, 1993 issue of the *English Journal* whose theme was "English and Employability."

Another pedagogical implication of this study deals with writer engagement: writing teachers should recognize what a complex phenomenon engagement—and, by extension, disengagement—is. Though Lindemann persuasively argues the first step in responding to student essays should be examining "the 'invitation' to write," (191), a student's "decision" to engage or not is ultimately based upon many variables, not just the writing prompt. That's because any written document is the culmination of a plethora of rhetorical variables. Though it would be convenient if a single variable or set of variables (a real exigence for writing, for example, combined with three full weeks to draft or a strong writer interest mixed with a "dash" of format familiarity) automatically prompted engagement among all students for every writing task, this study suggests otherwise.

Consequently, English teachers need to do more than create excellent writing prompts for their students. They need to prompt behavior associated with writer engagement—planning and recursive revision. That's not to suggest that every rhetorical task requires the same
kind of writing process or to imply that every writer writes in the same way. On the contrary, as Harris shows in her study examining the composing processes of eight graduate students in English, experienced "one-drafters" do exist (Selzer's 1983 case study of an engineer also provides a portrait of a "one-drafter"). However, as Harris also points out, inexperienced "students who are one-drafters or have tendencies toward single drafting . . . should have strategies that provide for more exploration and invention" ("Composing Behaviors" 188).

Obviously, more than one strategy exists. Harris, for example, strongly advocates writing center tutorials as a strategy for prompting engagement because of the "'exploratory talk' [which] encourages thinking and discovery" naturally taking place as writers and tutors "toss . . . around ideas to see how they play out" ("Why Writers Need Writing Tutors" 31). Others, such as Bruffee and Gere, advocate peer response and/or writing groups as a means of prompting engagement. According to a writer in Gere's "The Extracurricular of Composition," "[U]nless you . . . get reactions from different groups of people, you're not a writer. You're just dilettanting around. You gotta get rejected and get applause. You gotta get both sides" (76-77). Writing
journal entries specifically about papers-in-progress, (not unlike O'Hare and Memering's "writer's mind" strategy previously mentioned in this study) is another means for helping to prompt writer engagement. As Macrorie notes in a foreword to Fulwiler's The Journal Book, "most teachers and students using journals agree . . . that they get people thinking, they help them test their own experience against the ideas of . . . others (ii). It seems important to note, too, however, that some adolescents can become engaged as writers by using their own individual strategies. In "A Rose for Emily," Fuller, Morgenberg, Ziegler, Allen, and Daiker describe an adolescent writer who spent the first part of two thirty-five minute class periods exploring her feelings toward the writing prompt before beginning her essay—unlike her 213 classmates who launched immediately into the first draft, spent little time seriously revising, and didn't write as good a document as Emily did.

This study suggests that teachers can help prompt writer engagement among students by assigning collaborative writing projects in which students share equal responsibility for all aspects of the paper, even the grade attached to the final draft. Nevertheless, like many adults, not all high school students love to write collaboratively.
When I announced a collaborative writing assignment in my composition class, many thought the change in routine would be great, but most were skeptical. Some were downright negative. The most original of all the responses was... "English isn't a team sport." (Brockman, "English Isn't a Team Sport, Mrs. Brockman" 60)

Our first [collaborative writing] experience was less productive than we had hoped it would be. Although we were pleased with our final paper, we had difficulty dividing the work equally. It was also hard to get five separate voices... to blend into one paper. (Davis and Kyle 61)

Writing is one of those avocations that is left to the mind, left to the instinctive aspects of one's creativity. Creativity is a drive that originates deep in one's soul, almost incomprehensible even to the mind in which it originates. Trying to combine this creative drive with others... makes a huge melange... that is absolutely worthless. (Fisher 61)

In spite of student or teacher reservations, however, I still contend that collaborative writing is a good strategy for encouraging writer engagement because students must talk to write, and so document planning and recursive revision during composing is likely to occur. Moreover, high school writing classes are excellent settings for collaborative writing for three simple reasons.

First, high school students traditionally move "en mass." That means they arrive on the first day of class with a "sense of group" advantageous for collaborative writing already intact—just like Heath, Irv, and Jack for the writing of their ski trip proposal and Emily and
Ellen for the writing of their committee guidelines. Consequently, if teachers resist the temptation of taking complete control over group member selection, they may not need to devote hours of class time to the kinds of group-enhancing activities advocated by Belanger and Greer. That's not to oversimplify the complexity and importance of group dynamics within collaborative writing teams or to underestimate the potential problems of working with intact groups. It is to suggest, however, that—unlike university classes where undergraduates may be complete strangers—high school students often know each other, and so "the stage is set" for writing as a collaborative process.

Second, highly specialized courses (such as gender and composition or 19th Century British poetry) commonly taught at the university level or even a constant, yearly set of classes are not guaranteed for high school English teachers, so designing, assigning, and responding to different kinds of writing prompts is a necessity in secondary-level classes. Collaborative writing, however, is flexible: it can "work" with virtually any kind of assignment. Michigan members of Phi Delta Kappa collectively reinforced this assertion at a workshop I led regarding collaborative writing. One participant—a Spanish teacher—reported that she
had co-authored a grant proposal to fund a K-12 foreign language program in her school. Another participant said she had written an academic article with two university faculty members, and a third announced that collaboration was common among "creative" or "expressive" writers too. She, for example, had written a children's story based upon an African legend and then had assisted another writer in transforming the story into a play. These examples provide evidence that assignments with differing purposes, audiences, and formats can be written collaboratively. In addition, the examples of teachers co-authoring documents suggest that topic expertise isn't necessarily a requirement of writing team members.

In light of Nelms' *English Journal* editorial comment entitled "The Arithmetic of Teacher Workloads," I mention a third reason high schools are good settings for collaborative writing assignments: English teachers are overworked.

[A] . . . middle-school teacher . . . came to our writing project one day with the news that she would have 196 students in six sections of language arts this year . . . every day! Or, to put it another way, if this teacher spends fifteen hours a week outside of school hours (that's a fifty-hour week altogether), she can spend a little over a minute and a half a week reading and responding to each student's writing. (92)
Of course, working conditions vary from district to district, but even teachers--like those at BHS--who work with "only" 85-100 students in five days each week find themselves buried in papers on a regular basis. By asking students to write collaboratively, however, high school teachers automatically reduce their workload.

If a teacher assigns a paper in a class of twenty-five, there will be twenty-five essays to take home and evaluate. If that same assignment were collaborative in nature, those numbers would change from twenty-five to roughly eight. That bears repeating. Twenty-five essays become roughly eight. Just think of the possibilities--and try to gloat quietly. (Brockman, "'English Isn't a Team Sport,'" 60-1)

Heavy teacher workloads alone obviously couldn't justify collaborative writing. Nevertheless, because it may help to prompt planning and recursive revision during writing--both of which are behaviors associated with writer engagement--collaborative writing does have its positive side-effects for high school English teachers.

**Final Remarks**

In response to a supervisor's request, as a result of an organization's "past practices" or a collaborative brainstorming session, and/or entirely of their own volition, many adolescents--more, in fact, than might be expected--write in their volunteer positions, school
clubs, youth groups, and part-time jobs. They are writing business and professional communication. A full decade after Odell and Goswami's landmark 1985 study, *Writing in Nonacademic Settings*, it's time to begin studying adolescent business communication. Like the writing of their adult counterparts, adolescent business communication is inherently important for as Dauterman argues, "any writing is a social act . . . holding the potential for influencing the social fabric of [an] environment" (109).
Appendix A

Adam's College Application Essay

As I mentioned in the first chapter of this study, Adam's snapshot is based upon my own recollection of our Write Place sessions. In addition, neither version of his college application essay was unavailable for inclusion in this study.

I frankly remember few specific details from the first version of Adam's college application essay other than the focus: Adam's maternal grandfather whom Adam as a very young child called "Pop Pop." According to Adam, "Pop Pop" was a caring physician interested in helping others, and Bexley community members respected him for his compassion. Even as a little boy, Adam said that he wanted to be a physician because his grandfather had inspired him.

The details regarding the second version of Adam's college application essay are clearer. Adam began the essay by discussing the difficulty of adjusting to his first honors course at BHS his junior year. It wasn't, however, the teacher or the curriculum which made the course difficult: it was his new classmates, many of them National Merit Scholars, all of them enrolled in honors courses since their first year at BHS. Adam felt intimated by his peers, and his lack of confidence must have shown because--according to Adam--no one would agree to be his lab partner until the teacher assigned one, a 4.0 student who had just won an international math competition. As the year progressed, however, Adam reported that he proved himself academically in the course by participating in class discussions, by earning high scores on tests, and by eventually setting the curve on the final exam. Adam believed admission officials would value the essay because it showed that he could be successful among academically-challenged students, the kind of students who would attend the University of Michigan.
MEMO

Mrs Broeckman:

I would like to say that I worked very hard on this paper. But

D. S. That salad is

I.Olive Garden is

P. S. Thank you

for allowing me some extra time.

Thank you

D. S. I got to

193
Appendix C
Charlie's Fund-Raising Letters

C-1

St. Alban's Episcopal Church
333 South Drexel Avenue
Columbus, Ohio 43209

January 19, 1992

Dear Mr. McCoy:

The youth group of St. Alban's is organizing a trip to Red Mesa, Arizona this summer. The purpose of the trip is to work on a Navaho Indian reservation for a week. While our group is on the reservation we will be working on projects such as renovating dilapidated houses. In order to attend the camp our group needs to raise upwards of four thousand dollars. This is the reason we are asking corporations such as yours for their support. Your corporation would not just be helping us raise funds, it would be helping hundreds of other people who really need our support. Your support would be greatly appreciated. If you are interested, or have any questions, please contact me at home or call at the church office.

Sincerely Yours.
December 4, 1992

Dear Madam:

The youth group of our church has been planning a trip to southeastern Georgia for several months. On this trip we will be involved in a group workcamp. At the workcamp our group and many others like ours will be renovating dilapidated houses of low income families. We attended a camp of this sort last summer and worked on approximately one hundred houses.

In order to go on this trip we need to raise upwards of six-thousand dollars. We have planned fundraisers such as luncheons and car washes. Our latest idea is a celebrity auction. This is the reason I am writing to you. Our group would greatly appreciate an item to auction off. This could be an autograph or an item that represents your profession and character. The auction will be held in mid February. We and the people of Georgia would appreciate your support with this project.

Please send to:

Bexley, Ohio
43209

Sincerely Yours,

President
St. Alban's Youth Group
Appendix D

Dana's Environmental Club Letters

D-1

Aug. 22, 1993

Dear Faculty,

The five new officers of Environmental Club are starting fresh with clean recycling bins and a new organization. In each room we have placed three cleaned, blue bins for white, colored, and computer paper. All we're asking is for you to put them out in your room. We will have Environmental Club members emptying them weekly, or more frequently if you please. They should be of no hassle to you. This year we are providing a new choice of having a fourth blue bin in your room specifically for aluminum cans. If you would like this option, check at the bottom and return to Mr. Tatman's mailbox. We hope these bins will be used properly. If you have any questions, comments, or suggestions, please feel free to contact any one of the five officers. Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

President        Co-Vice President        Co-Vice President

Secretary        Treasurer

4th Sun
Faculty,
I wanted to see how the recycling program was working. Hopefully, all of the bins are being emptied regularly. If the bins in your room or any room in the building are not being emptied, please notify me. If you have any other suggestions, comments, etc., please just leave a note in Mr. Tatman's mailbox. Thanks.

Environmental Club Vice President
Appendix E
Emily and Ellen's Committee Guidelines
Student of the Month
Job Description

As a committee member, you should:

1. Be willing to put adequate time into this project.
2. Be able to take criticism, both good and bad.

The Selection Process:

1. When choosing a Student of the Month, don't pick a person for who they are, but what they did.
2. Choose someone who has done something above and beyond ordinary tasks, something that would be extraordinary for everyone (Not an A on a test).
3. Use a nomination form to help get ideas. Make it available for both faculty and students.
4. For the month being shown, pick someone for what they did in the previous month.
5. Pick the person(s) by the end of the last week in every month.

Making the Board:

1. Included on the board should be a picture of the Student of the Month and a brief description of why he/she was chosen.
2. To obtain the picture, call the parents. Don't ask the students! Ask the parents to keep it a secret and to put it in Mrs. Brockman's mailbox within three or four days.
3. The board must be up by the end of the first week of every month.
4. Make sure the board is appealing and eye-catching.
5. Make an announcement once the board is up, congratulating the new student of the month and asking the old one to pick his/her picture up from Mrs. Brockman.
Appendix F
Fran's Newsletters

May 22, 1992

Dear L.Y.O.ers,

Good morning! (I can’t believe I am writing this letter at 5:30 a.m.‘) 8th graders, welcome to L.Y.O. (Lutheran Youth Organization)!!!! We all hope you will join us for our summer activities. We’re looking forward to getting to know y’all. (Don’t be shy; we’re not as mean as we look.)

Sunday, June 7 During the Sunday School Hour, we will have our annual L.Y.O. elections. If you are interested in running for an office, make sure you are there (and be prepared to work hard for the next year!). If you do not wish to run for an office, come anyway because we need your votes! 8th graders, we need you guys there, too.

Also, we will be making a "Thank You" video for Amos (Andy Rust). While ballots are being counted, we can start working on this video. Everyone will have his or her own turn to tell a story about Amos or simply say "Thanks, Amos, for all the work you have done for us." Please be thinking of something really profound to say to our tremendous leader. (He deserves it.)

Thursday, June 11 At 9:00 a.m., there is an officer/sponsor meeting at the Shoney’s on Alum Creek and Livingston. What a great way to start summer vacation!

On this same day, we need all of the wonderful juniors (seniors to be) at 10:00 a.m. at Shoney’s. It is important that all the juniors be there. We are in charge of the "farewell stories for the seniors" on the night of the picnic at Webster’s. (In the past, the sponsors did this, but we’ve decided to change that). Planning for this will be at Shoney’s. It shouldn’t take too long, if we can get ALL OF THE JUNIORS there on time.

Again, on June 11, at 7:00 p.m., everyone (including 8th graders-hint, hint) is invited to my house (in case you have not figured out who is writing this) for an L.Y.O. get together. Our main goal will be to finish that video for Amos. Please bring some pop (soda), potato chips to share, and any kind of game. We have a badminton net for people to use.

Sunday, June 21 The annual picnic to honor the seniors, welcome the freshmen, and thank the sponsors, will start at 4:30 p.m. This is for all L.Y.O.ers and their families.
Food will be provided, but you need to bring games. The map to Webster's Farm will be sent later.

Monday, June 29-Friday, July 3 Every night at the Kriska's house we will be constructing the 4th of July float. We will meet at 6:30 p.m. each night and work until dark. Please come; we need your help. Please, bring pop if you can.

Looking forward to seeing everyone on June 7 for elections!!!

God Bless,
June 12, 1992

Dear LYO folks,

The officers met yesterday and we have our exciting summer events planned (or almost planned). I am hoping that many of you (particularly those who we don’t see very often) will come. Once again, I hope that we get to meet all of the incoming freshmen soon. (Like at these summer events!!)

Sunday, June 21
The annual "Celebration Picnic" at Webster’s farm will start around 4:30. Everyone is invited and you all may bring your families along, too! I can’t tell you how much fun you will have, so you will just have to come and see for yourself. Please bring your own chairs and games for everyone to play!! Food will be provided and there will be lots of dessert if the YOUTH COMMITTEE MEMBERS AND SPONSORS REMEMBER TO BRING LOTS OF BROWNIES OR COOKIES FOR EVERYONE TO SHARE. I’ll put the directions to Webster’s farm at the end of this letter. NOTE: If an officer has talked to any of you about a "farewell story for a senior," this is the night that you will share that story.

June 22 and 23 (this is not definite, but is going to let us know for sure.)

You won’t believe it, but we are in the process of planning a white water rafting outing! This would be a stay-in-a-tent type thing (or in other words—CAMPING) for one night. *****Please stay tuned in Sunday School for definite plans and further information.********

Monday, June 29—Friday, July 3
No, we are not going on a week-long retreat.
This is the week that we will build our 4th of July float! We will start working at 6:30 p.m. at my house ( ) each night.

Sunday, July 19
There will be a picnic at sometime in the afternoon. (I’ll send directions later, O.K.?) In case you don’t know Kelly, she’s the young lady that drives that neat Jeep. I’ll also let you guys know about a definite time in the next letter.
Wednesday, August 5

We are hoping that we will be able to go to "The Beach" (near King's Island, in Cincinnati) for a day. If anyone might be willing to do some work and help get this planned (in other words, be on a COMMITTEE), please let me or one of the officers know in Sunday School.

Before I end this letter............

PLEASE COME TO SUMMER SUNDAY SCHOOL THIS SUMMER!!!!!!! Fred Grimm and Steve Lietz will be our teachers. These guys have a lot of neat stuff to teach us. Come and get to know them—they are two wonderful people.

See you all in Summer Sunday School!
Love,

( )

**********Directions to Webster's Farm for June 21**********
- Take Rt. 33 towards Canal Winchester to Gender Road. Exit at Gender Road.
- Go right on Gender Road. (which is now #674) until it dead-ends (at Lithopolis-Groveport Road.)
- Turn left onto Lithopolis-Groveport Road.
- Go a short distance and make a LEFT turn at the blinking light (this is Washington Street, but it is not marked). Proceed less than a mile. When you come to a sharp right in the road, TURN LEFT. Watch for a white barn, a broken fence, and some balloons. The Webster drive is the first driveway on the left.

NOTE: If you pass the covered bridge, you have gone too far.
Appendix G

Gregory's Application Letter

Bexley, OH 43209
April 25, 1993

Dr.
Dept of Ophthalmology
Children's Hospital
700 Children's Drive
Columbus, OH 43205

Dear Dr. Leguiz

I am extremely interested in working in a research laboratory at Children's Hospital. I want this position because I am confident that I am qualified for the job and not just because I am minority.

The first reason, why I should be considered for apprentice position at Children’s Hospital is that I have been a diligent science student. Here is a breakdown of my science grades:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>S.T.S. (Science Technology Society)</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blue Biology</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honors Chemistry</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

My average grade over the past three years has been a 3.66.

I also excel in languages. I receive good grades in English, and I have a fluent command, both oral and written, of Spanish, my mother tongue. In addition, although my French skills are not as strong, I have a good understanding of the language and I enjoy speaking it whenever possible.

Secondly, I believe I am qualified to be a minority research assistant because it is the sort of unique learning experience I welcome. In the past two years, I have participated in The Governor's Institute for the Gifted and Talented in the Arts (1991), Globe Potters (1992), and Columbus Council on World Affairs (1993).
Another unusual learning experience has been my part-time position as a nanny, of sorts, in the home of a divorced mother of three children, one of whom is a nine-year old autistic boy named Joey. The responsibility of caring for a special-needs child requires a lot of patience and love.

Working as a research assistant at Children's Hospital will give me two opportunities. First, I will be able to apply science-related skills such as isolating variables, interpreting data, and measuring quantitative results. Most importantly, by working in a laboratory, I can begin to decide if a medically-related career is right for me. Thank you for considering my application.

Sincerely,
Appendix H
Heath, Irv, and Jack's Survey

SKI TRIP SURVEY

Name

1. Are you interested in a big ski trip over spring break? (1994)
   YES ___
   NO ___

2. Where would you rather go?
   WEST ___
   EAST ___
   INDIFFERENT ___

3. How would you prefer to travel?
   FLY ___
   BUS ___
   TRAIN ___

4. How much are you willing to spend?
   $250 → $500 ___
   $500 → $1000 ___
   $1000+ ___

5. If this trip doesn't occur, are you planning on going on another school related function?
   YES ___
   NO ___

6. Would you be willing to do a fund raiser to help pay for some of the cost?
   YES ___
   NO ___

PLEASE RETURN THIS SURVEY TO YOUR HOMEROOM TEACHER!!!

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Appendix I
Heath, Irv, and Jack’s First Proposal

Dear Mr.

Over the past two weeks surveys have been passed out to the students at Beasley High School, excluding the seniors. These surveys were written by three juniors, and the surveys were directed to the skiing enthusiasts in the school. We have included a copy of the survey that was handed out.

We are hoping to get a group together to go skiing over spring break, 1994. Over one hundred students have responded yes to our survey. For instance: [ ] a freshman, said that he was interested in going. He is interested in going west on a plane and does not want to spend over one thousand dollars, but he said that he would also help by going a fund raiser. [ ] also a freshman, said about the same thing but she would rather take a train and not spend more than five hundred dollars.

The majority of students showed an interest in going west and taking a plane to get there. The length of the trip is going to be five or six days long and will not take any school time.

We are asking for your approval of this trip, and to please take this idea to the board. Mrs. Brockman and Dr. have showed interest in chaperoning the trip.

*These surveys, one of which is included, were written by three juniors, and were directed to the skiing enthusiasts in the school.

2 We have randomly selected two positive responses to our survey.

Sincerely,
April 7, 1994

Mr.
Principal
Bexley High School
326 South Cassingham
Bexley, OH 43209

Dear Mr.:

Over the past two weeks, we have distributed surveys to all freshmen, sophomores, and juniors at Bexley High School. These surveys (see attached) were directed towards the skiin; enthusiasts in order to find out if there is any interest in a school-sponsored trip to a major ski resort, like Steamboat Springs or Killington, Vermont, during spring break next year.

Over one hundred twenty-five students from BHS responded "yes" to the first question of our survey, indicating a high interest for a school-sponsored trip (two randomly selected surveys have been included). The majority of students showed an interest in going West and taking a plane to get there. The length of the trip is going to be five or six days long and will not take any school time.

Based upon the survey results, we want to organize a ski trip, one which Mrs. Brockman and Dr. have already agreed to chaperone. We hope you will approve this trip and then suggest it to Dr. and the Bexley Board of Education.

Sincerely,
WORKS CITED


Balderman, Jack. 'I Was Published!': Developing Interest and Confidence in Student Writers." English Journal 82.3 (1993): 61-2.


"BHS Student Profile." Bexley High School, Bexley, OH, 1994.


Lexington, April, 1992.


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      Teachers Inspired Union President." Word on Business May, 1994, 10.


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