

and teacher-made tests are outlined. The last segment of this chapter contains an 8-step model for curriculum-based assessment. Subsequently, each of these points is expanded upon in the next four chapters. An explanation of how this model can be applied to each of the major areas of classroom instruction is then presented in the six succeeding chapters: reading, mathematics, written language, adaptive and social behaviour, learning strategies, and preschool education. Practical examples are furnished at the conclusion of each of these six chapters. In these examples Salvia and Hughes have attempted to include the various types of assessment decisions made in schools, the diverse ages of students assessed, the different levels of severity of a student's problem, and many educational settings. Finally, chapter twelve offers suggestions to the teacher for developing a more effective and efficient classroom.

From the perspective of someone who was previously a classroom teacher this book has long been awaited. The presentation of classroom assessment without technical jargon and elaborated statistics is a major feat. Salvia and Hughes are to be commended for their practical and thoughtful approach to curriculum-based assessment. This book will be a welcome addition to any classroom teacher's library.

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STYLE: TEN LESSONS IN CLARITY AND GRACE.

Third Edition.

Glenview, IL: Scott, Foresman and Co.

241 pp.

This 241-page book teaches how to write well in English. And it does this superbly. There are few people who would not be able, upon reading this book, to learn some additional skills for use in their preferred literary genre. The book purports to teach how to write clearly, cohesively, concisely, even elegantly and has the double merit of succeeding in this, on the one hand, and exhibiting these virtues itself, on the other. Aside from its purely pedagogic elements, the book is fun to read. It is splashed with colourful, historical, entertaining, and often amusing examples of good writing. And the quotations from renown writers are generally instructive, relevant, even memorable.

The lessons of this book are well designed. The author introduces a topic, concisely delineates its features, states sources of difficulty, gives poorly written examples (then rewritten examples) bearing on the topic being explicated, makes summary statements of principle, and then presents exercises. As an example of how he proceeds, let us take Lesson Five, "The Grammar of Concision." Following a statement of the problem of wordiness, the author delves into its sources: redundant pairs, redundant modifiers, redundant categories, meaningless modifiers, pompous diction, belabouring the obvious, excessive detail, a phrase for a word. In treating these topics, he liberally admixes examples and exercises.

This section is followed by another entitled, "Talking to the Reader: Metadiscourse." Following a brief treatment of the nature of metadiscourse, that is, text which orients and contextualizes the ideas that the writer is communicating, the author presents types and examples along with advice on judicious use of this kind of discourse. The types focused upon are (1) hedges and emphatics, (2) sequencers and topicalizers, and (3) attributors and narrators. As in his other statements of principle, there is a lack of dogmatism in regard to how much and what kind of metadiscourse is appropriate.

The last section on concision treats the problem of the excessive use of indirect negatives. An example of indirect negatives that bloat as well as obscure text is the following (which I take from his summary on cutting fat). "There is no reason not to believe that engineering malfunctions in nuclear energy systems cannot always be anticipated." If we rephrase this: "One can assume that malfunctions in nuclear energy systems will take us by surprise," we benefit from increase in clarity as well as concision. Combining these negative constructions with excessively abstract, passive, complex terms produces the turgid, opaque text that fills academic journals. Even a cursory reading of this section cannot help but have a salubrious effect on offenders. (Or if you prefer . . . will certainly benefit offending readers.)

The lessons of this book run a gamut of useful topics which it will be useful for some to know in advance. They are the following, each of which the author treats in turn in separate lessons: clarity, cohesion, emphasis, concision, control of sprawl, management of long sentences, elegance, style and usage, and style and punctuation. Though each lesson can be read with profit without necessarily having read those that precede it, the author's specialized use of terms makes it desirable to learn such terms as they are introduced.

I would except from this counsel the preface, which, anomalously, has the most obscurantist prose I have read in a long time. Somewhere in the middle of the preface (I cannot tell you exactly where as the author, for some reason, has chosen not to number its pages) it is written

I know that many undergraduates have a problem precisely opposite to that which most of this book addresses – a style characterized by one fifteen-word sentence after another. But that’s not a problem that endures very long. I have worked with many adult writers in government, in the professions, in business; I have met not one whose major writing problem was a style that was immature. I am encouraged in this observation by every other adult writing program I have ever seen: Not one of them takes up the matter of writing longer rather than shorter sentences.

The context doesn’t help in interpreting this passage. I and others I have given it to read find it confusing. If one reads it several times carefully, one may actually become more confused. What, indeed, is the problem in question? Is it a style opposite to one fifteen-word sentence after another? Is the style characterized by the long sentences the one that the book addresses, or is it the opposite one? Perhaps it is the one the students have? Is it the long sentences that are opposite to what the book addresses? Do many students write sentences that are too long? If they do, do many others write sentences that are too short? Is this the problem that doesn’t endure very long? The author tells us that he has worked with writers in the professions, business, and government and not one has had an immature style. But is an immature style one that is excessively long, or one that is excessively terse and spare, or both, or something else? The paragraphs that follow did not help us.

Let me continue with some minor but not insignificant quibbles. Excellent as the lessons themselves are, they are not demonstrably flawless. Indeed, they would have been less enjoyable in the reading were that not the case (that is, *pace* Williams, not not flawless). First, there was the customary incantations about the use of Latinate abstraction, yet the author lauds the *Gettysburg Address* as the greatest speech in American history (p. 58) even though it is also recognizably the most Latinate English-language speech any of us ever had to memorize as school children. The implicit inconsistency in the above advice is also apparent in the abandon with which the author indulges in Latinate language. On page 14, every verb listed (in a discourse on nominalization) is of Latin origin: discover, move, resist, react, impede, fail, and refuse. Words have certain qualities that are more important than their etymology. Who would wish to change Macbeth’s “. . . multitudinous seas incarnadine” into “. . . many seas red”? There are qualities of meter and rhythm and overtone that override other considerations.

Similarly with the size (read number of syllables) of words. Comprehensibility is more important than size, as anyone who has perused a *Scrabble*

dictionary will quickly realize. The polysyllabic is not necessarily a correlate of the esoteric or even the pretentious. In any event, that the author considers "deem" and "apprise" to be "big words" (p. 86) and "think" and "inform" their respective simpler near-synonyms is an opinion like so many others that needs to be substantiated.

Lest I seem to be unduly undermining the credibility of a truly good book (that is now in its third edition), I will restrict my criticisms to one final and minor observation. The author rightly emphasizes the need to use verbs to express action rather than to express static conditions (unless of course one is speaking of static or immutable things). He calls changing verbs into subjects nominalizing; the results are nominalizations. Examples are regulate and regulation, establish and establishment, express and expression. But we cannot assume that if a noun and a verb are cognates, the noun is a nominalization of the verb. On the contrary, it may be that the verb is a verbalization of the noun. For example, formula is not a nominalization of "to formulate"; table is not a nominalization of "to tabulate" or to "tabularize" or even "to table"; context is not a nominalization of "to contextualize," and so forth.

I will close this exercise by noting that there are a number of qualities of good writing that are more important than either clarity or grace; one of them is accuracy. I may not need to say that even if one writes with the sparkle and pungency and elegance of Hemingway, it is of less importance than making the fine distinctions and nuances characteristic of scholarly writing. The cost of doing the latter is to make our prose heavier, more tedious, and less pleasurable than would otherwise be the case. *Style: Ten Lessons in Clarity and Grace* will help you minimize those costs.

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COMPUTER ENVIRONMENTS FOR CHILDREN.
Cambridge: MIT Press (1988).
192 pp. \$9.95.

Over the last decade, the area of educational computer applications has been rapidly evolving. While only a few years ago it was difficult to find any books pertaining to the topic of educational computing, today we find a number of top researchers in this ever growing field who have authored books ranging from practical applications of the technology in the classroom to more theoretical, research-oriented manuscripts.