Cognitive Tool	Ages*	Grade	Main goal	Main characteristics
Ironic	21+	15+	mastery of refined re-flexiveness	questions ability to know things as true through any of the other cognitive tools, except perhaps somatic; skepticism ranges from extreme to more reflexive (skepticism turned on itself)

*These are rough ages.

**Although children are taught the alphabet and reading skills in this period, it also is important to continue to develop the mythical understanding. More information about Egan's theory and implications for education may be found at his website at http://www.educ.sfu.ca/people/faculty/kegan/. (This table copyright 1998 Andrew D. Carson, all rights reserved, except for fair-use associated with this single instance of publication, or through such reprints as authorized by this journal.)

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Despite the diversity of history and practice found in the educational landscapes of school, college, and university, the consensus, to quote cultural anthropologist Clifford Geertz, is that the traditional boundaries that have separated the various disciplines and genres of knowledge are collapsing. English language arts, the language in which much of teaching-learning is negotiated across the curriculum, as well as a disciplinary field in its own right, stands arguably on the "front lines" of such a transformation to the way we think, teach, learn, and construct knowledge. English language arts teachers have become aware of the impact of collapsing boundaries upon their discipline in a variety of ways, although what to do about it can seem bewildering. In a sense, the question we ask is how to get a foothold in an apparently explosive, yet intricate landscape. Where does one begin the re-visioning process?

It is in the context of this compelling need that Bruce Pirie's lovely book, *Reshaping High School English* falls. Pirie is an intellectual and a practising Canadian English teacher who also has the very real gift of entering into a conversation with his reader, thus enabling him to ground some exceedingly complex issues and concepts in a clear, engaging style. The book is rich both in reference material and classroom histrionics. In the case of the former, *Reshaping High School English* offers the enquiring reader a gold mine of contemporary, timely books, on topics ranging from the predictable – literature, rhetoric, response, writing, narrative modes of thought, to the eclectic – theatre as socio-

cultural transformation, cultural studies, media literacy, the culture of teachers in a postmodern age, and semiotics. Pirie is a writer, and the weave of his text is handled with such dexterity that it never once sags under the burden of the sources he draws into his argument.

From his opening account of the impact of the first wave of change in the teaching of English in his career, told with the kind of circumspect intelligence and wit that signals the beginning of a very real book about teaching-learning, Pirie moves into the landscape in which most of the text takes place: the point where media education meets the teaching of English language arts.

> . . . Surely, however, right near the center of an English teacher's job description ought to be an expectation that we will put into students' hands tools for understanding how texts work. . . The individual person can only be understood in reference to a location in a social web, a location described by a set of statements of sameness and difference. . . Similarly, the individual text takes its place within a cultural web of all the representations the reader has experienced, and this web grows by the addition of each new text. (p. 21).

The rest of the book is an embodiment of this web, an examination of the texts, contexts, and intertextualities that shape the English class-room of the 90s. As is the case for many practising teachers, Pirie's theory takes shape in the action of teaching-learning. This will make his book credible to even the most critical reader, since what he has to say is grounded in the fertile "messiness" of teacher among students, with professional books providing the necessary dialogue that all peda-gogues need to have with their colleagues.

Additional strands of Pirie's web, translated into chapters and sub-chapters in the book include: interrogating the cult of the individual in English teaching (a necessary step in the re-visioning process, without which the notions of context and intertextuality become inadmissable); what our handling of literature implies about the place of the individual in society (". . . As Dorothy and Douglas Barnes [1984] have noted, teachers 'brought up on the particular sensibilities of the English novel tradition' may find it difficult to see this individualist focus as a 'cultural choice, a choice, that is, from amongst alternatives. . .' "); the principle of textual "non-transparency" (Masterman,1993); the role of audience in English language pedagogy; unlocking reading processes (a practical guide that considers the research of Patrick Dias, Wolfgang Iser, and Peter Elbow, within a context where the teachers are asked to consider that readers need to both get into and out of the literary text in order

to make sense of it, as well as to grow as readers); drama in the classroom as another avenue for exploring text, context, and intertextualities (with reference to Dorothy Heathcote and Augusto Boal); students as makers of culture (". . . In one writing class, my students and I were comparing the way we easily call ourselves 'readers,' but are inhibited about proclaiming ourselves 'writers'. . ."); re-visioning the five-para-graph essay (". . . I am haunted by David Buckingham and Julian Sefton-Green's [1994] study of one able student's essays written over three years of classes in English and in Media Studies. Their analysis of the student's work suggests that 'progress' in Media Studies means a widening and deepening understanding of the world and one's experi-ences of the world, while 'progress' in English seems to mean something much narrower, something more like getting better at writing English essays with their precise text-and-evidence protocols. . .").

The concluding chapter of *Reshaping High School English* carries the title, "Cultural Studies," and deals with the hypothesis that the next step in the evolution of English language arts education may well be to re-vision itself as cultural studies. The argument Pirie makes here is both astute and coherent: he is too experienced a thinker and teacher to overlook the fact that such a hypothesis is controversial. In the landscape of an ". . . English program founded on [the] awareness of positions and interactions within systems. . ." Pirie promotes the ". . . treatment of texts as constructions within intertextual webs, sponsored by institutions and interacting with audiences," the "study of our own complex situations as readers," a commitment to students as actively involved in cultural transactions, and an exploration of interactions between people, and between the verbal and non-verbal through drama. Ackowledging the critique of such a future launched by scholars such as Harold Bloom, Pirie responds: ". . . It is rather a recognition that textuality operates within thickets of knowledge and experience, and if we value understanding how that works, we can't afford to be focused in narrow absorption, sitting at the feet of verbal icons that we have set on pedestals. Ultimately, it is the machinery of textuality, not the individual text, that is our object of study."

Reshaping High School English is a thoughtful, intelligent book that is destined to become a classic in the next millenium. It will engage and delight readers who teach in secondary schools, colleges, and universi-ties, as well as education students and those involved in literacy work, vocational education, and communication arts.

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STEPHEN TCHUDI (ED.) AND THE NCTE COMMITTEE ON ALTERNATIVES TO GRADING STUDENT WRITING. *Alternatives To Grading Student Writing.* Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English (1997). 307 pp. US $22.95 (NCTE members US $16.95). ISBN 0-8141-0130-5.

Most readers will be well aware of Stephen Tchudi's distinguished career as a pedagogue, author of books on English language arts and interdisciplinary education, and author of young adult books. *Alternatives To Grading Student Writing,* edited by Tchudi, is the outcome of *NCTE's Committee on Alternatives To Grading Student Writing.* The committee's mandate was to study this subject, and then to assemble its deliberations into material for a book.

The text is lengthy, and organized into sub-sections: background and theory, responding to student writing, classroom strategies and alternatives to grading student writing, and faculty workshops in alternatives to grading student writing. The contributors of the nineteen papers and six workshops that comprise the book are largely teachers at universities, and *Alternatives To Grading Student Writing* appears to be aimed at this market.

Tchudi's Introduction to the volume gives an account of the deliberations of the committee, together with his own personal quest for alternatives to grading the writing of students. It is in the latter context that Tchudi revisits the battleground of post-secondary grading, assessment, and evaluation, that is also a landscape of power and resistance for teacher and student, teacher and institution. Committee members organized response to writing, assessment, evaluation, and grading into a taxonomy, in which response offered the most and grading the least "degrees of freedom" to teachers. As spokesperson for the committee, Tchudi's definition of these terms is one of the clearest that I have encountered recently, although cleaning up the terminology does little to resolve the necessity of arriving at a mark in order to satisfy the demands of the post-secondary education system.

The articles that comprise the book are virtually unanimous in their condemnation of grading, based both on its inaccuracy to determine individual growth and development, as well as its role in turning sites of learning into regimes of power. Different articles both describe and support teachers as coaches, self-evaluation and peer evaluation as indispensable keys to learning, grading on the basis of merit and achievement, outcome-based education, and student portfolios. In addition, there are case studies of a writing course in England, of second language learners, of the developmental process of an undergraduate student, and

of a class that incorporated evaluation into their growth as writers. Articles are interspersed with "interludes": the reflections of individual teachers and students on working through issues in evaluation and assessment, and alternatives to grading. The final chapter presents a series of workshops, together with a complementary list of resources, for faculties who would like to look together at such issues as: developing intrinsic motivation, contract grades, using rubrics and holistic scoring, communication with parents and the public, and alternative assessment across the curriculum. This chapter is a nice touch, insofar as it takes the issues treated in the book into a field of potential action, rather than leaving them as objects for reflection.

On the whole, *Alternatives To Grading Student Writing* lacks the kind of energy and vision that I have come to associate with Stephen Tchudi. The problem is not that I expected definitive answers, but rather that the topic demands a wider field of vision than the committee was able to provide. For example, the work of critical pedagogy and women's studies should have been considered, insofar as there are texts available, that analyze the culture of power in schools and universities; in addition, it seems to me that committee members should also have studied classroom teachers in elementary and secondary schools, many of whom are scholarly in their use of portfolios, rubrics, coaching and working with parents. The book may, however, be a valuable addition to the library of university teachers who are curious about how alternatives to grading are being pioneered in American universities.

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HENRY A. GIROUX. *Channel Surfing: Race talk and the destruction of today's youth.* Toronto: Canadian Scholars Press (1997). 254 pp. $39.95 (HC). ISBN: 1-55130-124-5.

> And where do intellectuals stand in relation to politics?. . . [T]hose who are mindful of the ties that link everything in this world to-gether, who approach the world with humility, but also with an increased sense of responsibility, who wage a struggle for every good thing – such intellectuals should be listened to with the greatest attention, regardless of whether they work as independent critics, holding up a much-needed mirror to politics and power, or are directly involved in politics. (Havel, in Giroux, 1977, p. 137)

In *Channel Surfing,* Henry Giroux holds up the mirror to politics and power in an attempt to make visible the political, economic, and cultural conditions "that undermine democratic public life and take the