

## BOOK REVIEW

by Nancy MacKenzie

Charles Bazerman. The Informed Writer. Houghton, Mifflin, 1981. 360 pages.

The Informed Writer is a text that claims to teach "the skills that allow a writer to transform a stack of loosely related sources into an original, well-supported, thoughtful, coherent argument." The book in fact does this and more--and it's the "more" that makes this a unique text, well worth a second look. It does a good job in teaching the mechanics of the research paper--notes, library searches, bibliography--but so do a dozen other texts on the market today.

What's unique about The Informed Writer is the emphasis it puts on that otherwise neglected but crucial part of researching a paper: reading skills, skills we rarely try to teach in any organized way: paraphrasing, summarizing, reacting by means of annotation, analyzing the author's purpose, and reviewing a book, show, or product. The first three of these are skills we demand of students, but never fully or methodically teach them. And they are skills that can make the difference between a solid, intelligent paper and a tedious string of quotations.

Each of these five chapters explains the technique and gives good, usable exercises. The chapters are full of examples which are carefully chosen to develop a single subject. For instance, the chapter on summarizing uses a series of examples drawn from the field of sleep research, and the student is guided toward seeing the need to make sense of different, sometimes conflicting sources. The examples are also well-chosen in that they are unusual for composition texts, and hence are a breath of fresh air for teachers and students alike.

Those opening five chapters make the book a different and an exciting text. Part II is called "Using Sources Creatively," and deals with comparing one's reading with personal experience, comparing and synthesizing sources, and actually writing the research paper. These chapters are good, if less unique, and they work in the classroom quite well. The combination of

reading plus personal experience, for example, can generate a very useful short paper as one step on the way to the full-blown research paper.

The emphasis throughout on the real use of sources--not just the mechanics of footnoting them--is the book's strong point. It performs a real service by showing the student how to integrate reading and writing, and shows reading as a crucial part of the prewriting phase. We recommend the book very highly for use in a second composition course, since it does not deal with the basics of organization and style.

#### BOOK REVIEW OF EVERGREEN

by Deanna D. Evans

Susan Fawcett and Alvin Sandberg, Evergreen: A Guide to Writing.

Second Edition. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1984. Pp. xii, 414; 12 black-and-white photos. \$?.

Available to instructor: Instructor's Manual and Instructor's Package.

During the past decade college and community colleges throughout the country have introduced and/or increased course offerings in developmental writing; as a consequence, many new basic writing textbooks and workbooks have been published within the last few years. One of the most complete and effective is Evergreen: A Guide to Basic Writing by Susan Fawcett and Alvin Sandberg (Houghton Mifflin, 1980). This combination textbook-workbook focuses on effective paragraph writing and has become the required text for basic writing courses on many campuses as it was at Bemidji State University, the institution where I teach, during the 1983-84 academic year. Instructors who have used Evergreen and believe it to be an excellent text may be disappointed to learn that an enlarged, revised second edition