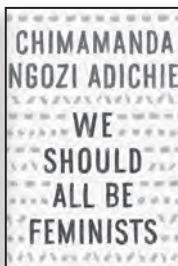
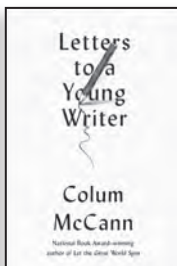
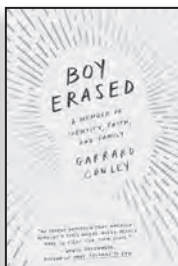
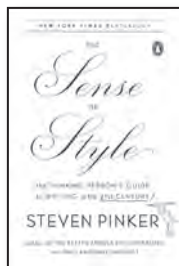


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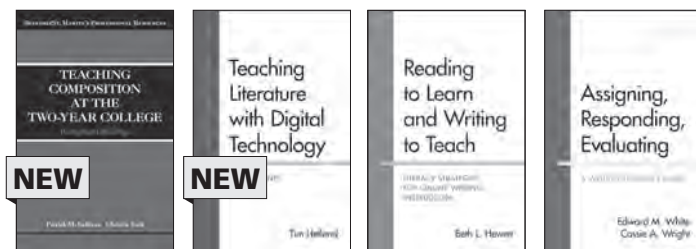
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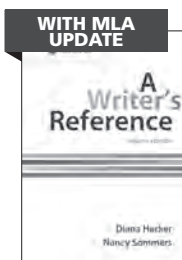
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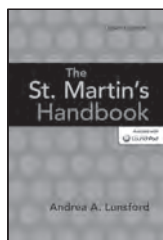
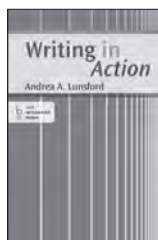
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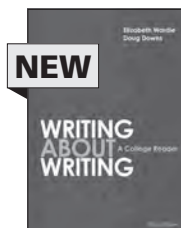
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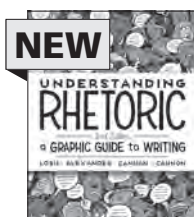
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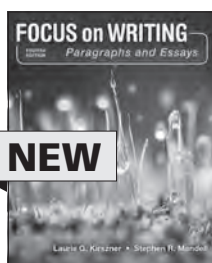


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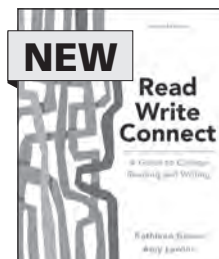
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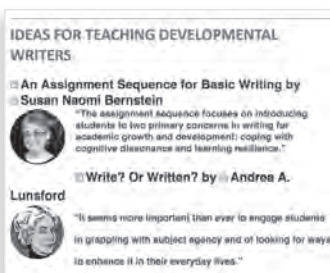
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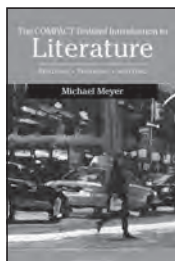


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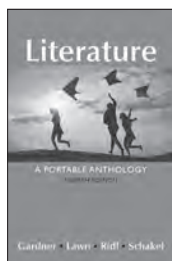
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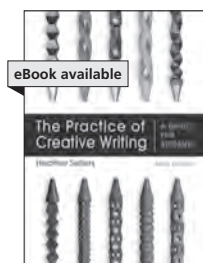
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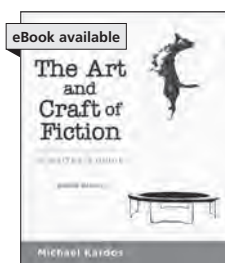
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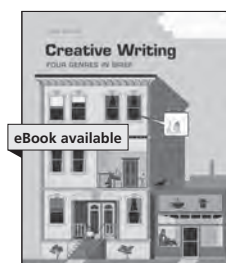
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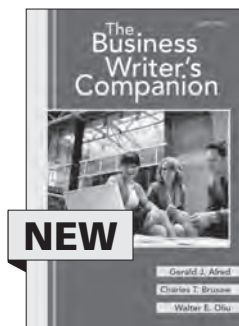
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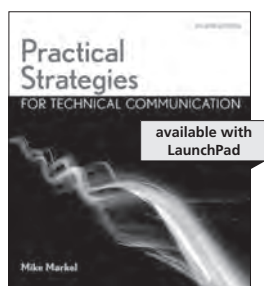
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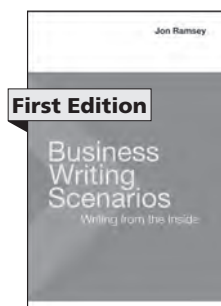
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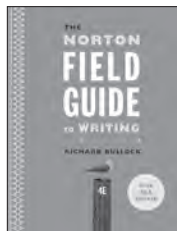
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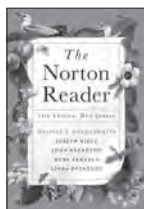
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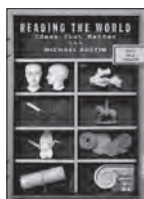
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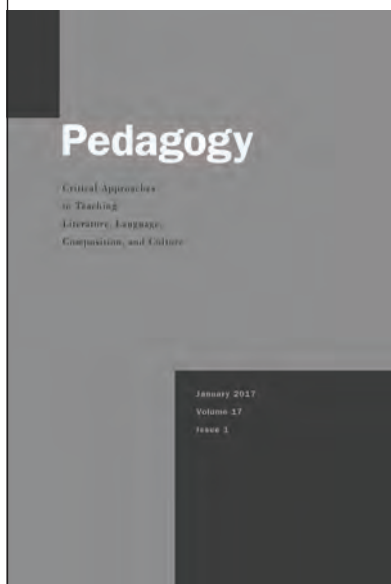


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## News Flash

### Clear writing is a teachable style

Most first-year writing courses give no systematic instruction in prose readability. Instructors have too many targets to hit. We do grammar brush-ups, deal with fragments, and discuss genres, yet we have no orderly way to deal with the fact that students write lousy sentences. We may give individual feedback on active verbs, etc., in the margins, but it has no effect on those many students who don't understand what a sentence is or how it works.

So I developed a new way to teach writing: the Readable Writing Method. It's grounded in the insights of the late Rudolf Flesch, author of *The Art of Readable Writing*. In the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary edition of that book, Dr. Flesch expressed regret that his readability insights had never been taken up by college instructors. That's no longer true.

Here's my claim, after 20 years of experience with this newish course: most of today's college students can learn to write clear, readable prose in *one semester* of freshman comp. The course must have (1) tight focus on readability as the goal of the course, and (2) careful arrangement of lessons in a sequence of skills that can be practiced, combined, and mastered.

Clear writing, it turns out, is the effect of a small number of teachable behaviors. (Dr. Flesch knew this.) The first novelty of this unique course is its theme: learning to be clear for the reader. The second novelty is the sequence of skills. Some are familiar—like how to use active verbs—and some are unusual—like controlling average sentence length.



John G. Maguire

In the first eight weeks, we attend sentence school, building on insights from Flesch and adding some of my own; we learn *for the sake of the reader* to construct simple, vivid sentences. In the last six weeks, having mastered the production of good sentences, we enter essay school. This is a mini-course in organizing *the reader's experience* by using a thesis sentence, transitions, and a satisfying ending. *We get good results at this point precisely because we have delayed the writing of thesis-based essays until the sentence has been mastered.*

I have taught the course successfully more than 50 times in the Boston area and have captured it in a 76-page book called *The College Writing Guide* (sometimes *John Maguire's College Writing Guide*). The CWG contains most of the course, including all topics in order, with explanations, and all the in-class and homework exercises. I have been selling it online at [readablewriting.com](http://readablewriting.com) for \$19.90 for the last couple of years. Here's what instructors have said:

***"I can't see why any writing instructor would use any other Freshman Comp textbook."***

—Daniel Smith, best-selling author of *Monkey Mind*, professor, the College of New Rochelle

***"I used your guide the first part of my semester and found it extremely helpful! The students' writing significantly improved after the human interest and active verb lessons."***

—Susan Layer-Whelan, instructor, College of Southern Maryland

***"This semester, I used the book as an assigned workbook for the first five weeks of the course. Their writing improved a lot this semester—it might be the best semester I've had. Their sentences got a lot better. ... I'm a real fan of this book; I tell everybody about it. I'm thankful for it because I don't have the time to invent more materials for my classes, and this package really works. I've been teaching college writing for more than 20 years, and this is the best resource I've found."***

—Kim Holcomb, instructor, University of Ohio

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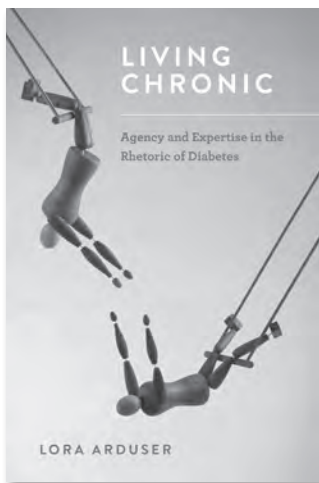




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