Revision: Reasons and methods

Helen Jane Cerny Jones

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REVISION: REASONS AND METHODS

A Thesis
Presented to the
Faculty of
California State College,
San Bernardino

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts
in
English Composition

by
Helen Jane Cerny Jones
August 1984
REVISION: REASONS AND METHODS

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Approved by:
Chair

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ABSTRACT

Historically, it has been established that all writing is rewriting (or revising), and revision must be engaged in for a writer to write well. But, most student writers do not agree and equate rewriting with punishment work; they rewrite because of excessive technical errors or to raise a grade. They define revision as editing for mechanical errors (external or surface revision) while professional and experienced writers, who understand the thinking process involved in revision, define it as altering the substance of the written work (internal revision). Also, experienced writers revise constantly and use both forms of revision to produce a polished piece of writing. And, revision patterns and profiles exist, but not one set method is followed by writers; therefore a variety of procedures are used. Students, therefore must be taught the need for revision, the motivating force of revision and about the tools and skills required to engage in revision. I propose, (1) that teacher education on the revision process, methods and techniques be implemented; (2) that the recursive revision process and cognitive strategies be taught to student writers; and (3) that instruction be given on revision methods and techniques for students to use. By providing this, we can help the students improve not only the form but the substance of their writing.
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INTRODUCTION:

Historians and professional writers testify to revision as an essential stage in the composing process. They tell us that the discipline of writing and rewriting prose leads to the discovery of what one has to say and how it can be said. Unfortunately, this general agreement about the importance of rewriting is not shared by many student writers. Few students make extensive or substantive structural changes, and most just rework their papers for mechanical errors and minor matters of form. Instructors have tried peer evaluation, self evaluation and, most often, extensive teacher evaluation, but despite their efforts, students still fail to revise or, worse yet, make revisions that do not improve their drafts. In order to teach the complexities of the revision process, all three kinds of evaluation—by peers, teachers, and self—are demanded and at all stages of a text's development.

For the past eight years or so, textbooks have been written on the history and process of revision, studies and research about writing have been published, and teachers have experimented with structured revision activities in
an effort to educate and offer way to the students to revise their writing. In view of this, Part One, Chapter 1 will include a historical overview of the background of revision, presenting the various theoretical approaches to revision. The different modes of writers (students, inexperienced and professional) and how they actually revise will be demonstrated and explained in Chapter II. In Part Two, the third and final chapter will draw from these theories and modes and will offer usable methods and techniques for instructors, writers and students.

A better understanding of the process of revision should serve to emphasize the need for the teaching of revision in composition classes and its incorporation into writing curricula.
PART ONE
CHAPTER 1
REVIEW OF BACKGROUND AND INFLUENCES

To understand the theoretical approaches to revision, it is necessary to review the background and different aspects and influences since, after all, revision is not an idea invented recently. A detailed history of revision is needed for one to comprehend this and to clarify the evolution of the term *compositio* and the processes involved in revision. Many scholars and authorities will be called upon to demonstrate and explain their theories.

What better authority to start our review with than Aristotle. Since the ancient Greeks did most of their revising in their heads, Aristotle didn't have much to say about revision. In addition, the Greeks had no term for composition in the modern sense, but thought of it as the careful arrangement of specifically chosen sentence parts. To substantiate this we find that Aristotle writes the following in his *Rhetoric*:

But purity (or correctness), which is the foundation of style, depends on five rules. First, connecting particles (words or clauses) should be introduced (arranged) in their natural order, before or after, as they require... The first rule therefore is to make proper use of connecting particles; the second to employ special, not generic terms (calling things by their special names). The third consists in avoiding ambiguous
terms, unless you deliberately intend the opposite, like those who, having nothing to say, yet pretend to say something... The fourth rule consists in keeping the genders distinct—masculine, feminine, and neuter (inanimate) as laid down by Protagoras... The fifth rule consists in observing number, according as many, few, or one are referred to... (express plurality, fewness and unity by correct wording). 1

According to Aristotle, then, changes were all done on the sentence level and editing was performed to attain "purity" (correctness) as his rules were applied to refine the product. His theory is still in effect today, used particularly by students and inexperienced writers. After they have completed their drafts, they proceed to examine each sentence very carefully, but for mechanical and surface errors only. Little attention, if any, is given to text changes. Today we call this process external revision or editing and proofreading.

While the Aristotelian theory deals with "surface revision," the Roman, Quintilian, writes about more elaborate or substantive changes in his Institutes of Oratory (AD 92). He observes that "the correction of our work is by far the most useful portion of our study, and that erasure is quite as important a function of the pen as actual writing. Correction takes the form of addition, excision and alteration." 2 To better explain, here are Quintilian's words:

On the other hand, to prune what is turgid, to elevate what is mean, to repress exuberance, arrange what is disorderly, introduce rhythm where
it is lacking and modify it where it is too emphatic, involves a two fold labour. For we have to condemn what had previously satisfied us and discover what had escaped out notice... Space must also be left for jotting down the thoughts which occur to the writer out of due order, that is to say, which refer to subjects other than those in hand. For sometimes the most admirable thoughts break in upon us which cannot be inserted in what we are writing, but which, on the other hand, it is unsafe to put by, since they are at times forgotten, and at times cling to the memory so persistently as to divert us from some other line of thoughts. They are therefore, best kept in store.

By this we discover that Quintilian considered revision a more complex procedure, since he speaks of creative "admirable thoughts" that come to mind and must not be ignored as the revising process is taking place. Although he doesn't call "pruning what is turgid, arranging what is disorderly," and "modifying where it is too emphatic" revision, he nevertheless gives us a definite "substantive revision" theory, quite different from Aristotle's.

We also discover that St. Augustine and Aristotle had similar views on revision. As Karen Hodges in her article on the history of revision notes, St. Augustine in his DeDoctrina Christiana, Book IV (AD 396) emphasizes correctness of grammar and clarity in diction, but his medieval students were told to imitate classical works of prose and poetry. As the students imitated existing works they had no opportunity to rethink or re-see the work with an objective eye which is what revision should be. In addition, with St. Augustine's emphasis on "correctness of grammar," a mere surface revision would take place.
However, the humanist, Erasmus (1466-1536) is his De Ratione Studii writes about paraphrasing material and using different styles for the same topic. Undoubtedly, paraphrasing used to produce brevity can be valuable when revising a lengthy section of resource material found in a book or article. It is similarly effective in revising for clarification of long and sometimes ambiguous sections of a draft. Erasmus also includes attempts to render the same subject in another style: one which perhaps would be more suitable for the topic being discussed in a paper. In his De Copia he stresses the importance of playing with words and illustrates his point excellently by listing two hundred variants of a sentence in Latin, "Semper dum vivam tui meminero" (Always, as long as I live, I shall remember you), with such examples as "I would leave the fellowship of the living sooner than have the memory of you removed from my breast," and "Sooner shall there no longer be soul within this body than you no longer in my thoughts." That richness in writing is often achieved as one revises a sentence or paragraph using fresh word choices. Many of Erasmus' suggestions for teaching revision are relevant to changes dealing with the substance of the written work and follow along with Quintilian's ideas.

The breaking away from the rigid rules of grammar for correctness occurred during the Renaissance throughout
Europe and England. Then, when Quintilian's complete manuscript of his *Institutes of Oratory* was found in 1416, his ideas about "admirable thoughts coming to mind out of due order" was more to the liking of the Renaissance writers who were refusing to be bound by the rules imposed on their writing. Therefore, by 1600 when over 100 editions of Quintilian's book was influencing writers, it appeared that the English Renaissance would realize that a substantive revision theory could be part of the composing process. However, too many differences of opinions among the rhetoricians of that time about the place of invention and style in writing, etc., prevented a significant theory of revision from being formulated.\(^7\)

In the seventeenth century, the writer Ben Jonson, devised a very basic theory of revision, as Karen Hodges discovered in her research:

> ...if a writer stops in the process of composition to judge with reason what the imagination has discovered and arranges thereafter only that part of the content he or she has approved, considering too the ultimate purpose of the writing, then we have a rudimentary theory of revision—a process of selection, then a focusing reselection.\(^8\)

Jonson recognized the creative processes involved in revision by including the imagination and its discoveries in this theory, however, the capability of revision was limited because of its involvement with surface problems and continued emphasis on correctness.

In the following century, English writers wrote
according to rigid rules of grammar still adhering to the surface revision theory, but many tried new things to discover their own particular style. Joseph Addison, for example, became an exemplary prose stylist with the informal essays in the *Tatler* and *Spectator* which he and Richard Steele published. Addison's informal, popular writing became a model, and John Richard Green commented, "While it [Addison's style] preserved the free movement of the letter writer, the gaiety and briskness of chat, it obeyed the laws of literary art, and was shaped and guided by a sense of literary beauty." Ben Franklin modeled his own style after Addison's, and many writers who employ the chatty informal style of writing follow his example today. The American humorist and essayist, James Thurber (1894-1961), for example, used that informal style in his story "University Days."

An interesting concept about revision and the mind was devised by George Campbell in his *Philosophy of Rhetoric*, (1776). Hodges writes about Campbell's concept, "the writer/speaker revises as he or she creates because the mind is continuously associating concepts in looking for a pattern, an ultimate focus." Revising as one writes is done by many writers since the mind does sort out ideas and rejects or selects them as it creates the written word. All of these activities occur as the mind works to connect concepts as it searches for some orderly
system by which it can formulate, maintain and express an idea to its complete utterance on the written page. Campbell's understanding of the mind relative to the composing/revising process was indeed accurate since the substantive revision theorists all agree that this type of revision is related to the thinking process. The surface revision theorists were much too concerned with correctness. Campbell, on the other hand, wrote about both forms of revision since in his Book II and III he discusses subjects such as "grammatical purity," word choice, word arrangement and sentence connectives. All of these are the same as Aristotle's five rules for purity (or correctness) mentioned earlier.

Another influential rhetorician of the eighteenth century was Hugh Blair; according to Edward P.J. Corbett, "his text book, Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres, (1783) which included a survey of philology and a review of classical and English grammar, was used extensively in English and American schools." Blair's main concerns were with the accuracy of word choice and sentence shapes, however, so most of his comments dealt with editing or proofreading for surface errors.

During the nineteenth century and early years of the twentieth century, our American rhetoric was influenced by members of the Boylston Professorship of Rhetoric at Harvard University. Specifically, during Adam Sherman
Hill's tenure (1876-1904), Corbett's history tells us,

Harvard's first Freshman English course was established, and the term rhetoric was replaced by the term composition, and dealt exclusively with writing. Hill was also responsible for using literature to teach freshman composition and used the four forms of discourse—exposition, argumentation, description and narration as his approach to the process of composition.  

Hill's concerns were for grammatical correctness and not for delving into the substance of the written work to alter or make major changes. Therefore, it appears that during his lengthy tenure at Harvard, surface revision was encouraged and probably used as the principal form of revision.

The three writing theories in existence around the 1880's also influenced the approaches toward the revision process. By definition, the classical theory "was characteristic of Greek and Roman antiquity with a style of conforming to established treatments, and possessing a general effect of regularity, simplicity and controlled emotion." The Aristotelian theory of "correctness" [surface revision] was what the classical theorists opted for since their most important concerns were with conformity to established rules and control of writing. The second theory, or the neo-classical was developed chiefly in the 17th and 18th centuries. This style, by definition, (more) "rigidly adhered to canons of form, although derived from classical antiquity, and was exemplified by decorum of
style or diction, and three unities (clarity, conciseness and coherence) and emphasized impersonal expression of human actions that were represented in satiric and didactic modes."\(^{16}\) Consequently, the neo-classical theorists, with their extremely strict adherence to rules and even more control of expression, would have been advocates of the surface revision theory because of their emphasis on the product. On the other hand, the third style, the Romantic, by definition, "subordinated form to content and encouraged freedom of treatment and emphasized imagination, celebrated nature and the common man [sic] and freedom of spirit."\(^{17}\) Writers of poetry and fiction were greatly influenced by this style because of the lack of restraints usually put on them by rules and because it afforded them an opportunity for self expression and spontaneous creativity they did not have available before. However, composition instructors in the schools were not influenced since the emphasis remained on correct grammar and usage, therefore, editing and surface revision continued to be done. Yet Wordsworth, a strong supporter of the Romantic theory, could have contributed to the revision process with his emphasis on details the mind chooses to remember. Therefore, it is possible that Wordsworth, as well as Quintilian, with his jottings in the space provided, Erasmus, with his variable ways to say things and Jonson, with his focusing and reselection, all
contributed valuable beginning theories of substantive revision with their attention to the procedures actually used in revising material.

An important aspect of composing (and revising), Corbett informs us, came about when Alexander Bain brought forth the "paragraph" in his teaching from his text, *English Composition and Rhetoric*, (1866). Then, Corbett continues, teacher, "Barrett Wendell's successful rhetoric texts helped to establish the pattern of instruction that moved from the word to the sentence to the paragraph to the whole composition."\(^{18}\) It is quite possible that this theory of expanding an idea might have triggered the idea of progression from the rough original draft to the revised finished essay. Thus, a student would be encouraged to elaborate an undeveloped idea with some details about the original thought, thereby expanding a sentence to the length of a paragraph. That additional information would then be integrated into the whole composition. The blending of all the parts after substantive revision (or expansion of data from sentence to paragraph length) is essential to revising successfully. Since students in the nineteenth century were still taught the importance of clear thinking and correct expression, this progression from sentence to paragraph to whole revising process was probably not pursued to any extent.

In the twentieth century and particularly in the late
seventies and early eighties Donald Murray, Linda Flower, Daniel Marder and others have been taking a hard look at revision itself, separate from rhetoric or composition, and have begun to formulate ideas and workable theories for revising. Most of them realize the importance of writers being aware of the two principal forms of revision, namely external and internal. External revision (proofreading and editing for mechanical errors), as we have discussed, has been taught since medieval times when St. Augustine emphasized "correctness." Internal revision, however, as has been stated earlier, involves the thinking process and is related to substantive changes in the written work, much like Quintilian's theory "of arranging what is disorderly, introducing rhythm where it is lacking and modifying where it is too emphatic." Some textbooks and handbooks still confuse revising with editing and proofreading.

Murray formulates new terms from the traditional Prewriting, Writing and Rewriting to Pre-vision, Vision and Revision. He states that "writers move back and forth through all stages, without realizing, as they search for meaning, then attempt to clarify it."19

In the first stage, Prevision, according to Murray, ...helps the student identify a subject, limit it, develop a point of view and begin to find a voice to explore it. Vision, which is the second stage of the writing process, the first draft--what I call a discovery draft--is completed. Revision is when the writer reads to see what has been suggested, then con-
firms, alters or develops it, usually through many drafts.  

Murray contends that there are four important aspects of discovery in the process of internal revision. The first aspect of discovery involves content, the collection and development of the raw material, the information with which the writer writes. The next is the form or structure of the writing itself, whether it be exposition or narration. The last two are the language and the voice employed in the clarification of meaning. Murray discusses language and voice:

Language leads writers to meaning by rejecting words, choosing new ones or switching their order around to discover what they are saying. Lastly, voice, which is an extremely significant form of internal revision, is the way in which writers hear what they have to say and hear their point of view, authority or distance from the subject.

Murray's terms Prevision, Vision and Revision create a tri-dimensional process which emphasizes each dimension as an integral part of the whole composing process. If student writers will relate to this by identifying their subject and deciding on its limits in Prevision, then after manufacturing their first draft as they investigate their subject in the Vision stage, they will be ready for Revision. Ready because Revision is the natural progression into the third stage whereby the topic is developed through many drafts.

Teaching students Murray's four aspects of discovery
for internal revision will give them a better understanding of what writing includes. Murray believes the content, for example, is the information students give in their early drafts. The best and proper form they choose to develop and embellish their content is essential to their product. The language and its order they use for argument or comparison and contrast is necessary for a clear expression of their thoughts. And finally, voice, or how they hear their ideas as they re-read their drafts, maintains that distance from their subject so they can react to their text as skilled, substantive revisers.

Parallel to Murray, Linda Flower and John Hayes attempt to probe the "cognition" of discovery, the process itself, by studying the way writers actually initiate and guide themselves through the act of making meaning. They call it "problem solving" or a discovery process that produces new insight and new ideas. This is an interesting theory since they approach this from a psychological viewpoint maintaining that people have a problem in wanting to move from one point to another and must use several skills to complete the move. The first point could be solving the problem and writing the initial draft of a paper, and then they move to the completed paper after using their thinking processes to enable them to get to that other point.

Another interesting theory about discovery that many
professional writers agree upon is that they discover meaning as they engage in revision. Robert Hayden substantiates this idea when he says, "As you continue writing and rewriting, you begin to see possibilities you hadn't seen before. Writing a poem is always a process of discovery." Another writer, Flannery O'Connor, tells us, "The only way, I think, to learn to write short stories is to write them, and then try to discover what you have done." Apparently, many professional writers, as they probe for answers to questions about their texts, discover new insights from their initial ideas, and from these they ultimately discover their real meaning or what they really meant to say from the beginning.

In "Revision as Discovery and the Reduction of Entropy," Daniel Marder discusses the problem of discovery. For most writers, he says, whether they are writing a letter or a business report, the problem stems from a prior awareness of what they are going to write, and therefore there is no room for surprise. Whereas those creative writers who produce poetry or fiction rarely verbalize their ideas in advance, because they rely on that element of discovery to happen as they actually write and rewrite. Marder says this about the process:

As a writer discovers through revision the style and form, the order which is ultimately meaning, he or she begins to hypothesize a model of the argument or description or explanation; and that model tends to guide the further expansion of the composition. Upon reading the draft or a
part of it, however, the writer may find that the model was not followed or that it was not really what was wanted after all; and the writer may begin again, or take an aberrant piece of writing from the draft and build upon that, using a second hypothesis derived from the first, a third derived from the second, and so on, until something approaching the writer's satisfaction is achieved.

Discovery in revision occurs at different stages of the composing/revising process and many times it can create building blocks to serve as structural supports for a piece of writing in need of a strong foundation. A writer very often can sense the need for revision to give his/her writing a boost of energy or strength, but the answers do not always come on cue. The discovery may occur quite unexpectedly and often with a great deal of impetus as rich new ideas flow into a writer's mind. This is a part of writing that makes it exciting and rewarding to the explorer or writer.

To sum up, we now know that revision, although not labeled as such, has been around for a long time. The ancient Greeks and Aristotle did most of their revising in their heads. The Roman, Quintilian, writes of "admirable thoughts that spring into our minds at any time" that must be kept in store for possible additions or deletions to a draft. His impatience with his peers for being concerned with "correctness" only is evident as he emphasizes the importance of re-examining the written work in an effort to improve it. Erasmus encourages writers to
paraphrase prose and poetry to help them learn how to examine large quantities of data, digest it, and synthesize the most pertinent data into a paragraph or even a short essay. His demonstration of two hundred ways to say the same thing serves to prove his point that fresh new word choices can work wonders for many students. During the nineteenth century, when the word composition replaced rhetoric, doors opened for the freshmen who were admitted to the composition classes that heretofore had only been available to sophomores, juniors and seniors. Still, the rigid rules of grammar prevailed since correctness was the order of the day. In the first half of the twentieth century, Wendell introduced instruction techniques for the "paragraph" and its development and emphasized the importance of unity, coherence and emphasis. Strict adherence to correctness, however, was still evident. Not until the twentieth century, in the late seventies and early eighties, did "discovery" become the by-word for revision. Scholars, writers and educators are realizing that discovery is the key to internal revision, and as we examine methods and techniques on revision this becomes more and more apparent.

Looking over the historical aspects of revision reveals an evolution of the theoretical and practical applications. The terminology may have changed, but many theories and practices are still with us, still practiced
by professional writers and students today. Why is this so? Perhaps because a solid theory of internal revision (external revision having been established) has never been formulated, especially one which all writers (professional, inexperienced and student) could grasp. Agreed, to devise a basic workable theory for a complex process such as internal revision is not a simple task. Therefore, it becomes apparent there is a need to teach instructors and students about the creative processes involved in internal revision. Discovering and establishing the need is the first step, fulfilling the need is the next step and we are there.
CHAPTER 1
NOTES


3 Butler, Book X - 111, 31 - IV. 1, p. 131.


6 Thompson, ed., De Copia, p. 354.

7 Hodges, p. 28.

8 Hodges, p. 29.


11 Hodges, p. 31.

12 Hodges, p. 31.


14 Corbett, p. 626.


16 *The Random House Dictionary of the English Language*.

17 *The Random House Dictionary and the English Language*.

18 Corbett, p. 626.


20 Murray, pp. 86-87.

21 Murray, pp. 93-94.

23 Murray, p. 102.

24 Murray, p. 102.

25 Daniel Marder, "Revision as Discovery and the Reduction of Entropy," in Revising, Editor, Ronald A. Sudol, (ERIC-NCTE, 1982), pp. 4-5.

26 Marder, pp. 4-5.
CHAPTER II
REVISION AND THE WRITER

The major question addressed here is the revision of professional or experienced writers and students. Experienced writers know about revision and do it consciously for textual changes or the reorganization of ideas; most students, however, do not understand revision. They are not taught a process, and their approaches vary. Their lack of understanding also includes their nonchalant attitude toward revision and their inability to grasp the importance of revising their work. They must comprehend that the tedious and time-consuming job of revising is a necessity if one aspires to become a successful or effective writer. For this reason, a few examples selected from professional authors are included to demonstrate some of their reasons for and attitudes toward revision.

In noting textual observations by Dickens on *Hard Times*, Sylvere Monod comments, "In his revisions he tried to preserve the consistency of each of his characters," to preserve "within his narrative a unity of tone," to "appeal to as wide and popular an audience as possible."¹ Dickens realized the value of reader response and worked
to maintain a specific tone for his audience. He worked to achieve a widespread audience because he knew its monetary worth. June Bailey, in her study of Coleridge, discovered that "his reworking of material shows, as do all the revisions he made, that he was motivated by a desire to clarify and simplify his prose, to sharpen the focus of his point of view, and with these to make more decisive his criticism of the popular political and moral opinions of his day." Coleridge's astute emphasis on elucidation and simplification epitomizes some of the basic reasons one should revise. The need for a writer's point of view to be clearly stated should be evident since it aids in a reader's understanding of the material. From these comments, it is evident that both Dickens and Coleridge were very thorough when revising their work.

The particular method or technique of revision and the processes used differ with the individual writer since his/her reasons and the amount of substantive changes vary. A writer too may make revisions after varying lengths of time between versions. This time lapse may have varying effects upon the kinds and quality of revisions. Some general observations about William Faulkner's thorough process, for example, were noted by Joanne Creighton: "It was flexible; it proceeded from the part to the whole, from simplicity to complexity, from the comic to the serious or vice versa; it retains the narrative form of the
original story; it strives for a profusion of details and a precision of style. Faulkner's flexible process of moving from part to whole is related to revising a paragraph (or part) and then incorporating it into the whole (the complete composition). Ideas become complex when subtle (minor) details are added, and these same details can also change the tone from the comic to the serious if a writer so desires while in the process of revising his/her work. There is much a student writer could learn by studying Faulkner's craft of revisions. In contrast, a very different process is used by Anthony Burgess, who tells us he revises as he goes. "I do page one many times and move on to page two. I pile up sheet after sheet, each in the final state, and at length I have a novel that doesn't in my view need any revision." When interviewed by the Paris Review he repeated, "Revising as I said is done with each page, not with each chapter or the whole book. Rewriting a whole book would bore me." 

When interviewed, Eudora Welty, a regional writer, made several comments about her method of revision. She writes her first draft in one sitting, then works as long as it takes on revision. After the first hand-written draft she uses a typewriter for all revisions, since she feels it makes her more objective. She can revise better, she says, if she sees it typed. After that, she revises with scissors and pins, shifting things around and "putting
things in their best and proper place," sometimes even shifting things from beginning to end or to the middle of the piece she is revising. 5

Clearly professional writers use a variety of processes but the one thing they have in common is constant revision. This is in direct contrast to the majority of student writers; even when students do revise, their practices include only occasional and minimal revision work. Too many engage in copy editing and stop there. Only a few employ some form of real revision.

Their bad revision practices are reflected in the common attitudes students seem to share. Janet Emig discovered this while examining the composing processes of selected twelfth grade writers. It becomes obvious from her research that students know that revision is, but most of them do not engage in it. One student called Rick says that reformulating (Emig's term for revision) is "proofreading," and that "revising" is to move things around. He complains that he's tired of the piece once he's finished and therefore doesn't always do "revising." Debbie, however, has two levels of reformulating; "rearranging" (alternation if she decides on a better way to write something) and "proofreading" for mechanical errors. Similarly, Victoria uses the terms "correcting" and "revising" and states that the amount of time she has available to her will dictate whether she just corrects
or revises. This same attitude seems to be true for the other students examined in this study. Most agree that when they have ample time and are inclined to revise, they will actually make some major changes in their work.

Emig was also told by one of her subjects, Lynn, that it isn't necessary to revise. Writing to her was "all business" and only a given amount of time was devoted to it. Her attitude toward reformulating came from her experiences with school writing, and she explained that she never took it upon herself to revise a composition because she treated it as "punishment work." This was work assigned when she had a certain number of mistakes and had been told to rewrite her composition and turn it in by a specified date. She quite frankly never remembered any suggestions by the teacher which stimulated her to rewrite something to make it better, since the only changes seemed to be technical ones. Lynn's definition of revising was the act of correcting errors such as spelling and punctuation, while matters of content, form language or voice were not touched. She believed that the teachers weren't concerned with any revisions she might make. Emig states, "She is in effect accusing them of oversimplification (the equation of reformulating with the "correction" of trivia); and casualness, if not cynicism in evaluation (they demand correction of trivia, but they will not read and reevaluate a serious effort to recast essences)."
Today, however, Lynn would discover more instructors are making earnest efforts to stimulate and influence students to revise by marking papers with well-chosen questions and thought-provoking comments. In her conclusion, Emig says, "Although students define reformulating and describe the kinds they engage in for self-sponsored and school-sponsored writing, like Lynn, they engage in no reformulating of pieces produced for this inquiry." Emig's research tells us, therefore, that until students understand the process of revision and the necessity of engaging in it to improve their work, they will continue, for the most part, to engage in surface revision or editing.

Another study done by Richard Beach implies we need to know more about cognitive strategies: why some students are not able to carry over data from one draft to another when revising. This informal study was conducted to determine the self-evaluation strategies of extensive revisers and nonrevisers. The twenty-six students in the study were all pre-service English teachers enrolled in a writing methods course at the University of Minnesota. They were instructed to write two short papers. After each draft was written (free-writing form used for initial draft) they were told to evaluate themselves on tape. They were to write as many drafts as they deemed necessary but were to let two days elapse between each draft. Then, they were categorized by two judges according to the amount
of revisions from the previous draft; (extensive changes = extensive reviser, and small number of changes or none at all = nonreviser). From this study Beach found that nonrevisers believed that revision was merely a process of making minor changes similar to external revision or changes of punctuation, spelling or rewording of specific sentences. Extensive revisers believed that revision was a process of making larger or substantive changes in their text. Both beliefs were based on knowledge accumulated from instructors and textbooks. The nonrevisers, in thinking of revision as surface or external concerns only, couldn't consider making changes of any substance since they were only concerned with finishing or polishing the product. In direct contrast, the extensive revisers planned to clarify their meaning with subsequent drafts.

Free writing to the nonreviser group was a way to state their ideas at random with no reason to restate or rewrite the material. The extensive reviser group, on the other hand, knew they would re-think their free writing and would thereby improve it by rewriting it several times. Thoughts about readers were judged necessary by the nonrevisers while the extensive revisers would set the idea of reader response aside until a later time.

Extensive revisers were able to carry information over to their next draft, a process very similar to one used by
many professional writers. The nonrevisers treated each line separately and therefore didn't accumulate any data for their next draft. They also didn't plan on many future drafts, because they treated each draft independently, and were unduly concerned with mechanical problems and wording in their first and second drafts, since they thought of these as the only ones they would write. The opposite was true for the extensive revisers who stored data in their heads, considered development through several drafts and could foresee alterations in succeeding drafts. Beach also found that "nonrevisers were less self critical, because they could not step outside their own ego-centric perspective and consider alternative approaches. They, therefore, became bogged down with problems of their moods, role definition, attitudes. Extensive revisers seemed to have less difficulty in detaching themselves, in achieving an 'aesthetic distance.'"\textsuperscript{9} Beach's study points out the need to know more about cognitive strategies as well as the need to formulate alternative ways to help students learn the revision process.

As a means to this end and because of her displeasure with the linear model of writing (revision engaged in at the end of writing), Nancy Sommers conducted a three year study of the revision process as practiced by both student writers and experienced writers. For her study, Sommers
used twenty freshman writers from two universities (Boston and Oklahoma) and twenty experienced adult writers, such as journalists, editors, teachers and instructors. She stated, "The principal difference between these two groups is the amount of experience they have had in writing." She had each subject write three essays and rewrite them two times (nine drafts total including the finished product). They were questioned after they finished each essay, giving verbal accounts about their process as well as providing written products in the form of their revised drafts. Here, only her findings about student writers will be discussed.

Sommers' agreement with writers about revision being a continuous (or constant) process is evident in her definition of revision: "A sequence of changes in a composition—changes which are initiated by cues and occur continually throughout the writing of a work." These cues can and do occur at various stages of the composing/revising process. If a writer, for example, decides there is a need for elaboration on a specific idea and in doing so discovers that another aspect must be taken into consideration before that revision can be completed, he/she continues to make the additions or alterations for both revisions generated by the different signals (cues) as the changes are actually taking place. One adjustment or change may lead to another and so forth. For this reason
students need to understand the real meaning and ramifications of the internal revision process.

In her study, Sommers found that students don't use the word "revision," but they told her it was a term used by their instructors. Some of the terms they used to describe the changes they made were "reviewing," "redoing," or "marking out;" all these terms when combined meant deleting or adding words or changing them around. They equated revision with lexical changes only. They might search for and use a different phrase to improve their thought but that is the extent of the process as they know it. The students believe that substituting or changing words around will solve many of their problems, however, they often merely repeat the same idea again without realizing it. They cannot see revision as a process or a seeing-again of the entire composition, because their strategies deal strictly with words rather than content or form changes.

If the students don't have any special problems with words or phrases, Sommers also found, they don't revise because their understanding of revision does not include development or modification of ideas. Lynn, in Emig's study, also expressed this same attitude. In addition, many times students are willing to revise, but when they attempt it they make only minor changes. On being asked by their instructors why they don't do more, they usually
stated," 'I knew something larger was wrong, but I didn't think it would help to move words around.'"12 Sommers continues, they "have strategies for handling words or phrases" but no procedures to help them reorganize or posit "questions about their purposes and readers." Concepts such as unity and form mean only that a composition must "have an introduction, a body and a conclusion."13

How far do they go on revisions? Not very far, Sommers answers, since their revision strategies are what they have learned from past instructors (proofreading and editing for mechanical errors). Occasionally they might make some changes if they should recall a vague rule. Even then, the chances of it being applicable to their work are rare. Too often the revising they do is solely to please the instructor who had previously noted various rule infractions on their papers. Sommers concludes with "Students need to seek the dissonance of discovery, utilizing in their writing, as the experienced writers do, the very difference between writing and speech—the possibility of revision."14

Students not only need to seek out "the dissonance of discovery," but they also need to learn procedures for revising. We need guidelines to establish these procedures. When Faigley and Witte did a recent study on this entitled "Analyzing Revision" they pointed out that there was a great deal of variety in the ways experts revise.15
There didn't seem to be a set pattern for their methods. Some, for example, make hardly any revisions, while others might make major revisions. Some, too, revise by weeding out superfluous words or material. As an example of this they said,

...we observed a consulting engineer write memos without revising while he was in the process of extensively revising a proposal he had drafted... Likewise, a colleague who is a fiction writer showed us the manuscripts of published short stories that have minimal revisions after the first paragraph.16

Certainly the experts have many revision skills at their disposal, yet their procedures or techniques are diversified and do not include all strategies at any one time. How then are we to establish and develop guidelines for the student writers to help them realize individual success?

Mimi Schwartz suggests "one way to develop guidelines is through a series of revision profiles."17 She established these profiles after examining many papers for her dissertation on student and professional writers (freshmen through seniors). Portfolios including first to final drafts for the ten to twelve papers written during a one semester writing course provided the information for defining the individual styles that writers use to transform initial drafts into finished products. Her topology of nine profiles (Overwriter, Underwriter, Restarter,
Recopier, Rearranger, Remodeler, Censor, Refiner and Copyeditor) helps us to understand that writers have one governing profile per work and that often it differs within a writing or changes from writing to writing. Much of this changing of profiles has to do with revision problems, the writer's style or problems within the text. These nine profiles are divided into three frameworks which briefly include profiles that produce and generate language, profiles that reformulate initial meanings and profiles that reassess the content.

The profiles that generate language include the Overwriter and the Underwriter. The Overwriter usually writes more than is needed and cuts back. Personal preference dictates whether we choose the Overwriter or the Underwriter who minimizes the beginnings yet intends to elaborate later on. Student Overwriters, unlike experienced writers, too often retain too much of their first writing. They have a tendency to leave everything in rather than deciding on the proper wording by removing portions of the text. Schwartz demonstrates this with this example:

One day you are walking down the hall at school, and you notice a sign which is hanging on the wall announcing tryouts for the school play. You are fearful, uneasy and afraid of trying out, but you go anyway.

A student will leave it that way. An experienced writer will sense the initial overkill and cut back in the next draft.

One day you are walking down the hall, and you notice a sign, announcing tryouts for the school
Experienced Underwriters know how to add details, specificity, and otherwise develop ideas in subsequently revised drafts. Student Underwriters, however, many times require help in including specificity in their drafts and have to be reminded to put everything down on paper that is in their heads. These two, nevertheless, can produce good expression.

The second framework of four profiles concerns the way writers respond to their initial meaning. They can tear it all up and become Restarters, or make a few simple changes and become Recopiers. They can become Rearrangers by combining old parts with new ideas, or become Remodelers by elaborating and improving the first structure section by section. Of course, a great deal of time can be wasted by throwing out the original and becoming a Restarter. Being a Recopier is all right if a good paper is accomplished on the first try (which is rare); this might occur on short essays but usually doesn't happen on larger projects or research papers. Research papers generally require the Rearranger because the writer is dealing with several ideas that need to be categorized, as well as bibliographic entries and quotation notes. A large amount of information has usually been accumulated for this type of paper and needs to be sorted out, organized and rearranged into a
well-structured text. The Remodeler, a beneficial profile for teaching revision, helps students to see how their unimpressive first efforts can be converted into superior writing, if they take the time to engage in remodeling. Much of the improvement comes in response to peer or instructor's statements about their writing. After the students realize that their original words are not set in cement, they feel free to add, subtract, substitute or alter sentences or whole sections in an effort to change the text into a sparkling new one. These structural reformulation profiles, the Restarter, the Recopier, the Rearranger and the Remodeler, are useful, but writers must be able to adapt to changing their strategies in order to develop their first drafts into fine finished products.

The third framework of profiles, Content Reassessment, demonstrates three important concerns. What is correct or suitable in the text, its goal and readers are the main concerns of the Censor. Examining content for exactness and lucidity is the main purpose of the Refiner. The Copyeditor (the External Revisionist) who reassesses correctness of form or structure is primarily concerned with rules of punctuation, spelling and grammar. An equal proportion of all three of these strategies is needed for successful writing. The Censor is his/her concern for the reader's response to the text becomes the voice of the writer and makes inquiries about the proper choice
of words for his/her audience. However, the Censor must be careful not to be too concerned with audience response and change the diction to such an extent that it also changes the writer's meaning. The Refiner, now, must have a sense of taste as well as the ability to revise well; many times a student having neither of these abilities will turn in a paper that is far from being refined. The last, the Copyeditor, relies on a skillful appraisal of the text (hunting for mechanical errors) and should not be employed too soon, because the text can become perfect grammatically but lack interest or sparkle. However, if the Copyeditor is not used, a piece of writing with good substance will not be considered in earnest. Therefore, the only way to accomplish proper form and clarity in a text is to use the Copyeditor, the Refiner and the Censor carefully and skillfully.

Schwartz believes that her profiles can be of help to revision pedagogy and research because by using her terms, teachers, students, writers and researchers can communicate with each other regarding concerns about revision. For example, as problems come up in students' writings or they continue making the same errors over and over again, then the profiles can help the writers comprehend exactly what they are doing or might do to improve their texts. In addition, this terminology can benefit teachers as they comment on a student's text. They can
posit questions about a student being a Remodeler who needs to learn to elaborate and add specificity or a Recopier, who needs to learn that he/she must work on being a Rearranger to form an effective text. Teacher response then can be based on a particular writer's text and one can also suggest changes in product as well as changes in process. These terms can be used in a composition class to educate the students about the various profiles that can be adopted as they revise their drafts.

To sum up, research shows us that professional and experienced writers engage in extensive revision because they recognize the need for it. Second, studies reveal that traditionally most student writers feel revision is not necessary or they engage in very little. Finally, data culled from writers' drafts shows that revision profiles or patterns do exist. Armed with this information one can only conclude that instructional methods and techniques for revising should be established for use in the classroom and incorporated into the writing curricula. Such methods would be valuable tools for composition instructors so that students could be taught how, when and why to revise their first drafts.
CHAPTER II

NOTES


7 Emig, p. 87.


9 Beach, 163.

10 Nancy Sommers, "Revision Strategies of Student Writers and Experienced Adult Writers," *College Composition and Communication*, XXXI (December, 1980), 380.

11 Sommers, 380.

12 Sommers, 383.

13 Sommers, 383.

14 Sommers, 387.


16 Faigley and Witte, 410.


18 Schwartz, p. 552.
The need for revision procedures to be taught to our students emanates from the traditional meaning of the word revision (proofreading or editing for mechanical errors). In addition, revision has always been conceived as a separate part of the composing process (the linear model) which takes place after a piece is written. Today, thanks to the research of Nancy Sommers, Donald Murray, Lester Faigley, Stephen Witte, Linda Flower, John Hayes, and others, pedagogy concerning revision has changed. Revision is now conceived as a complex creative act which requires skills to be learned if one wants to write well. This new concept of revision (stages engaged in during the writing process) has revolutionized the traditional theory. Experimental methods and techniques are being tried, more research is being done, and recent studies and writings are being published about the significance of revision in the writing process. In this chapter I will examine and evaluate some of these methods, techniques and theories based on research and studies. Where possible, I will draw conclusions as to
the feasibility of their use in teaching revision in composition programs.

Different approaches for revision are described for students and inexperienced writers in the many textbooks and handbooks I have examined for this study. The majority of these devote a chapter or two to revision, but too frequently they refer to the process as a "mopping up" procedure, therefore their "revision checklists" primarily deal with surface errors or the editing and proofreading for mechanical errors. Granted, a few will incorporate good sound advice about making substantive changes in content or form, but they rarely give the student writer concrete procedures or strategies to use. I have located a few, however, that deal with both external and internal revision and give the beginning writer some ways of thinking about internal revision as well as offer specific procedures to try. Barnett & Stubbs' guide to writing, for example, states, "In revising a writer clarifies his 'ideas and emotions' for his readers, making the imagined reader the collaborator in the revision by posing questions, demanding clarification, and at the same time the writer clarifies his ideas for himself."

The following is one procedure they recommend for revising: "(1) After the first draft, save what you can. Then, use scissors and glue to rearrange paragraphs or sentences. (2) Set aside the draft until the next day."
Then reread the draft always keeping the thesis in view in larger revisions."² Although this procedure is rather condensed it still offers a specific method for a student to begin to revise his/her initial draft. The first suggestion to retain as much of the original as possible encourages rather than discourages a student to engage in revision because he/she isn't made to feel that it is necessary to compose the piece all over again. As one engages in remodeling the draft with scissors and glue, leaves the work, and returns to it a day or so later, one realizes how improved the draft becomes. The last suggestion to reread the paper with controlling thesis statement in mind is excellent too, since cohesiveness can be accomplished this way. This is an excellent handbook with an entire section devoted to revision with headings such as Revising for Conciseness, for Clarify, for Emphasis, or Coherence, and ideas for revising for content, structure and form. Because the headings cover several specific problems many students have with their writing, this book could be an aid to them.

Another textbook author, Jacques Barzun, (Simple and Direct) claims "all writing is rewriting and states revision is like surgery: one rearranges, lifts, transfers or eliminates fragments, and sutures are necessary before the page shows a smooth surface."³ Barzun's "Reviser's Guide"
of ten questions that must be answered favorably before one can call the revision finished, is especially good. It deals mostly with substantive changes of the text. For example, he asks, "I turn now to my theme and ask myself whether the ideas of which it consists have been set down fully and in consecutive order or have I again relied on my understanding of the subject to bridge over gaps in thought and to disentangle snarls in description?" After these questions have been answered, students may consider turning in the draft as a finished product. This guide can effect some major changes in a student's draft, because the questions are posed in a probing manner that helps a student think seriously about his/her work and thereby make a positive effort to improve it.

The Craft of Writing by Thomas Elliott Berry contains a good chapter on the revision process called "From Rough draft to Final copy," stressing that "a writer look for a certain smoothness, a certain rhythm, a certain perfection of expression that creates an appealing natural momentum." Berry, says, "It is like a swimmer moving with the tide, and since momentum has a magnetic quality it draws a reader from sentence to sentence." The chapter contains good suggestions for progressing from just an adequate paper to a well-written finished paper. Since more emphasis could be placed on the rhythm involved in writing, this unusual approach might stimulate student writers to revise.
In their textbook, *Staircase to Writing and Reading*, Alan Casty and Donald Tighe use a staircase to demonstrate revision as a step-by-step process by including an original and revised version of a student theme to illustrate. Each sentence is numbered and the five paragraphs of the theme are revised one by one. They point out the close reading that is necessary to revise a rough draft by illustrating a line by line draft marked with comments by a reader/editor. Some of the comments listed are: "awkward construction," "clumsy phrase," or "confusing." Questions are also posed, such as: "Can you be more specific?" At the end of each original paragraph several items of advice are offered: "Sentences 3, 4 and 5 are choppy. Combine them. Sentence 6 is not needed. Leave it out." After the paragraph is revised then more comments are listed: "Sentence 3 now states the thesis clearly. Put last it makes a good link between the introduction and body." The positive feedback received through this technique can be valuable to students as they revise. They can also see the results of careful revision since changes are made graphically with this method.

Peter Elbow's *Writing Without Teachers* includes good ideas about freewriting, the teacherless writing class, group evaluation and peer editing. Elbow says of revision: "Cut away flesh and leave only bone." He believes one should think of revision as "a positive creative
act similar to that of a sculptor who chips away layers of stone with his chisel to reveal a figure beneath.\(^8\)

Another of Elbow's books *Writing With Power* states the need for productive revising and points out that "one has different needs depending on one's temperament, the kind of writing engaged in, and the circumstances."\(^9\) He presents such procedures as: Quick Revising, Thorough Revising, Revising with Feedback, Cut and Paste Revising and the Collage. He recommends revising with others and practicing on each other's drafts. Practice can also be done on articles, reports, memos and even newspapers and magazines which have a great deal of writing that requires revision. All of these will give the student essential practice of cutting, reconceiving and reordering: skills that are needed when they revise their own drafts. This is a comprehensive book on methods for revision that should be highly recommended to all student writers, since a variety of methods is presented.

Roger Garrison (*How a Writer Works*) firmly believes revision is the key in his approach to writing. One method he suggests is a "split-page device as a self-teaching tool--on the right, copy the draft, double or triple spaced--on the left, talk to yourself; question, criticize, make notes, additions, and changes. Try to bring your own internal reader/editor alive."\(^11\) He actually takes the reader through a revision process by using the question
and answer method (reader to writer) through five drafts of a paragraph from a journal entry of his own. This method can be particularly useful for problems with clarity, since it is simple enough for a student to use without an instructor.

Dan Kirby and Tom Liner (Inside Out) discovered that once they began to write with their students, their writing classes changed. Positive comments and encouragement helped most of them more than error hunting. Students were willing to rework their writing if the instructors could suggest specific ideas for making a piece more effective. The authors reason that, as writers themselves struggling with their drafts, they are placed in a favorable position with the students and a more meaningful relationship is established in the classroom. At the individual conferences, which are indispensable in teaching revision, their students reflect a more agreeable and accepting attitude about specific suggestions. This approach definitely has its merits. Too few English instructors, however, are writers themselves, and the ones that are, may have difficulty dealing with their vulnerability and ego when it comes to letting the students see and hear their mistakes as Kirby and Liner suggest.

Richard Lanham's Paramedic method in Revising Prose provides emergency therapy for a piece of writing. He calls it a first aid kit since it cures existing "diseases"
(such as "noun disease"—using nouns instead of verbs).

To apply this therapy Lanham gives the following eight instructions:

(1) Circle the prepositions. (2) Circle the "is" forms (every form of to be). (3) Ask who is kicking who? (where is the action?). (4) Put this kicking action in a simple (not compound) active verb. (5) Start fast—no mindless introductions. (6) Write out the sentence on a blank sheet of paper and look at its shape. (7) Read the sentence aloud with emphasis and feeling. (8) Vary sentence length to avoid monotony.

It is evident from this example, as the writer removes the wordiness of prepositional phrases, the sentence tempo increases:

Original: She answered in an angry way as she completed the job of wrapping the string of blue yarn around the package.

Revised: She answered angrily as she finished wrapping the package with blue yarn.

It is again obvious that by removing the form of "to be" from the following sentence more vitality is put into the sentence:

Original: There is one good trait which Toby has and that is generosity.

Revised: Toby has a good trait, generosity.

And it is always important not to bury the action in words or phrases (lard factor) as exemplified by:

Original: The teacher tried without any success to bring her students around to accepting the proposition that the moon was made
of green cheese.

Revised: The teacher tried, unsuccessfully, to convince her students that the moon was made of green cheese.

Of course, unnecessary introductions (more lard factor) are of no practical use as shown here:

Original: The fact that Namath appeared in the stands nearly caused a riot.

Revised: Namath's appearance in the stands nearly caused a riot.

To examine the shape of a sentence and change it after applying some of the instructions from the paramedic method will also help to shape its meaning. By reading the sentence aloud one can locate stilted words or phrases that do not seem to fit and thereby correct them. By varying the sentence length in a piece of writing the reader will not become bored. Lanham says that the curse of academic writing is spelling everything out and recommends we consider eye and ear for rhythm and sound. He also believes one must type the revisions since the typewriter is more powerful than the pen (visually). His paramedic method solves some of the problems students have in their writing, but since it is only first aid, a more complete procedure is needed to take care of the major "illnesses."

Another method similar to Lanham's "Who's Kicking Who?" is by A.M. Tibbetts (Working Papers: A Teacher's
Observations on Composition) who advocates the "Who Does What?" technique for revising sentences. He asks what is causing something to happen. Tibbetts' technique includes instructions which refer to semantics, syntax and the situation. He tells the student:

Look at the situation, find the action(s) involved, and put them into an Subject-Verb-Object pattern. Keep doing this until you learn enough to straighten out your sentences. If you need more sentences, use them.

The following is a sample of a student's material undergoing WDW-ing:

Original: Accordingly there is a tremendous emphasis on P.E. and recreation beginning in the junior high which accounts for the significant increase in the accident rates for grades 7-12.

First rewrite: Accordingly, the schools emphasize P.E. and recreation beginning in the junior high which accounts for the significant increase in the accident rates for grades 7-12.

I [Tibbets said], "Try WDW some more."

Second rewrite: Beginning in junior high, the schools emphasize P.E. and recreation. This emphasis causes the significant increase...

I [Tibbets said], "Look again; try the real WDW; what is causing something to happen?"

Third rewrite: Beginning in junior high, schools emphasize P.E. and recreation for the first time. For example, about forty percent more students
The emphasis on WDW-ing sentences is on "looking again," or a re-seeing." This method encourages the students to add specific details and to use the active voice (in place of the passive) in their writing. Even though they are not always aware of what they are doing grammatically, by the time they finish WDW-ing a sentence they have made several intelligent attempts to put together their ideas about a situation and include an adequate description of it. Students would especially enjoy Tibbetts' use of simple terms in place of the traditional technical ones. In addition, all of his explanations and theories are presented in a simple, uncomplicated fashion since he found this unusual approach helpful to student understanding. After they comprehend the simple, subject-verb-object pattern, they begin to think of the need for more substance in their sentences and usually add specific details or more sentences which enhance their essays. This book deserves a thorough reading.

Daniel D. Pearlman's Guide to Rapid Revision is an excellent small handbook for students to carry with them. All the proofreading and editing marks are listed with page numbers for brief explanations, and examples are arranged for quick reference. It is a convenient source
book that all freshmen at least should own.

All the textbooks discussed here can be useful to student writers looking for suggestions and help with their revision problems. Which technique or procedure a student chooses is a matter of personal preference. One student may like the split-page device as suggested by Garrison, while another may feel comfortable using Lanham's paramedic method. The point is that all of these books address internal revision as an essential step in the process of writing and try to offer beneficial suggestions on how to engage in that process intelligently and skillfully.

The best information on methods and techniques for revising was found in English journals and magazines. Some were experimental, while others were being used on a regular basis in composition classes. As Abraham Bernstein, for example, discussed revision as a dual process (student writes, instructor corrects and provides feedback), in his essay "Revision--A Dual Process," he included a few successful approaches to revision because they were imaginative methods and were being used in the classroom. He explained one approach used by Alice Glarden Brand of Rutgers: Her method was to place portions of student writings onto transparencies (for overhead projection) and have the class work to find errors made by the anonymous writers. Bernstein said, "Miss Brand is convinced that
these revision tactics 'tap personal intuition, win a lively response, and focus on writing as an organizing and integrative act.' "17 Group evaluation and peer editing done in this manner tends to alleviate the pressure many beginning writers feel when their work is being scrutinized as well as make it more interesting for group participation.

Bernstein continues with mention of another teacher, Richard E. Barbieri, who felt his students were too grade conscious and competitive and therefore devised a way to have them direct that energy toward cooperative revision. After doing assignments which focused on joint activity techniques, the students were given a graded assignment on cooperation. Briefly, after they wrote their papers they were divided into groups and given class and assignment time to work together to revise and edit their papers. The difference in Barbieri's approach, continues Bernstein, is that the grade he gave (the same to all) to each group measured the group's obvious progress or improvement over the original version of the composition they examined. The main thrust of this cooperation revision procedure was for the students to demonstrate their ability to work together and to show (through revision changes or alterations) considerable improvement in each subsequent draft. The spirit of cooperation that developed in these students must have been rewarding for Mr. Barbieri to observe.
In summing up, Bernstein offered an experiment of his own called "Penalize the Proofreader" whereby rather than pick up a set of papers due in class one day he informed his students they were to take them home, revise them and return them to the next class meeting. After they brought in their papers he had them exchange with each other and instructed them all to edit them and bring them back to the next class meeting. The major difference in this assignment for revision was that Bernstein informed his students that if he located an error not found by the proofreader, he wouldn't penalize (lower the grade of) the writer but he would penalize the proofreader. This could be an effective way to make certain that students edit carefully and improve their revision skills at the same time.

All of these successful approaches help to lighten the load of papers for teachers as well as helping the students learn to revise and participate more fully in the dual process of revision.

In another essay "A History of Revision: Theory Versus Practice," Karen Hodges suggests we revise Aristotle's notion of topics to "invent" our own "classical" theory of revision enabling students to have a heuristics of revision as well as of invention to stimulate their desire to excel in their writing. Under "Topics of Revision," for example, she encourages the student to change structure; move from inductive to deductive, or from unit structure
to a norm method of development or change focus; select a small portion of the original as a new focus and expand."

This is an interesting approach to revision, but not all students have the cognitive skills to "invent" a theory or the ability to change structure from inductive to deductive.

Scissors and scotch tape are the key tools in the "cut-and-paste" method of revising wherein writers (cf. Eudora Welty) reorganize a piece of writing by cutting out pages, sections, paragraphs or even sentences, inserting them between other sections and then gluing, scotch taping, or stapling them together. After coming up with a list of eleven activities writers engage in during the revision process, Carolyn Boiarsky discovered the cut-and-paste method becomes indispensable in at least four of these. First, in reorganizing material, a writer may need to eliminate or cut out a section, page, paragraph or sentence altogether or may need to move it from one position to another (paste it in). Second, since writers work at making every word count, they eliminate repetition, redundancy, and wordiness by deleting (cutting out) words, phrases, sentences, paragraphs or even whole sections. Once the cut is made, writers must check to make sure the remaining areas around the deleted part flow smoothly into each other. Third, if they determine in their checking for
flow that they have omitted a description or even a set of instructions, they must expand (paste in) information by insertion. Fourth, in considering emphasis in ideas, writers sometimes use a technique of placing paragraphs, sentences or words at the beginning or ending of a section. This shifting and pasting serves to put emphasis in the proper place and on the essential idea. While some teachers are familiar with the cut-and-paste method, many students are not. I believe students might enjoy this method, since it is very much like working and solving a puzzle.

Group proofreading sessions are recommended by Len Fox in "What to do When Grammar Exercises No Longer Help: Group Proofreading," as a way for students to sharpen their revision skills. Besides the psychological support the students give to each other in these sessions, Fox suggests that peer editing for grammatical errors as well as internal substance (giving suggestions on style and optional ways to improve the writing) is proving to be most effective in teaching students to become objective readers and editors of each other's work and eventually of their own.

Thom Hawkins, in his essay "Intimacy and Audience: The Relationship Between Revision and the Social Dimension of Peer Tutoring," discovers that tutoring the revision
process is the best method. He says, "The truly discursive nature of the talk between tutor and tutee is at the heart of learning how to revise and how to refine thoughts from draft to draft." The tutees grasp the significance of revision being a recursive process and thereby aim to remodel or expand on their concepts and eventually put them into an appropriate structure. Tutors tell Hawkins (through their journals) that it is the friendly conversation they have with the students that helps them develop the self confidence to be able to strike out and make substantive changes in their work. Students learn through dialogue with their understanding tutors how to present a valid argument, or to examine and interpret material for analysis. The chance to talk to sympathetic peers helps many students to discover they know more than they thought they did and to accept criticism along with beneficial suggestions. A peer tutor also affords the student instant feedback from an interested and concerned audience. Eventually students learn to revise their writing with subsequent drafts (having each draft critiqued) and can say what they really meant to say in their finished product. I believe this is the ideal method of revising except for one problem: the availability of tutors and teachers as readers for each draft.

Another method suggested by James M. Hendrickson
"The Treatment of Error in Written Work," is to have students write a theme or first draft out of class and bring it to the next session. The teacher then verifies that it was done, returns it to them unmarked and instructs them to re-write it. They must return both drafts, but the second draft only is graded. This procedure gives students an opportunity to discover solutions to their written errors and oversights. Thereafter they continue to experiment with feedback technique in error correction and changes with each subsequent draft.  

A good method, but the class has to be structured for the writing of fewer themes during the quarter or semester, to allow for sufficient revision time. Hendrickson found this method most effective when used by adult foreign language learners.

Lee Odell and Joanne Cohick ("You Mean Write it Over in Ink,"") write about a system developed by Richard D. Young, Alton Becker and Kenneth Pike. The use of their discovery procedures makes this method unique. Their procedures deal with reference to physical context, reference to causal and time sequence, reference to change and contrast and classification. The students ask themselves questions in detail and probe the possibility of shifting grammatical focus on the physical context. In the causal sequence, the students ask, "Why?" Determining the answer clarifies the writer's viewpoint. Time
sequence reference searches out gaps between two points in a time sequence. Reference to change brings out questions dealing with change: changes in people, for example, which can be emotional, physical and/or intellectual. In the contrast and classification procedure, students are asked to analyze a variety of things. Odell and Cohick say, "They identify words that suggest someone is contrasting (i.e. making a distinction, noting an incongruity, point out some disparity) or classifying (i.e. seeing a similarity, labeling or grouping)." This is a brief idea of the discovery procedures used, and it has worked for some students. It might, however, prove too complex for the majority of students.

The use of a narrative guide was written up by Diane S. Menendez ("Perception and Change: Teaching Revision") as a way to teach revision. The instructor distributes a sample student composition to the class with a list of questions about the piece. The students are told to mark the theme (bracket, circle or underline) as they reply to the questions. After all have finished, discussion follows with the entire class participating. The following is written on the board to serve as reminders:

The revision guide requires students:

(1) To discover intention and meaning and their effects.
(2) To describe those discoveries for the writer.
(3) To analyze why and how the writing affects a reader.
(4) To evaluate the effectiveness in terms of the writer's purpose and context.
(5) Finally, to recommend strategies for change.

This type of group revising has proved very effective because students enjoy working on an anonymous theme and feel free to criticize and comment constructively. As they analyze and evaluate the piece, they are caught up in a desire to help improve the work and enthusiastically recommend ideas for change. A great deal of interest is generated as they answer each question listed on the guide, and a high degree of participation is always evident.

W. U. McDonald Jr. in "The Revising Process and the Marking of Student Paper," writes about his techniques for revision that deal primarily with comments on drafts serving as a stimulus to revise. He agrees with students like Janet Emig's Lynn, who felt that the teachers never encouraged or inspired her to revise. He believes that all comments put on preliminary drafts should be a stimulus to revise and suggests that there be at least two drafts written before the graded one. Instructors responses' to the first draft should include a determination of whether the student has focus and if so then to ask questions about the subject matter (for relevance), the lucidity (especially in paragraphs), and the coherence between paragraphs. McDonald continues that with the
second draft, while still noting the first draft's concerns, he would concentrate on sentence form and grammar usage. He says that the instructor still can comment on everything in the graded draft that he/she has always commented on in the finished paper. The students actually write several drafts although they are only working on a single piece. They should be told the reasons for the changes in emphasis in subsequent drafts and yet understand that the work done on all of the drafts will be taken into consideration for their final grade. Difficulties exist, however, in this method of teaching revision, admits McDonald:

One is time: How do we find or make the time to provide written responses to two preliminary drafts and to a final graded version of each paper... A second potential problem is that we do have to avoid writing the paper for the student... The remaining potential problem...I now read not to judge but to identify problems and possibilities, this is, not in terms of what has been done, but of what needs to be done, what can be done.28

This does make it more difficult to grade the final version on its merits alone since instructors may still want to ask questions or suggest changes, but cannot. Of the three potential problems expressed by McDonald, the lack of time seems to be the only real drawback to this method, yet even this could be solved by assigning fewer papers. An assignment of four papers for the course with two preliminary drafts for the first three papers and at least
one for the last paper is quite feasible.

Another good method was by George J. Thompson in "Revision: Nine Ways to Achieve a Disinterested Perspective," wherein he claims there are nine ways to achieve a disinterested perspective when revising and argues for multiple drafts much the same as McDonald. His nine ways include:

1. Rereading the initial draft silently, then aloud, simply listening to the prose, feeling its rhythm and movement;
2. Reading the draft backwards, word by word makes it easier to catch grammar and spelling errors;
3. Reading only every other line noting clusters, images and phrases;
4. Rereading a draft to locate thesis proposition statement;
5. Reducing each paragraph to a single word or phrase;
6. Listing in sequence words or phrases that represent the main idea of the paragraphs, then synthesizing this information into a single sentence and comparing it to thesis statement identified in step (4);
7. Returning to paragraphs to identify specific or concrete evidence that supports the central word or phrase found in step (5);
8. Rereading the draft focusing on transitions between paragraphs. After identifying the transitions the student then either modifies them or provides new ones and if necessary reorders paragraphs;
9. Evaluating metaphors and the quality of composing, shaping and ordering which are the thread and the design of the written product.

These nine items reflect a different approach to re-seeing the initial draft, and if most of these were followed by a student reviser, many substantive changes would be made. I suspect students would have a good time reading their draft backwards and would be amazed at the mechanical errors they would locate as they tried this.

Another recent method is in Roland Huff's essay,
"Teaching Revision: A Model of the Drafting Process."
It has been field tested and variations of this model have been used with elementary, middle school and secondary students, remedial and regular freshman students, and graduate students. It involves zero drafting, problem-solving drafting and final drafting. Huff says, "the writer's thoughts are more engaging and real than the active text reveals in zero drafting. In the problem-solving drafting writers begin to wrestle with specificity and unresolved problems they have created in their efforts to conceptualize a subject and communicate with an audience. In the final drafting, thoughts and ideas begin to be ordered into a text." Since internal revision involves the thinking process, the writer struggles to arrive at the best solutions and the text becomes a much more interesting text than the original idea. Drafting as a recursive process is essential to revision and many advocate the multiple draft method; Huff's drafting model is important, however, because it provides students with something that teaches them how to construct a text after they have limited and defined their subject and have defined and analyzed rhetorical problems.

Finally, we discover the ultimate modern method of revising is by computerized word-processing. In John C. Bean's essay, "Computerized Word-Processing as an Aid
to Revision," he tells us that his study suggests a computer can help beginning writers learn to revise their initial draft with less emphasis on word substitution and grammatical correctness and much more emphasis on a step by step remodeling of ideas through successive drafts. True, Bean says that the computer cannot cure directly student psychological or cognitive blocks to revision, but it can eliminate mechanical difficulties and particularly the illegibility of students' handwritten drafts and their lack of time for recopying. Briefly, the process used in revising by computer is as follows: the initial text is entered into the computer and the writer receives a typed manuscript (on wide print-out paper) for revision. The writer then enters into the computer only the changes to be made to the text--deletions, insertions, recasting of passages, reordering of parts--and receives a typed copy of the new draft which can again be revised. When the student is finished, he/she commands the computer to type a completed copy on standard-sized paper. With this method, the student writer is always working from newly typed scripts instead of from messy handwritten revisions marked up with arrows, asterisks and words crowded into sentences. The thinking process itself is only involved as the student revises the manuscripts with new material, rewritten passages and so forth.
One of the students who engaged in the study felt that the major advantage of computer revising was the freedom from worry about retyping an entire paper after extensive internal revision. The student was more apt to revise a draft five or six times because of this factor, and, as an added benefit, enjoyed operating the computer. The main problem I can see with this method is that the hardware is unavailable to the massive number of students who take composition classes.

The main point of this chapter has been to set down several ways that a writer could revise. Textbooks, handbooks, published articles by scholars and teachers can inform students as well as teachers of the various procedures available. How to effect that good writing is up to the individual, but the one thing all agree upon is that revising is a recursive process and must be constant if the writer wants to perform well. It is not important which procedure, method, or technique a writer chooses to use; it is important that he/she does revise, and revise and revise.
CONCLUSION:

In reviewing the historical background of the composing process and its complexities, we have come to understand that many theories have existed and that processes writers have used to produce great literary works have also been numerous. Psychologists have studied writing in relation to how writers think as they move through the composing/revising process in their search for meaning. Methods and techniques for improving written work by revision procedures have been plentiful, although not all have been practical.

Since students are disinclined to revise, procedures for improving their written work must be created to show them the way. Teachers must be aware of all the ramifications of the composing/revising process. They must be instructed in ways to motivate students to revise and too in utilizing the students' own self-evaluation and editing. Teachers should be trained in peer editing techniques for the classroom, and they must accumulate a storehouse of methods to teach revision.

The idea of writing alongside of one's students has dramatically changed the teacher image for many. Computer technology is being used to teach English composition and is an invaluable tool for revising drafts. More and more how to teach revision articles are being published, and
writing across-the curriculum workshops are being held. If teacher education for revision is seriously implemented, there is no reason why revision cannot be integrated into the composition programs on all levels. The curriculum could be arranged to include the writing of fewer papers during a course, thereby allowing more time to revise preliminary drafts as opposed to grading one original draft. If curriculum changes are implemented in the classroom in the future and used in the community colleges and universities, many benefits will be derived. The most important benefit would be better student writing created from a better understanding of the revision process as a "normal" part of the composing process.
CHAPTER III
NOTES


2 Barnett and Stubbs, p. 175.


4 Barzun, p. 200.


6 Berry, p. 183.


15 Tibbets, p. 22.


17 Bernstein, p. 425.

18 Bernstein, p. 426.


23 Hawkins, 67.


28 McDonald, 1970.


31 Huff, 816.

33 Bean, 148.
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