

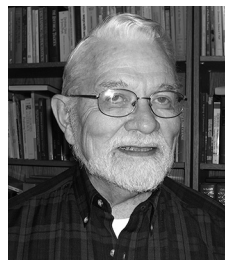
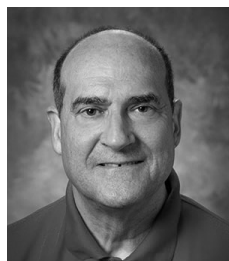
A Tribute to George Hillocks, Jr.

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**Introduction: Peter Smagorinsky**

RTE editors Ellen Cushman and Mary Juzwik have asked me to serve as Forum editor for this year's volume of the journal. The four Forums will include retrospectives from three former editorial teams, to follow in subsequent issues, and this issue's tribute to George Hillocks, Jr., a major figure in literacy studies and teacher education who passed away November 12, 2014, in Chicago. His career began in 1956 when he taught English in grades 7–10 and 12 in Euclid, Ohio, a position he held through 1965 when he moved to

Bowling Green State University, where he taught in a variety of positions in the Department of English. In 1971 he moved to the University of Chicago, where he taught until his retirement in 2003. Even in retirement he was an active scholar, continuing to write and conduct workshops for teachers, and he was planning new projects at the time of his death at age 80.

This tribute includes essays by four of his former students: Dorothea Anagnostopoulos, University of Connecticut, who earned a Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) and Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) under George's mentorship; Michael W. Smith, also both an MAT and PhD student of George's; Carol D. Lee, who earned her doctorate under George; and yours truly, also with an MAT and PhD with George as major professor. Choosing four from among George's many students was not easy, and I hope that these four essays represent what his many friends, admirers, and students feel about this sadly departed giant in research in the teaching of English.

Dorothea Anagnostopoulos



One of the most vivid memories I have of George is of him standing in the middle of a sixth-grade classroom in Ray School, a public K–8 school in Chicago’s Hyde Park neighborhood, holding a large conch shell over his head. As George walked around the classroom, he invited each student to describe the shell. Though the first few students were tentative, as George continued walking and allowing students to touch and hold the shell, students soon were eagerly shouting out descriptions of the shell’s color, shape, and texture. George, just as eagerly, took up their descriptions and gently pushed the students to think of more specific details and comparisons. Within minutes, students extended their descriptions into vivid metaphors and similes. George and the students had entered the flow. They were engrossed in their exchange and intent on generating new and richer descriptions. George’s 12 MAT students seated around the room were equally engrossed as they watched how George prompted the sixth graders to develop their ideas and deftly maintained their engagement. I knew, as a former MAT, a high school English teacher, and then a graduate student assistant with the program, that the vision of teaching George presented to the MAT students was both inspiring and daunting. It is a vision that calls on teachers to respect students’ capacities and to create activities that provide students opportunities to grapple with substantive assignments, complex problems, and important concepts, together.

Another vivid memory I have is of George in front of a standing-room-only crowd at an NCTE convention. George’s book, *The Testing Trap: How State Writing Assessments Control Learning* (Hillocks, 2002), had just been released and George was presenting its major findings. As he compared the various state writing prompts and rubrics and revealed how most of them supported low-level, vapid writing, the audience of English teachers and teacher educators eagerly took in the details. In the question-and-answer session that followed, the teachers shared their own experiences and perspectives on how high-stakes state writing assessments threatened to negatively affect their teaching. George’s analysis helped the teachers to locate these experiences in the broader policy context. Many teachers told George after the panel that his work had provided them with evidence they needed to argue against the misuse of standardized writing assessments in their own schools.

I offer these two memories to illustrate the different dimensions and wide-ranging impact of George’s work. Though George did not consider himself (nor is he seen as) a policy researcher, George’s work is, and I hope will continue to be, highly relevant to the most prominent policy debates and movements currently shaping teaching and teacher education.

First, George’s work speaks to—and, in many ways, against—current standards and test-based accountability policies. *The Testing Trap* stands as one of the most rigorous studies of the nature and consequences of high-stakes assessments for the teaching and learning of writing. The book has been reviewed nationally and

internationally and is widely cited in the research and debate regarding test-based accountability. Given that book's clear critique of test-driven reform, it is somewhat ironic that George's recent work on teaching argument, especially his book *Teaching Argument Writing, Grades 6–12: Supporting Claims with Relevant Evidence and Clear Reasoning*, has become a popular resource supporting current efforts to help teachers meet the Common Core State Standards and the high-stakes assessments attached to them. State departments of education and districts across the country are using George's book to support these efforts. I recently used the book in my own work with my mathematics colleagues to build teachers' knowledge and skills in teaching mathematical arguments. As I led a group of 40 K–12 mathematics teachers through the "Slip or Trip?" activity that George had first developed some 30 years ago, I thought fondly of George and of my time as an MAT student and program assistant with him. And I was happy that George was getting his due!

At the same time, I knew that George would be concerned that his work be used with integrity. Nothing made George angrier than when teachers, for whatever reason, dumbed down writing instruction, reducing it to only response, process, and form. For George, constructing meaningful arguments required students to construct and critique valid claims supported by evidence and grounded in well-reasoned warrants. It also entailed students making defensible judgments about their own and others' values and experiences. I hope that as teachers take up George's contributions, they will embrace and pass on to their students George's fierce commitment to argumentative writing as intellectual and moral work.

I hope, too, that George's work will become increasingly relevant to policy and reform in teacher education. University-based teacher education is under attack, in part, because of its incoherence and lack of clear connection to the practice of teaching. In response, scholars like Pamela Grossman (Grossman, Hammerness, & McDonald, 2009) and Deborah Ball (Ball & Forzani, 2009) call on teacher educators to develop teacher candidates' fluency in enacting those teaching practices found to foster student learning. George's work with the MAT program at the University of Chicago predates this practice-based model by over 30 years. From the very start of the program, George taught the MAT students how to plan and teach well-sequenced, coherent units. We began by writing the same sort of text that we expected our students to produce. He then engaged us in the inquiry-based activities that we would rehearse with each other and then teach to our middle or high school students.

The work required for co-planning and co-teaching a four-week personal narrative unit at Ray School remains, for me, the most powerful model of practice-based teacher education I know of. Each year, after a summer of planning and rehearsing the teaching of writing, MAT students took over writing instruction in one sixth-grade class for one month. Each MAT student would plan and then teach lessons while the others sat around the room taking notes on factors like student participation in whole-class and small-group discussions, teacher questions, and teacher movement. The MAT students debriefed after each lesson, jointly analyzing observation data and student writing to assess instruction, monitor student learn-

ing, and plan for the next lesson. Through this process, the group co-constructed a shared understanding of and language for the teaching of writing that integrated theory and practice.

George has written about the Ray School writing workshop in his book, *Narrative Writing: Learning a New Model for Teaching*. That book documents how the personal narrative unit and the MAT students' collaborative workshopping of it supported both the sixth graders' and the MAT students' learning. Importantly, it was the experience at Ray School that enabled the MAT students to enact what George then called "inquiry-based" teaching, or what scholars now call "ambitious teaching," as beginning teachers. George's work with the MAT program is a model of high-quality teacher education and serves as a powerful counterargument to current efforts to promote alternatives and fast-tracks in teaching and to dismantle university-based teacher education.

I remember George as a remarkable teacher and beloved mentor. George's passionate commitment to teaching as intellectual and moral work remains a guiding force in my own career as a teacher educator and stands as a powerful model for the field.

Michael W. Smith



I took my first course with George Hillocks over 40 years ago. It was a methods course in the MAT program he directed that had a practicum component. I still remember my first teaching experience in that practicum. And George's response.

I taught a lesson on writing haiku. I mimeographed a collection of haiku and used them as the basis of a teacher-led discussion in which I elicited from the class the formal features of a haiku. I thought that if they knew those features, the class could produce their own haiku. I was wrong, and more than a bit disappointed. After the class, I went over to George to debrief. I said something like, "Well, they didn't get it." George fixed me with that stare of his and said, "What could you have done to ensure that they did?" As we talked, he helped me to see that I was doing all of the work in the lesson— that rather than engaging the students in a genuine inquiry, I was instead leading them by the nose to a predetermined destination. As we talked, he helped me see how my emphasis on declarative knowledge—which, as George (Hillocks, 1995) has put it, "enables identification of characteristics"—was misplaced and that instead my focus should have been on procedural knowledge, which "enables production" (p. 121). Helping students understand what I wanted them to do, I came to see, was useless without engaging them in learning how they could go about doing it.

I start with this story because I think it captures in a nutshell two of the most important things George taught me, two ideas that dominated the writing he did and that have dominated the writing I have done: the importance of procedural knowledge and the power of what he would later (Hillocks, 1986) call "environmental instruction." I think my little anecdote illuminates another idea that's at

the heart of George's work as well. One of the most profound lessons that George taught me, beginning with that very first observation, is that if the kids didn't get it, it was my fault. It meant that I hadn't thought hard enough about what I wanted students to be able to do and that my materials hadn't worked well enough to prepare them for success. George had a profound belief in kids—all kids. He taught all of his prospective teachers that if the kids didn't get it, it was always our fault. What we needed to do was collect data, think about it, and figure out just where we went wrong and just how we could fix it.

This belief both in kids' abilities and in the potential for teachers to increase those abilities marked George's work both as a teacher educator and as a scholar. In the words he would use some 25 years after first watching me teach (Hillocks, 1999), George was an "optimistic constructivist." He believed deeply that all students could learn under "appropriate circumstances," and because he understood that "students must be engaged in the construction of their own knowledge," he tried to teach his students how to develop "activities that will allow students to do just that" (Hillocks, 1999, p. 132).

These activities are at the heart of what George (Hillocks, 1986) meant when he talked about "environmental instruction"—instruction in which the importance of the students, the teacher, and the curricular materials is nearly in balance. The notion of environmental instruction is a big idea, one that challenges both traditional teacher-dominated instruction and progressive alternatives that seem to see teachers and schools primarily as interferences. As important an idea as it is, I'm afraid it hasn't had the influence on the profession that George (and I) had hoped. Despite his compelling meta-analysis and a number of his own investigations, it just hasn't caught on.

In part, I think it hasn't had more influence because George made an unfortunate choice when he named it. *Environmental instruction* sounds more like science than it does literacy. In part, I think it hasn't had more influence because until his most recent books on narrative (Hillocks, 2007) and argument (Hillocks, 2011), his writing was not as accessible as is the writing of some who have had more influence on the profession.

George may not have had the influence on the profession he would have liked, but he certainly has had a profound influence on me. Forty years after I met him, I'm still making use of his lessons. I'm currently working on a project designed to prepare 11th- and 12th-grade students from a comprehensive high school in Philadelphia, students who would be the first in their families to go to college, for the rigors of college reading and writing. As we're writing the lessons that we'll be teaching, George is standing on my shoulder, whispering in my ear: "Have you created materials that will engage students in the thinking, talking, reading, and writing you want them to do? Have you given them enough practice to develop the procedural knowledge you want them to acquire? Have you created contexts in which they will do meaningful work together in the here and now? Have you sequenced things so that students develop knowledge as they move from text to text and task to task, and have you given them the opportunity to employ that

knowledge toward significant ends?"

And on and on. George remains so salient in my thinking and teaching that my students and I joke that they are George's grandstudents. I asked one of them today if he could articulate the most significant lesson that George taught him. He responded quickly: "Teaching means creating engaging things for students to do and not thinking of intelligent things for me to say." I think George would be pleased.

George is also whispering to me as a researcher, though George would reject the distinction between teaching and research. Indeed, in George's estimation, ongoing inquiry is an essential feature of the classroom. Students have to be engaged in inquiry, he believed, if they are to develop the procedural understandings they need to write sophisticated arguments. Teachers, in his estimation, must be reflective practitioners, and in reflective teaching "every move may be subject to scrutiny" (Hillocks, 1995, p. 207) with the recognition that no move stands alone but rather is part of a sequence that adds up to an observable improvement. Moreover, "there is no reason that most students should not show improvement. If they do not, the teaching needs to change" (p. 207).

When I was in classes in the mid-seventies, George was reading the work of Karl von Frisch, who was a co-winner of the Nobel Prize for Physiology or Medicine for his meticulous studies of bee behavior. George would go on and on about his admiration for von Frisch, about how much the scientist learned simply by looking hard and then looking again. I'll admit I thought he was crazy at the time. But George's thinking about von Frisch's research has stayed with me as I've conducted my own. And once again, he's on my shoulder, talking in my ear: "Look hard, Michael," George keeps telling me. "Be open to data that shakes conventional wisdom and your own presuppositions. Make sure your research accounts for all students in some way or another. Make sure that it will be useful to teachers as they do their important work."

I've tried to heed George's whispers in my teaching and my research. I know I'm not alone. Another great gift George has given me is a connection to his other students, now primarily through an electronic mailing list open to his former MAT and PhD students. I don't know of many teacher-scholars who have influenced so many people so deeply as to make such a list possible. I'm honored to be part of it. I'm humbled to be connected in some way to so many teachers who are doing such important work day after day in their classrooms. I think George would regard those teachers as his greatest legacy. I think he would be right. And I hope that other teachers, teachers who did not have the great good fortune to have George as a teacher and mentor, continue to read his work, put it into practice, and reflect on it. Our profession will be the better for it.

Carol D. Lee

I was George's doctoral student from 1988 to 1991 at the University of Chicago. I was the only PhD student taking courses with him during those years. Initially, I felt a bit like a stepchild, as it was clear that George's babies, his inner circle, were his beloved MAT students. George had for decades headed a one-man operation,



training cohorts who would become extraordinary English teachers. One of the most compelling illustrations of the long-term impact of the Hillocks MAT program is the electronic mailing list that continues today, where former Hillocks students collaborate around instructional and intellectual issues of practice. His ability to cultivate a long-term intellectual community of practice precedes the influence of the model of Lesson Study (Lewis, Perry, & Murata, 2006) in the United States. In contrast to most teacher education programs,

George socialized his students into collaborative self-reflection before they went out into the field. I had a chance to work with the MAT program during my period as a doctoral student. Despite my feeling like a bit of a lone wolf on the periphery, once I started the dissertation process, George became my strongest advocate. He pushed me to craft the dissertation because he was intent that I would publish it as a book. In fact, as a result of his intense focus on writing and rewriting, shortly after graduation the dissertation was published as my first book (Lee, 1993).

George's students use the name *Hillocksians* to capture the intellectual coherence across those of us trained by George. I think what characterizes the Hillocks tradition is a deep focus on analyzing the underlying structure of the discipline—whether composition or literary reasoning—in order to inform powerful principles for scaffolding novices. Here, I want to address his influence on the teaching of literature and, in so doing, to talk about his influence on me.

A dominant influence on teaching literature at the middle and high school levels has been reader response, the idea that students' personal connections to literature should drive instruction. George's perspective was not widely accepted. George fundamentally argued that if students do not have the technical skills to access the structures and rhetorical moves of authors, they are likely not to have much of a personal response or those responses are likely to be superficial. George also argued that a dominant mode of teaching literature is to ask students to produce interpretations without providing supports for learning how to carry out such tasks. In common literature anthologies, students will be asked to interpret symbolism in literary works, but there will be nothing about the basis for rejecting the literal as a sufficient explanation of the phenomenon, or about processes for reconstructing an abstract proposition from the details in the text that the reader presumes to be symbolic. George here distinguished between what cognitive psychologists called *declarative* and *procedural* knowledge. Declarative knowledge is knowing *that* or *what*—for example, knowing that some details in a literary text can be symbolic. Procedural knowledge is knowing *how* and often *why*—for example, knowing how to detect symbolism and how to reconstruct a warrantable interpretation. This distinction, which he applied both to learning to compose arguments and narratives, and to learning to interpret literature, grew out of his interdisciplinary orientation to scholarship. He was deeply steeped in studies of cognition that helped to shape his focus on this distinction between declarative and procedural knowledge, as well as his long-standing attention to the idea of scaffolding.

One of the influences on George's protocols for scaffolding was cognitive scientist Ausubel's (1960) work on the use of advance organizers to help structure the focus of thinking as the learner attempts to solve problems. George extrapolated these principles uniquely to problems of both composition and literary interpretation. The applications to literature were informed by his articulation of the foundational kinds of knowledge that novice readers needed to bring to acts of interpretation. These included knowledge of character types, of archetypal themes, of plot structures, of rhetorical problems. Hillocks identified such organizers as *gateway activities*. Gateway activities are designed to activate knowledge that students can use to articulate criteria on which to make judgments about character types (e.g., mythic hero), archetypal themes (e.g., courageous action), and rhetorical problems (e.g., satire and irony). Foundational exemplars can be found in publications written by George's students (Johannessen, Kahn, & Walter, 1982; Smagorinsky, McCann, & Kern, 1987; Smith, 1989).

George has had a powerful impact on my own body of research. While George focused on what he called gateway activities, I extrapolated from that work to develop what I call *cultural data sets*. George's gateway activities addressed problems of theme and character largely. Michael Smith (1989) took up this tradition, influenced by George to draw on Wayne Booth's (1974, 1983) studies of narrator and irony, to design gateway activities that supported procedural knowledge around irony and unreliable narration. I expanded on this tradition by designing the architecture for activities that drew on students' cultural knowledge derived from everyday experience, particularly with regard to African American students and students from other nondominant groups, to focus on rhetorical patterns and problems, moving now to include symbolism and satire. I attempted in this work to build on Hillocks's research by expanding the rhetorical problems addressed and by being explicit in scaffolding everyday, culturally rooted knowledge and dispositions (Lee, 2007).

This growing tradition of scaffolding derived from George's scholarship requires a comprehensive and thoughtful analysis of the demands of literary texts. Such demands, George argued, should shape the goals of instructional units, including the sequence of texts within units and the scope of units across instruction. George and Michael Smith (Smith & Hillocks, 1988) articulated principles for sequencing literary texts, and later Peter Smagorinsky and Steven Gevinson (1989) offered a comprehensive overview and detailed examples of the broader principles for designing instructional units across the years (see also Smagorinsky, 2002, 2008). George went further to take up problems of assessing literary interpretation. The field still suffers from a lack of authentic assessments, especially diagnostic assessments of literary interpretation. He developed the taxonomy of skills in reading and interpreting fiction (Hillocks & Ludlow, 1984) that identified seven categories of questions that form a hierarchy from the literal to the inferential. Two important contributions of this taxonomy include levels of the literal and levels of inferencing that are typically not conceptualized in work on comprehension, and his articulation of what he called *structural generalizations*, which ask students to detect and analyze the impact of structural and rhetorical

choices of writers of fiction. As I indicated earlier, George's attention to technical problems of rhetoric and structure represent a unique and powerful contribution to how we conceptualize robust teaching of literature at the middle and secondary level. The work in developing this taxonomy is also testimony to his interdisciplinary commitments, drawing here on work in Rasch modeling (Wright & Masters, 1982) to validate empirically that the items on the assessment progress in difficulty.

George Hillocks was, without question, a Renaissance scholar, committed to designing robust instruction deeply rooted in the authentic demands of disciplinary problem solving. George was also the preeminent master teacher, training a generation of master teachers to follow him, never ending his direct engagement in real classrooms, largely in urban schools. We who follow him are forever indebted to him, knowing that our most fundamental orientations to studying teaching and learning in the disciplines of literature and composition grow from the seeds he planted. And our field, the teaching of English, has been shaped at its very foundation by this visionary scholar, musician (George played the bagpipes), mentor, father, grandfather, friend to many, and fine human being. I think the following quote captures the essence of the scholar and the man. The quote is from the preface he wrote (Hillocks, 2005) to a volume dedicated to his vision of teaching, edited by his former students with chapters largely written by his former students, quite a testimony to the man (McCann, Johannessen, Kahn, Smagorinsky, & Smith, 2005). George said:

Saying that we care is easy and trivial. Making such caring manifest consistently in every class is neither easy nor trivial. I believe that consistent manifestations of caring can take place only if the teacher has first a deep understanding of her students as developing people and learners, a thorough understanding of the subject matter taught, and a consistent willingness to depart from the tried and trite to explore better ways of teaching so that the subject matter becomes the vehicle for the student-teacher interactions that lead to the personal, moral, and academic development of young people.

Peter Smagorinsky

I have known George Hillocks since the fall of 1976, when I showed up in Hyde Park on Chicago's South Side to begin my Master of Arts in Teaching program under his advisement. Early in the fall quarter, I got my first opportunity to teach a class in the University of Chicago Lab School, based on something I'd designed for one of George's classes. Although I had been a substitute teacher in Trenton, New Jersey, prior to moving to Chicago, this was the first time I'd ever done anything resembling teaching; and apparently, whatever I did that day did not come close to resembling *good* teaching. Afterwards, I met with George to debrief. I still remember quite clearly how we began. After he spent a few minutes loading and lighting his ubiquitous pipe, he squinted at me through the ensuing plume of smoke, shook his head, took another puff, and began the feedback session with, "If I were a superintendent and observed you teaching that class," the smoke now slowly filling the room, my eyes starting to water, "I'd can you."

Fortunately, whatever I'd done so poorly that day got addressed, and I completed the program before undertaking my high school teaching career in three suburban Chicago high schools. I begin with this vignette because it illustrates a few things about George that made him such an important person in my career. First, he was very serious about teaching, and perhaps was the leading instructionally oriented researcher of his generation, or any other. Many in our profession are strong as either practitioners or researchers, but George was a leader in both, and, if anything, was more interested in good teaching than anything else. He could be a bit belligerent in his professional confrontations over how to teach well, but few could doubt his commitment to his views or his efforts to substantiate them empirically. Even toward the end of his life, he was writing about the teaching of writing and was always up for some good shoptalk about teaching practices.

What I've called his belligerence was part of a general crustiness and forthrightness that I welcomed in my quest to become better at teaching, as my opening vignette suggests. This direct, at times adversarial stance did not always work to his advantage with his conversational partners, but if you could accept blunt criticism without crumbling, he was a great mentor and colleague.

I've heard a recurring narrative many times in the last 30 years: George gets invited to do a workshop on the teaching of writing. On first impression, all in attendance find him to be "curmudgeonly"—the word invariably used in this narrative—but after he's warmed up and run some activities that the teachers find useful, they increasingly embrace him as charming and supportive, and end up liking and admiring him and incorporating his approach into their teaching. Those who never got past that first feisty impression, and backed off from the curmudgeon in him, had trouble getting to his charm and wisdom.

That's quite a shame, because he had so much to offer. I still find that my pedagogical foundation, clearly apparent throughout my practice-oriented writing and teacher education courses, rests on the principles I learned during my MAT program under George's guidance. Although I grew to disagree with him in a few areas, my basic approach remains grounded in what I learned during my MAT program from studying *The Dynamics of English Instruction, Grades 7–12*, which he had coauthored with two colleagues in 1971.

George is probably better known to *RTE* readers for his research program than for his pedagogical contributions. What I find remarkable about George, however, is that he managed to publish archival research steadily while being a one-man show in the University of Chicago's English Education programs—both the MAT program and the doctoral program he founded in the early 1980s. George taught every MAT class in the domain of English pedagogy; organized and ran workshop-style classes conducted in South Side public schools for his preservice students; made all of the student teaching placements and did the bulk of the observation of student teachers' instruction; and undoubtedly did much more behind the scenes to provide the dozen or so students he admitted annually with the best possible preparation for teaching careers. I have strong memories of beginning my career with new faculty from other university programs, and wondering why they always

seemed so ill-prepared: why they came in every day saying how late they'd stayed up planning for the next day, when George had taught us how to design units covering four to eight weeks, leading to tweaks but never wholesale initial planning late into the night for the next day's work. For those who only know George as a researcher, I think it's important to understand that his research came almost exclusively in relation to teaching problems from his own junior high teaching in Euclid, Ohio, and from challenges he continued to wrestle with in his role as teacher educator.

George's research program probably requires little introduction in the pages of *RTE*. What's less well known is how he became a social science researcher. Like many of his generation, George had no formal training in social science research. Rather, his doctoral dissertation was on the Henry Fielding novel *Tom Jones*, about which he had encyclopedic knowledge that he was always willing to share. But his interests in how to teach effectively, and his position in a school of education, required him to investigate different sorts of problems, particularly the teaching of writing.

The University of Chicago's bias in the early 1970s, when he began his appointment, was heavily experimental, and he adopted those values for much of his career. Through the 1980s, he conducted comparative studies of teaching methods, a common approach in that era, and found that methods derived from his inquiry and environmental perspectives outperformed what was happening in control groups. That work was featured in his most frequently referenced publication, *Research on Written Composition: New Directions for Teaching*, the National Conference on Research in English-commissioned review of writing research covering the previous two decades.

Two points on that volume: it met with considerable criticism from many in the field who disputed George's quantitative bias and his critical view of many of the field's icons; and it served for George as definitive proof of the superior effectiveness of the approach he'd championed throughout his career, a belief he held until the end (e.g., Hillocks, 2009). Although I agreed with him that his methods worked mighty well, and although most of my pedagogical writing relies heavily on them, I abandoned the idea of "best practices" given my encounters with many teachers who taught in other ways, and quite well (Smagorinsky, 2009). George, however, never wavered from his advocacy for teaching based on teacher-designed, task-based activities through which students inductively and collaboratively talk through problems that provide the basis for their writing about similar sorts of problems: defining abstract terms like *courageous action*, writing narratives, arguing points, writing fables, and so on.

George's next major publication following the release of this book came in his book-length study of high-stakes writing tests (Hillocks, 2002), a volume that was much more warmly embraced by the field in its scathing criticism of the manner in which writing tests designed for mass production and assessment inevitably produce both bad writing and bad teaching. Then, in his 70s, George produced two major pedagogical volumes, one his Meade Award-winning book on teaching narrative, the other a best-selling book on the teaching of argument. Those books

will be, perhaps, his most important gifts to the generations of teachers who never engaged with George in his prime, but come across him in their efforts to improve their teaching of writing.

I think that would make George happy. His greatest career legacy, in spite of the success of the researchers he trained, remains the over 200 teachers he taught in his MAT program. His pride in their accomplishments in the classroom always made him beam and boast. This man was one hell of a teacher, and his contributions to practice, theory, and research will outlast him by many years. Knowing him has changed my life in countless ways, and the lives of many others. Rest in peace, dear friend. I hope that in your version of heaven, you'll find a good set of bagpipes, a bottomless fifth of scotch, and a roomful of teachers who get their kicks out of talking shop into eternity.

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Initial submission: June 18, 2015

Accepted: June 24, 2015