



# A Tale of Two Textbooks: 1960s and 2020s

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# Research Questions:

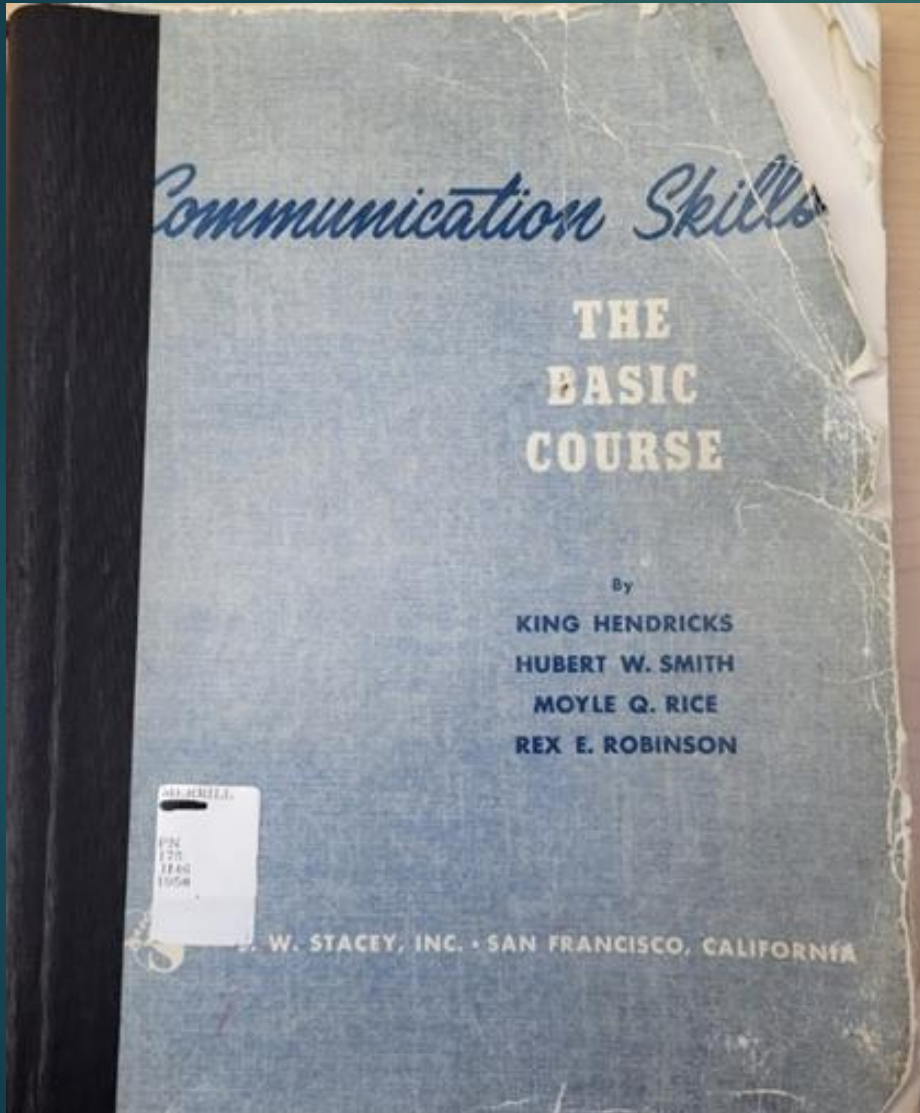
- ▶ How have composition/writing studies textbooks used at Utah State University changed following the Dartmouth Seminar?
- ▶ How can these changes inform pedagogical practices in composition/writing studies at Utah State?
- ▶ How have textbooks changed to meet students' and instructors' needs?

# Mixed Methods Approach

- ▶ Interview with *BC* era composition instructor
- ▶ Archival and textual analysis

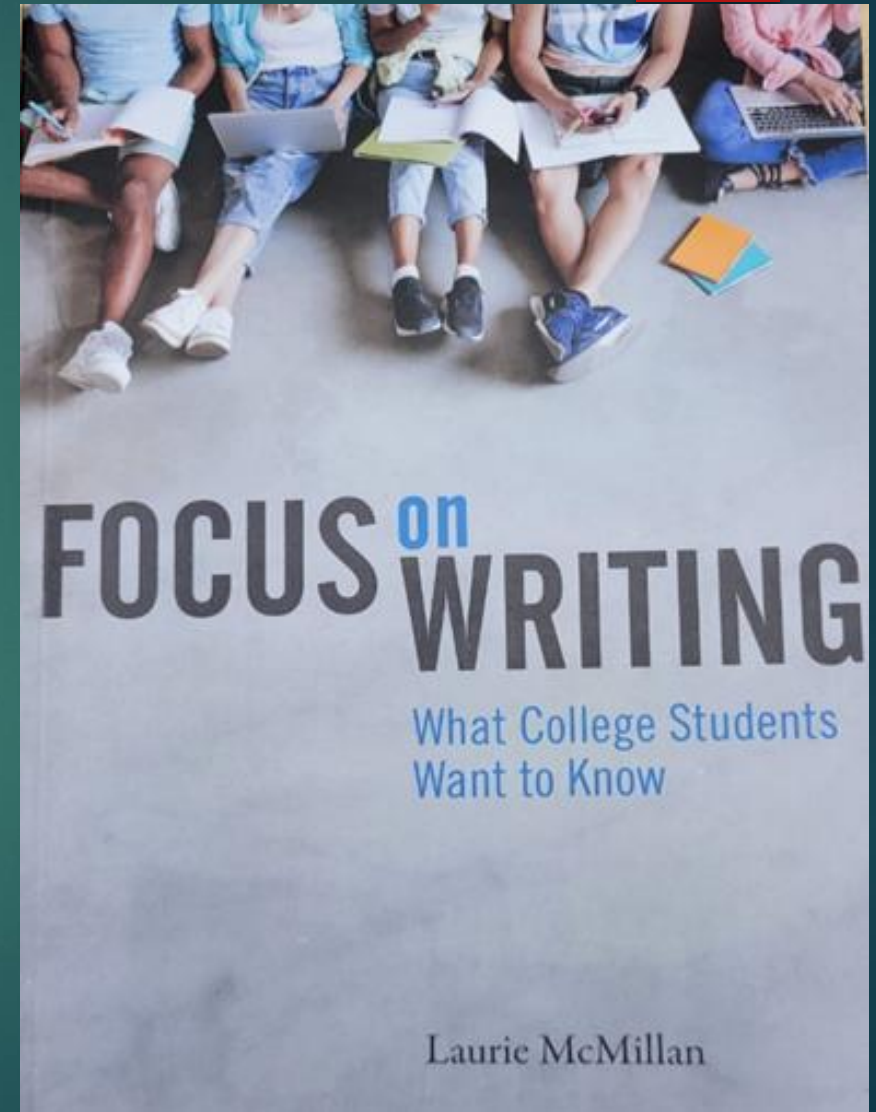
# Dartmouth Seminar 1966

- ▶ Writing Studies experienced what Chris Anson called “Big Bang” as a result of the Dartmouth Seminar, shifting from a product orientation to teaching writing to one based on process.
- ▶ I examined two textbooks that exemplify this shift and discuss how their features are representative of a 1960s era approach to teaching writing and a contemporary approach.

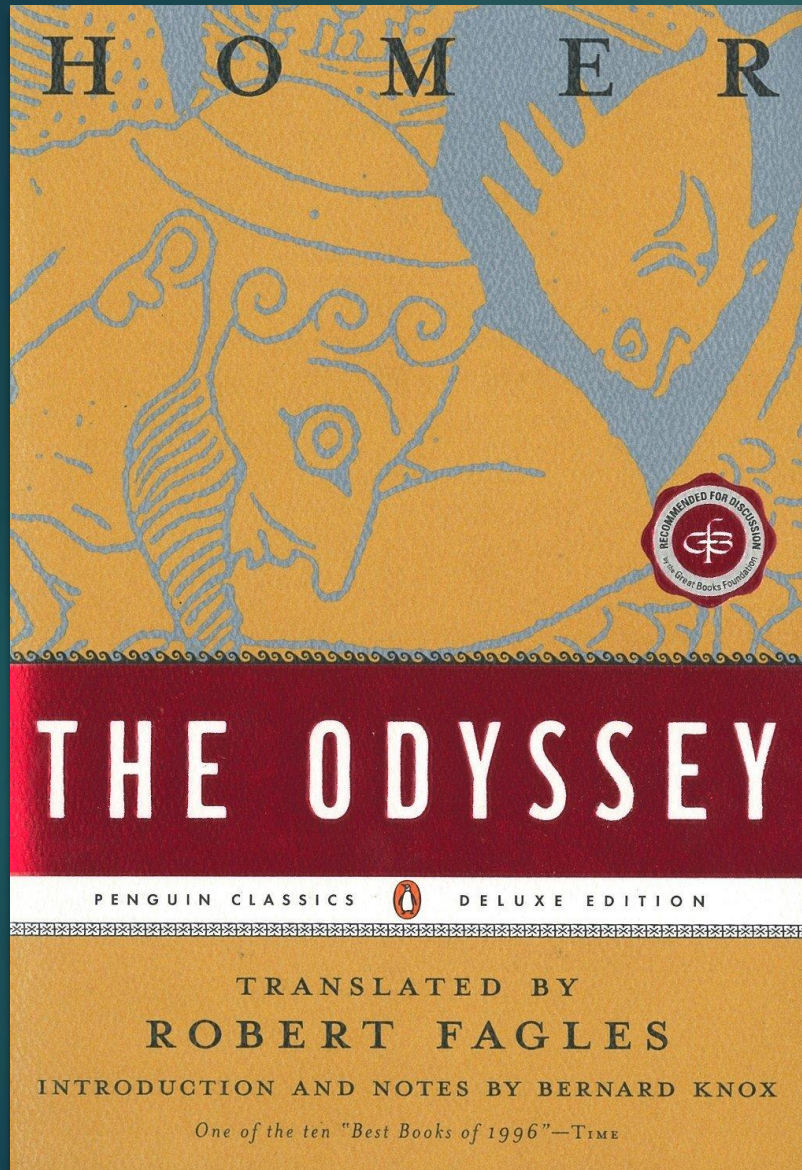


*Communication Skills: The Basic Course 1958*

*Focus on Writing: What College Students Want to Know 2018*



Feature	<i>Communication Skills: The Basic Course</i>	<i>Focus on Writing: What College Students Want to know</i>
<b>Dedication</b>	No	Yes
<b>(Table of) Contents</b>	Yes	Yes
<b>Acknowledgments</b>	No	Yes
<b>Introduction</b>	No	Yes
<b>Preface</b>	Yes	No
<b>Student Records</b>	Yes	No
<b>Reading and Listening Progress Records</b>	Yes	No
<b>Proposed Course Timetable</b>	Yes	No
<b>Index</b>	Yes	Yes
<b>Permissions and (legal) Acknowledgments</b>	No	Yes
<b>Student Writing Examples</b>	Yes	Yes
<b>Pictures/Graphics</b>	No	Yes



## Results:

Role of classic literature in composition/writing studies texts shifted

BC text includes many readings from ancient Greek and Roman writers. FOW does not include any readings from ancient Greek or Roman writers.

Interview participant noted issues teaching *The Odyssey* in composition classrooms

BC served as a tool for students and instructors. Used as more than just a textbook

FOW establishes writing as a communal activity

# Conclusions

- ▶ Textbooks demonstrate shifts in teaching paradigms. Composition/writing studies classrooms focus on writing about writing. Shift from teaching writing using classic literature
- ▶ Textbooks fill different needs in 2020s than the 1950s. Digital tools (Canvas, email, Banner) remove the need for many of BC's features
- ▶ BC and FOW demonstrate the shift from product based writing to process based
- ▶ Classic literary texts such as Homer's *Odyssey* were once mainstays in writing studies courses. FOW does not include classic literature
- ▶ Writing about writing becomes the focus in composition/writing studies classrooms
- ▶ Writing calls for community and collaboration and emphasizes diversity, equity, and inclusion



# References

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I welcome your questions and  
comments

