Activist WPA, The
Adler-Kassner, Linda

Published by Utah State University Press

Adler-Kassner, Linda.
Activist WPA, The: Changing Stories About Writing and Writers.
Project MUSE. muse.jhu.edu/book/9844.

For additional information about this book
https://muse.jhu.edu/book/9844

For content related to this chapter
https://muse.jhu.edu/related_content?type=book&id=211356
NOTES

CHAPTER 1

1. All educational institutions, K-graduate, come under the auspices of an accrediting agency. Most colleges and universities fall under the auspices of one of the regional agencies: Middle States; North Central Association/Higher Learning Commission; New England Association of Schools and Colleges; Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities; Southern Association of Colleges and Schools; or Western Association of Schools and Colleges. There are also hundreds of accrediting agencies for specialized educational institutions, from schools of acupuncture to barber colleges. Accreditation is often a requirement for federal funding; thus, if higher education institutions lose their accreditations, it is also likely that they will lose millions of dollars in federal (and state) funds that they receive.

CHAPTER 2

1. This approach to language instruction is borne out in some of Scott’s addresses regarding writing (such as those collected in The Standard of American Speech), while some of the textbooks he wrote—often collaborating with coauthor Joseph Denney—seem more influenced by current-traditional rhetoric (e.g., Elementary English Composition).

CHAPTER 3

1. The strategy of providing overwhelming quantitative evidence to support assertions regarding education stemming from the Spellings Report has been used on occasions subsequent to the Report as well. In regional hearings on the report, Undersecretary of Higher Education Sarah Martinez Tucker opened each meeting with a rapid recitation of statistics about the number of students (including low income and minority students) who had “problems with student learning,” though the sources of these statistics were never mentioned (Tucker, June 5 2005).

2. Despite a request to ACT for the questionnaire distributed to survey respondents (e-mail correspondence, April 30, 2007), I have been unable to access a copy of the actual survey, thus the description of the survey represents a best guess regarding survey construction extracted from the reporting of results included in the NCS Report.

3. Respondents were asked to use a Likert scale ranking from 1 (not important) to 5 (very important) to indicate the degree of emphasis
they placed on instruction in the given area: “Composition Process and Purpose” (24 items); “Topic and Idea Development” (14 items); “Organization, Unity, and Coherence” (8 items); “Word Choice in Terms of Style, Tone, Clarity, and Economy” (8 items); “Sentence Structure and Formation” (7 items); “Conventions of Usage” (7 items); “Conventions of Punctuation” (11 items); and “Evaluation of Writing” (10 items) (39–40). (Presumably, these questions map onto the “Test Specifications for the EPAS English/Writing” exam described later in the report, which include questions about “punctuation”; “grammar and usage”; “sentence structure”; “strategy”; “organization”; and “style” (54–55). (All categories except “Evaluation of Writing” included a choice of “other” and asked for respondents to specify; although the Report includes the mean rating for these “other” choices and indicates the standard deviation for this line, there is no indication of the responses that were submitted or specifics provided by respondents.)

4. ACT’s 2005 revenue (the latest available via Guidestar, a database of non-profit organizations) was $179,333,056. Of that, ACT spent $131,681,560 on “the administration of research, testing, measurement, and evaluative programs in all types and kinds of educational endeavors; and the advancement of the interpretation and dissemination of information resulting from such programs” (ACT Form 990). ACT also spent $110,930 on “attempt[ing] to influence national, state, or local legislation, including any attempt to influence public opinion on a legislative matter or referendum” (ACT Form 990). All proceeds generated by ACT’s various products are put back into the company in the form of salaries, research (such as the NCS), dissemination (such as reports), and so on. The NCS is but one of the research tools included in the more than $131 million spent by ACT on “research, testing, measurement, and evaluative programs” (ACT IRS Form 990).

5. The SAT unveiled in early 2005 included the new writing exam, created in part in response to pressure from the University of California beginning in 2001. George Gadda, assistant director of the UCLA Writing Programs, was enlisted to chair the group developing the exam (SAT site). The revised exam, to be completed in an hour, consists of a multiple-choice test of grammatical conventions (to be completed in 35 minutes) and a timed writing experience (to be completed in 25). In the writing portion of the exam, students are to “develop a point of view on an issue presented in an excerpt; support your point of view using reasoning and examples from your reading, studies, experiences, or observations; and follow the conventions of standard written English” in an essay (SAT).

CHAPTER 4

1. As with the other school-based vignettes in this chapter and the next, this is a pseudonym.

2. There is some dispute—among activists, and among linguists and other academics—as to the specific role of language in this change; one criticism of the work of Rockridge and Lakoff is that their work can be seen
as suggesting that developing new frames can create change. Before Democrats (or anyone else) develop these frames, though, critics argue they need to come up with some new content, in the form of ideas and narratives, to put a frame around (see, e.g., Nunberg 2006).

CHAPTER 6

1. Most Jews believe that there is not one way to be Jewish (though some, like Hasidic or ultraorthodox Jews, might adamantly disagree). The different approaches to Judaic culture and practice are reflected in the various strands of Judaism. Hasidism, orthodox (though there are significant differences between ultra and modern), conservative, reform, reconstructionist, and secular humanism are all approaches to Jewish observation that fall under the “big tent” of Judaic culture and practice. While each group shares common roots in Judaic culture and a common allegiance to principles of that culture (that is, a common cultural identity as Jews), the differences between a Hasidic Jew and a secular humanist are substantial and span epistemologies, ideas, ideologies, lifestyles, and practices.