English for Academic Purposes

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Material Writer's Guide (1995) (Ed. P. Byrd)
Boston, MA: Heinle & Heinle

English for Academic Purposes

John M. Swales

> A common assumption in ESP is that the truly professional practitioner uses locally produced or in-house materials for teaching, not published textbooks.
>
> (P. Robinson, 1991, p. 56).

INTRODUCTION

I shall restrict my comments to textbook writing in English for Academic Purposes (EAP), rather than attempt to cover the broader field of English for special purposes (ESP). EAP textbooks are designed to prepare students for college or to assist their progress once they are enrolled in degree programs. The former are often called presessional courses and the latter insessional courses. In the contemporary United States, a common type of presessional course is a July–August intensive program in EAP and study skills for those who will start studying for their degrees in the fall. In contrast, insessional courses run alongside content courses during the academic year. These courses may be eligible for credit of various kinds, and may have links with particular disciplinary areas or even with particular course offerings (as in so-called adjunct courses). Insessional courses have a limited number of contact hours (usually from two to six per week) and often have a focus on particular skills such as "lecture comprehension" or "academic writing."

I have concentrated in this chapter on the EAP sector for a number of reasons. First, EAP has an identifiable market with established channels of communication among publishers, their agents, and institutes likely to place orders for class sets. Second, EAP courses tend to be offered on a regular basis, whereas ESP work for specific occupational groups—as in contract teaching for organizations—tends to require materials of a special nature. Third, marketing strategies in professional rather than academic areas tend to be much more problematic. For example, Maher's *International Medical Communication* (1992), an excellent manual for non-native-speaker (NNS) medical doctors, is a marketing nightmare since it really needs to be promoted through medical channels rather than through publicity aimed at the ESL community. Fourth, in some areas, especially in English for Business, the need to develop high quality videos of real-life situations now imposes sufficiently high origination costs to leave little opportunity for the individual author. And last but not least, my own experience has predominantly been in the EAP area.

EAP TEXTBOOKS: PUZZLES AND PARADOXES

I have long been intrigued by what I perceive to be the somewhat paradoxical situation of the would-be EAP or ESP textbook writer. Part of the puzzle lies in the way that ESP course materials are developed. Curriculum design in ESP is typically a three-stage process, even though the three stages are usually cyclical rather than following each other in strict chronological order. Stage 1 involves reaching some understanding of the target situation, that is, the roles that a specific group of NNS learners can be expected to play in English. In Stage 2, a study is made of the elements that realize those roles. This study might require, for instance, analysing prototypical texts and identifying key vocabulary and communicative strategies. In Stage 3, materials and language-learning activities are devised with the hope that the elements elicited in Stage 2 can be acquired as efficiently as possible, so that the students can survive and flourish in the target situation environment.

Throughout the world, for at least the last 25 years, versions and variations of this process have continued to be the central creative activity of EAP operations. The quantity of course materials that have been produced is enormous: part of it is in current use, some of it was ephemeral, some of it has been filed away for future reference, but much of it is now forgotten (except perhaps in the memories of its creators). Overall, then, EAP materials production is a widespread cottage industry that may bring very considerable personal satisfaction to its practitioners, but which offers in most cases a rather doubtful monetary return on the energy and time expended. One solution to this "inefficiency" has probably already occurred to the reader. Why not publish more of these materials so that they reach a wider audience? In this way could we not cut down on the massive reduplication of effort at the local level?

In the quotation that opens this chapter, Pauline Robinson offers one reason why this simple solution is not so simple. In EAP, much more than in other areas, textbooks are thought to be lazy, second-rate alternatives to in-house materials. For many years textbook adoptions have traditionally been assumed to diminish practitioner status and value, and to lower the prestige of the employing unit. Of course, there may well be situations for which no published materials are suitable, or others where a shortage of money (particularly foreign exchange) may make local handouts inevitable. On the other hand, there are many other situations where textbooks could have been adopted, but were not. Further, this "rejectionist" stance toward EAP textbooks does not exactly endear the EAP profession to the major commercial publishers. Indeed, the climate of disdain can make it difficult for EAP practitioners to accept the idea that there actually could be "useful" or even "good" EAP textbooks. Robinson's (1988) scathing review of *Writing Laboratory Reports* (Dudley-Evans, 1985) is a good case in point, as is Jone's (1990) discussion piece entitled "ESP Textbooks: Do They Really Exist?" Publishers' representatives, whether at a conference, a book fair, or on the road, are understandably less than pleased to find a whole class of their wares damned virtually unseen before their eyes.

This rejectionist attitude further problematizes an already small and difficult market. A publisher friend relates the story of his many visits to Middle Eastern universities in the 1970s—at that time a hotbed of materials writing activity. On arriving at the ESP unit, the head of the operation would immediately and proudly announce, "Of course, we never use textbooks here; we produce all our own materials," and then, pointing to a stack of typescript on the desk, would ask, " We were wondering if you would like to publish our materials." My friend ruefully commented that he could never persuade anybody that, from the publisher's perspective, there was an inherent contradiction between the announcement and the query.

The self-esteem wrapped in creation rather than purchase thus reflects one kind of paradox that the EAP textbook writer needs to reckon with. Another is the paradox of needs analysis. Ever since Munby (1978), it has been argued that the more we know about our own students and their particular target situation(s), the more tailor-made our courses need to be. Needs-driven approaches are thus antithetical to materials made available for more generalized audiences in only broadly comparable situations. Regression to the individual situation (Johns, 1988) is an opposite movement to the wider audience coveted by a textbook author. A corollary paradox emerges when we note that an EAP textbook, perhaps one aiming at a worldwide market in some specialized area, is almost inevitably the outcome of a localized experience, typically down to the level of a single institution. Although the generalizing transformation has some advantages, there are losses too. The materials may have to be bent to fit into a series format; the reduction in page size may have adverse effects on the exercise typology, as may the new constraint that it will no longer be possible to look at several pages at once; and the close fit to student characteristics in terms of mother tongue, cultural background, and educational level will have to be foregone to cope with the exigencies of a more heterogeneous and yet imaginary audience.

So far this section may have provided depressing reading to aspiring EAP textbook writers. Needless to say, there are also several arguments that can be made in favor of EAP textbooks. Textbooks have "a clearly discernible shape: a beginning, a middle and an end." (Swales, 1980, p. 18.) They offer predictability, direction, and much better opportunities for self-study. They also tend to be much better organized and planned and to be more internally coherent than in-house materials, principally thanks to the combined efforts of authors, reviewers, and publishers. And, of course, ESP and EAP textbooks actually exist—and in fair numbers. Robinson's (1991) extensive ESP bibliography contains over 800 items, of which I estimate about 80—or around 10 percent—are textbooks.

A CASE HISTORY OF AN OCCASIONAL EAP TEXTBOOK WRITER

In this section I would like to review my own experience as a part-time EAP textbook writer. I hope these reflections will illustrate in concrete and pragmatic

ways the threats and opportunities that face those of us who hold out hopes c turning some of our course materials into commercial products. Perhaps th vicissitudes of my own "para-career" as a textbook writer may offer hints, sug gestions, cautions, and pointers to younger colleagues.

However you measure it, my first experience with ESP textbook publishin was also my most successful, thus giving further credence to the view that man professional ESL instructors have one decent textbook inside them but few hav more than one! The thinking behind the materials that became *Writing Scien tific English* (WSE) in 1971 has already been told—with the usual dash of cor rective hindsight—in a chapter in Mackay and Mountford (1978). Here I mainl want to stress how serendipitous were the circumstances that led to this text book. I had taken up my post as a junior lecturer at the College of Engineerin in Tripoli, Libya, in the fall of 1966, having just completed a graduate course i linguistics and English language teaching. Shortly after I arrived, the head of th small English section was dismissed for supposed "irregularities" in his runnin of the college bookshop. I was appointed in his place since I was the "only on with recent training," and, in effect, I was thus prematurely assigned the role o leading a small materials development team. Over the next four years three col leagues and myself worked together successfully to develop materials for th first- and second-year engineering students, who were all required to take inses sional English courses. I had the prime responsibility for the materials for teach ing writing. In the fall of 1969 E. Van Milne of Thomas Nelson visited Tripoli looked at my materials, and immediately said that his firm would like to publis an expanded, de-Arabicized version. I concurred with surprise, enthusiasm, an no thought of negotiating the offered contract. For example, I did not know until some time later that the percentage of royalty typically increases as certai sales figures are met. Van Milne was keen to obtain the manuscript because, a that time, the only comparable books on the international market were Her bert's *The Structure of Technical English* (1965) and Ewer and Latorre's *A Cours in Basic Scientific English* (1969), and neither focused very clearly on writing (Perhaps neither did WSE, but that's another story). Shortly after Van Milne's memorable visit, Moammer El-Ghaddafi overthrew the regime of King Idris, a dusk-to-dawn curfew was imposed, and the university closed for several weeks Even a fairly indolent young man enjoying the relaxed pace of North African life in the 1960s could see that this hiatus in normal affairs provided a window o opportunity that should not be allowed to slip idly by. I got to work and the manuscript was written by the time I left Libya in the summer of 1970.

By today's procedures, the materials were turned into a book with a mini mum of editorial concern, although our hasty decision that the textbook would never sell enough copies to warrant a companion instructor's manual (IM) would come back to haunt us (again and again). Even if the scientific content of WSE was indifferent, the linguistic analysis, the exercise typology, and the early attempt at a functional approach were well enough done to make the book a modest success, even to its garnering a fleeting mention in Howatt's *A History of English Language Teaching* (1984). By the time it went out of print in 1985, it

had run through several impressions (with its price rising in steps from 80 pence to 4 pounds 80) and had sold around 50,000 copies. There had been an official Japanese version (15,000 copies) and a large "unauthorized" one in the People's Republic of China (reports of the latter's press run of 600,000 copies are probably highly exaggerated).

Despite this modest level of success, WSE, like the other books I have since written, never produced any income that did more than cover certain incidental expenses (regrettably in my case, cigarettes). On the other hand, the fact that I had a textbook in "the works" was undoubtedly a significant element in my getting a lectureship at Leeds University in 1970. I also suspect that critical approval of WSE tipped the balance in my favor when I was appointed professor and director of the English Language Servicing Unit at the University of Khartoum in 1973.

One small textbook came out of my five years in the Sudan, but two did not. I had hoped to write with colleagues a textbook on English for academic legal purposes, and another on English for architectural studies, since I had been active as a course developer in both these areas at Khartoum. But both projects died as we came to realize the vast differences between the world's legal systems and the very different emphases that different universities gave to first-year undergraduate architectural studies (from straight civil engineering to the glories of the world's architectural heritage, to an emphasis on drafting skills). Since we could not find sufficient "generality," we abandoned our initial discussions with publishers. The book that did emerge—coauthored with Paul Fanning—was *English in the Medical Laboratory* (EML; 1980). EML was based on the materials we had developed for students in an advanced diploma course in medical laboratory technology situated in the medical school. These were typically mature students with developed career plans and were, for these reasons, a more interesting group to write materials for than the less-focused undergraduate students in the humanities or social sciences. I suspect that Van Milne of Nelson took the book on as much as a favor to me as in any hopes of Nelson reaping any financial reward. EML was designed for the third world and was based on a pretty thorough analysis of relevant manuals and typical procedures. It did give rise later to a fairly amazing correspondence with an administrator from a London hospital who urged me to destroy all available copies since they contained a description of a laboratory procedure that had since been declared unsafe in Britain. Are Paul and I the only ESL textbook writers to be accused of producing materials that are hazardous to human health? (If not, I would like to hear of other cases.)

Despite its very restrictive title and coverage, the book was not, in fact, a total commercial loss. By 1985 it had sold 7,000 copies. By that year the ESL publishing industry was entering a period of turmoil marked by mergers, takeovers, and buyouts. Publishers' lists seemed to be changing hands with bewildering frequency, leaving purchasers, booksellers, and authors in a state of

confusion. Marketeers and accountants had somehow managed to put them selves in the position of making decisions about a manuscript's viability, thu reducing the influence of the ESL commissioning editors, who were often con siderable ESL experts in their own right. Nelson's story was all too typical; Va Milne retired and a new person "with management training" took over an decided unilaterally that all ESL textbooks that were not selling 5,000 copies year were to be dropped from the list. I only learnt some months later that m two textbooks were no longer officially in print when I failed to find them in th next year's catalogue! O tempora, O mores.

Meanwhile, in 1982, I had become involved in an EAP textbook project o a very different sort, although one not atypical of ESP in the developing world By this time I had become reader in English for Specific Purposes at Aston Uni versity in Birmingham, England. The strong ESP group there, which was pri marily involved in running an innovative Master of Science in ESP program, bi for and won a contract with the British Overseas Development Agency to writ a replacement textbook in technical English for the 75 polytechnics in the east ern region of India. The book was to be written with the Technical Teacher' Training Institute in Calcutta, who seconded Rabindranath Ray as local counter part. There was provision in the contract for three extensive local visits and a sum of about $20,000 dollars, which would provide at that time a lecturer-writer's salary for a year plus some part-time and clerical assistance. We there fore appointed an experienced instructor/materials writer on a one-year specia contract to carry out the bulk of the work—with the idea that the regular staf would offer advice, occasional assistance, and fine tuning.

After six months we came to realize that we were facing a problem. The materials writer had produced some very interesting fragments, but seemed to be finding it difficult to conceptualize the book as a whole or to develop a plan that would ensure that the draft materials would be ready by the contract deadline— and by the time the money ran out. After a crisis meeting, Ray Williams, who hac recently written an excellent study skills volume entitled *Panorama* (1982), and I added ourselves to the writing team. Within a few months we managed to pro-duce a resource book in technical English divided into four sections: reading (Ray Williams); grammar (the materials writer, Mr. Ray, and others on the staff); word formation (contracted to a part-timer); and writing (myself). The 216-page book—with a 90-page (IM)—was published by Orient Longman in 1984 as *Communication in English for Technical Students* under the authorship of Ray Williams, Rabindranath Ray, and John Swales. This was the only time I became involved in a commissioned textbook project (there was of course no question of royalties). As far as I know, the book was initially well received and there have since been several teacher-training workshops designed to show how the volume can be exploited. However, in retrospect, this project called for a more profes-sional approach to the whole business of textbook creation than my colleagues and I, as busy lecturers and occasional materials writers, were able to provide.

That, you might think, could well be the end of this account of a small EAP textbook writing career. Not quite. The Libya and Sudan scenarios are now repeating themselves at the University of Michigan. I am currently engaged with a colleague, Christine Feak, in turning five years' experience of working on a writing course for incoming graduate students into a volume for the University of Michigan Press' EAP Textbook Series. I shall return to this project in the final section of the chapter.

And even that is not quite the end. For several years now I have been teaching a graduate credit course in "Prospectus and Dissertation Writing for Nonnative Speakers." My longer term plan is to produce a manual of research English for nonnative speakers of English. This is a big project since only part of the initial research has so far been done; for instance, I need to have a better understanding of the grant proposal genre than I do now. My current thoughts are to try for a volume that will operate at three levels—and in three different font sizes. At one level the manual can be used as a class text in an advanced writing class. At the second level, it will operate as a self-access reference manual for advanced NNS graduate students and researchers. At the third level (with the smallest font), it will provide a kind of encyclopedia of what we know—and do not know—about written research English. This level will itself be written in research English and will thus self-illustrate many of the points made. Amongst other things, I hope this volume will reveal the great progress we have made in understanding this very important variety of English since WSE was published in 1971. It would add a sense of personal closure, I believe, if I could arrange matters so that my last ESP textbook will come out in 1996, exactly 25 years after my first. And, yes, it will be the last. Probably.

TWELVE OBSERVATIONS ON WRITING EAP TEXTBOOKS

The two previous sections of this chapter can be seen, I think, as pointing to a number of messages. I have selected twelve.

1. For the EAP textbook writer, luck can play a much bigger role than we might normally imagine. Luck is often thought of as being in the right place at the right time with the right product. However, it may also involve meeting the right person. In my case, the right person was Van Milne of Nelson; others have told me of key mentoring relationships that gave them the competence and confidence to try and get a textbook published. Whoever they are, such people may not come along twice.

2. Unlike textbooks intended for general courses, EAP textbooks are less susceptible to being characterized and marketed in terms of fashionable labels ("communicative," "content-based," "reading-writing," "task-based," "discoursal-comical-tragical-pastoral"). They thrive or wither based more on their basic qualities, which become established by word of mouth, by a loose network of recommendations or disrecommendations.

3. One particular and particularly unhappy reason for this situation h been the failure in our profession to develop a coherent system for publishi appropriately critical and considered reviews of ESL/ESP textbooks. Apa from the occasional detailed review in *English Language Teaching Journal,* tex book reviewing does not compare with the quality reviews of scholarly teacher reference volumes such as can be found in *Studies in Second Langua Acquisition.* The amount of space given to published discussion of textbool remains low and the quality of that discussion is generally poor. Reviews tend consist of descriptive summaries followed by bland statements of the "Mar teachers will find this textbook a useful addition to their bookshelves" type. I consequence, innovative and exciting textbooks are poorly identified as deser ing praise, while those that are little more than potboilers are insufficiently cast gated for what they really are. We sorely need more thumbs-up and thumb down in textbook reviewing.

4. For those who aspire to university careers, especially in the so-calle research universities in the United States, textbook production is a risky bus ness. There the conventional wisdom typically makes a sharp distinctio between "real scholarship" (i.e., scholarly books, articles, and essays) and "pec agogical activities" (i.e., textbooks). In my experience, this unfortunate oppos tion can be somewhat defused by two strategies: first, by being active in bot areas, and second, by insisting that you see the textbook as an intellectual cha lenge rather than as a commercial opportunity. Despite prejudices against text book authors, I still believe that it is better to view writing EAP textbooks a career-enhancing rather than revenue-enhancing. After all, obtaining a new posi tion that offers greater responsibility, better security, and an increase in salar seems a more worthwhile deal than a decent royalty check for a few years. M advice then would be to aim for critical rather than commercial success (even if for the reasons I have stated, you may not get the reviews that your textbool deserves). In the end, it is what your peers think of you, not what your loan offi cer thinks, that counts. So, offer originality in aim (i.e., try to find an unfille niche in the market); do the research and development to try and get the text and tasks (mostly) right; and be enterprising and imaginative in creating exer cises and activities.

5. Given all this, it is important to recognise that the EAP textbook is bu one genre in the genre system that organises our discourse community. It con nects with our course development, it fits in with presentations of our ideas a conferences, it feeds off research papers that are relevant to our areas of inter est, it gives us opportunities to reframe our R & D in order to contribute to that literature, and it allows us entry into the arcane processes of manuscript review, personal recommendation, and program review. And there is a corollary to all this. I still believe it to be true of EAP, if not of some other ESL specialisms, that a person is thought to be somehow lacking if that person has not produced a respectable textbook. In the long run, it pays to present yourself as an all-rounder with strengths in several EAP genres.

6. I doubt if there is any generally useful "method" or "system" for producing a textbook. And here I am reminded of a story I long ago heard Gerry Abbott of Manchester University tell regarding the vagaries of the text development process. He recounted a radio interview he had heard with the well-known playwright, Tom Stoppard (of *Rozenkrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* fame). As I remember, Stoppard's remarks went somewhat as follows:

> There is a widespread view that playwrights work top-down. They get an idea, they then think of their main characters, then they plot out the play into acts, then into scenes, and they write the dialogue. This is like starting with the big bones, building up the skeleton by adding the little bones, then the muscles, and then the flesh. Well, although many playwrights may work like this, this is not my way of proceeding at all. I start with a perfect little finger, a little jewelled fragment of dialogue. I don't know what to do with it at this stage, so I write another perfect little finger, and then another. At some stage I have enough for a well-crafted hand, which might comprise a scene. And then I write another totally independent scene. And then I do other bits of the body until I can make a play.

Stoppard's story of his own textual production process has always been important to me. I see myself as following a broadly bottom-up way of proceeding—not perfect little fingers perhaps, but awkward hands. But I know of others who cannot stand the messiness of this approach. Of course, writing good materials is one thing, and writing a coherent and worthwhile textbook is another. A textbook is more than the sum of its individual parts, since it requires an organizing vision and a sense of direction that small-scale materials do not need. In my experience, getting the damn parts to fit together is nothing other than persistent and sometimes painful cogitation and experimentation. My co-author, Chris Feak, is, I suspect, often surprised by my restlessness, by my suggestions for moving this to there and replacing that with this.

7. Because of the paradoxes besetting the EAP textbook writer, it is important to pay close attention to the likely attitudes and interests of the instructor when writing for publication. My experience suggests that these instructors are not at all likely to be people who trundle into class so underprepared that they need, for example, to have each section of the book in exactly the same format. Indeed, textbooks unitized in this way rarely have enough momentum in task development to be satisfactory. So I see nothing wrong in designing units around the special communicative and discourse features of the chosen topics. Further, in order to respect the EAP teacher's active involvement, I see no need to design the EAP textbook as an all-inclusive, stand-alone, hermetically sealed package, but instead advocate creating one with open boundaries onto which instructors can be encouraged to attach their own supplementary texts, exercises, and activities. Although the ideas I expressed in Swales (1980) about "half textbooks" have never been taken up in practice, I still harbor the thought that there is much to gain and little to lose in opting for an arrangement whereby the

course is jointly constructed by the textbook writer and the local instructor sensitive to his or her students' specific target situation.

8. It is my sense that in the next few years EAP textbook writers would be wise to be selective. There are a number of cross-cutting parameters:

a. Undergraduate or graduate students? Or both?
b. In either case, presessional or insessional? Or both?
c. Narrow coverage of disciplines (e.g., just social science)? Or broader (e.g., all but the humanities)?
d. Narrow coverage of skills (e.g., lecture comprehension)? Or broader (e.g., study skills)?
e. Designed only for the United States? Or does the book have something sufficiently useful to say about the chosen academic area to be viable in other ESL/EFL contexts?

In today's world I do not hold out much hope for those who opt (whether as a result of personal ambition or of marketing pressure) for the broader choices in every case. The most likely result of such a policy will be a textbook—if it makes it that far—that does not please anybody. In our case, the textbook Christine Feak and I are writing is restricted to graduate students. It is strictly insessional. Unlike other EAP writing courses, it is highly "strategic" since it stresses the importance of helping NNS graduate students to "position" themselves vis-à-vis their audiences. On the other hand, we think it will work for a fairly broad range of disciplines (outside the arts and humanities). The book is strongly focused on writing in its first half—although inevitably there are some "model" passages for analysis and comment. Toward the end, reading becomes somewhat more central as we move toward writing summaries and then on to critiques of academic articles. We are still undecided about the volume's likely overseas acceptability.

As might be expected, the way we have selected the parameters has been much influenced by our experience at the University of Michigan. Most importantly, we have become convinced that incoming freshmen and graduate students have to match very different writing expectations. The latter, for example, are from the outset supposed to display technical sophistication and to use a consistently formal academic style. In addition, they have already developed analytic skills, have a strong sense of the research process in their chosen discipline, and are rarely afraid of quantification. It is these requirements and learned characteristics that motivate the niche-marketing of our writing course.

9. Part of this volume is set aside for the "Nuts and Bolts," so my observations here will be both partial and brief. Let me explain first why I no longer accept advances for books. First, the sums I am offered are quite small, but even so, paying off the advance through the early royalty checks can be a depressing experience. Second, I do not like the emotional constraints that financial indebtedness imposes on getting a manuscript delivered before being quite ready to do

so. I like the independence (illusory perhaps) that follows from not accepting an advance. Finally, and despite the low pay-rates prevailing in our profession, it is more likely to be time rather than money that we run out of. One possibility, pioneered long ago at my institute, is for the institution to find a way of giving release time for book development in exchange for a share of any future royalties. This system has worked well at Michigan for many years to all-round mutual advantage.

10. Toward the beginning of this chapter I referred to the "cottage industry" of EAP materials production. There are increasing signs that in many parts of the world this industry is turning its course materials into locally produced textbooks. I have recently seen examples from Brazil, Italy, and Singapore where both pedagogic and production quality is high. The print runs are usually small (1,000–2,500 copies) and the books may be used in only a handful of institutions. These volumes are labors of love, an emotion whose path does not proverbially run smooth. The story of the Brazilian reading text *Para Compreender Textos em Ingles* (de Gama, Barbosa, Reis, Ferreira, Madeira, de Souza & Dantas, 1992) exhibits a typical five-year cycle, including a substantial publication delay caused by a financial crisis at the university. As usual, the role of the coordinator Lucia Ferreira, was key. As Rosangela Dantas, one of the seven coauthors (that fact itself being another interesting story), said to me, "Without her we would never have got to the end." With the spread of desktop publishing facilities, I would anticipate a corresponding increase in such enterprises in the United States. Although there may be no immediate financial reward, opportunities to become involved in such local productions should not be lightly dismissed. They look good on the vita and may yet catch the attention of a major publisher.

11. Each decade offers a different set of opportunities for EAP textbooks. The 1970s were very accommodating, but the 1980s much less so. There are signs that the 1990s may be more like the 1970s than the 1980s, as smaller publishers with lower overheads and with more of an eye for niche markets proliferate.

12. A small, but useful and satisfying EAP textbook-writing "para-career" may still be possible without compromising standards, without writing down to what publishers anticipate (often wrongly) to be the levels of attention, knowledge, and intelligence of both instructors and students out there in our chosen area. The books by Master (1986), Weissberg and Buker (1990), and Maher (1992) prove that it can be done.

That said, there may be a final paradox. In my first draft of this chapter, I ended with the bold exhortation "Why not go for it?" Chris Feak commented as follows:

> Finally, a response to "Why not go for it?" I can only speak for myself, but I may be a fairly typical EAP instructor who has drawers and drawers of "stuff." I've heard a lot of people say, "Why don't you write a textbook?" . . . Yes, the potential is there, but I think many people need mentoring to get them going . . . . Also, because I am quite critical of what I produce, I may not like my own materials. What seemed like a good idea last fall doesn't look so good now. Was it Tolstoy who said he never read his own works because he would feel compelled to edit them as he read? Now I'm no Tolstoy, but I'm just as hard to please. A textbook seems so fixed. It's hard for me to imagine being completely happy with the final product. I guess I am happiest creating material that seems just right for the moment.

I would imagine that all ESL materials writers can relate to Chris Feak' comments, particularly the closing one about losing the dynamics of materi "just right for the moment." The commentary also reveals a final paradox c EAP materials writers being blocked in their textbook aspirations by their ow perfectionism. Happily, as readers will know by now, in this particular instanc the paradox has been resolved.

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Textbooks for Training Programs for International Teaching Assistants at U.S. Universities

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FACING UNIQUE REALITIES

Writers of textbooks for use in training programs for international teaching assistants (ITAs) must face two realities unique to ITA training. First, at most U.S. universities programs for training ITAs have a fundamentally different relationship to the institution than that of the institution's ESL courses and programs because of the location of ITAs in the structure of the institution. ITAs are both graduate students and either active or potential teachers of the institution's undergraduates. They are important to the graduate faculty for the quality of their academic work; they are important to the undergraduate program because of the quality of their teaching. Thus, the ITA training program and the materials it employs can come under scrutiny from and be subject to criticism by people who normally would not be concerned about the materials in an ESL course. Second, the market for textbooks for ITA programs/courses is a limited one. Although there is constant talk about the large number of ITAs (no one knows for certain how many there are, however), they constitute but a small subset of the total set of all nonnative speakers of English in U.S. universities. Moreover, ITA programs try to keep the costs to the ITA for training as low as possible. Many of the 43 ITA programs surveyed in 1989 noted as one of their main concerns that "making students bear the cost of training is a considerable financial burden on some ITAs," and fewer than half of them provided textbooks for their students (Byrd, Constantinides, & Smith, 1990). As a result of these two ITA realities, textbooks for ITA programs have to meet the expectations of audiences new to many ESL teachers, and their writers have to have some motivation other than the financial rewards they expect from book sales.

This chapter will survey the design factors that we consider basic to the creation of textbooks for ITA training courses and programs. We will then analyze three major problems for writers of ITA texts in a discussion that includes ideas and experiences from the coauthors of the three ITA training program textbooks that have been published by major publishers in the United States (Byrd, Constantinides, & Pennington, 1989; Pica, Barnes, & Finger, 1990; Smith, Meyers, & Burkhalter, 1992).