Composition Core Reading List

Rationale and directions for students: The core list is designed to introduce you to the intersection of history, theory, research, and practice in composition studies. As you think about expanding the list according to your area(s) of particular interest, you might consider attending to topics with broad historical scope (such as *ars dictaminis*, the development of writing manuals and textbooks, nonwestern traditions of writing/instruction, etc.). You might also emphasize particular areas of research and scholarship such as reading, basic writing, grammar and style, electronic literacies, multiliteracies, critical pedagogy, alternative discourse(s), writing centers, writing program administration, writing across the curriculum, etc.

History of Writing/Instruction (by period)

*Classical Writing/Instruction*
1. Progynasmata

*Medieval Writing/Instruction*
2. Albericus Casinensis (aka Alberic of Monte Cassino), *De dictamine* (d.1109)
3. Peter of Blois, *De arte dictandi rethorice* (1187)
4. Alain of Lille, “The Complaint of Nature” and/or *Anticlaudianus* (d. 1202)
5. Geoffrey of Vinsauf, *Poetria nova* (1417)

*Renaissance Writing/Instruction*
7. Juan Luis Vives, *De tradendis disciplinis* (1531)
10. Francis Bacon, *The Advancement of Learning* (1605)

*Long Eighteenth-Century Writing/Instruction*
14. John Locke, “Some Thoughts Concerning Education” (1693)
15. Mary Astell, *A Serious Proposal to the Ladies for the Advancement of their True and Greatest Interest* (1697)
17. Charles Rollin, *The Method of Teaching and Studying the Belles Lettres* (1759)
18. Thomas Sheridan, *Lectures on Elocution* (1762); *Lectures on the Art of Reading* (1775)
19th-Century Writing/Instruction
20. Gilbert Austin, Chironomia (1806)
22. Samuel P. Newman A Practical System of Rhetoric (1827)
23. Ralph Waldo Emerson “The American Scholar” (1837)
24. Alexander Bain English Composition and Rhetoric, selections (1866)
25. William Matthews Oratory and Orators (1878; 1896)
26. Anna Julia Cooper “The Higher Education of Woman,” A Voice from the South (1892)

20th-C & 21st-Century Writing/Instruction
31. Murphy, James J., ed. A Short History of Writing Instruction from Ancient Greece to Twentieth Century America (1990)

Research on Writing:
34. Bishop, Wendy. Ethnographic Writing Research: Writing It Down, Writing It Up and Reading It (1999)
41. Mortensen, Peter and Gesa Kirsch. Ethics and Representation in Qualitative Studies of Literacy (1996)
Theories of Composing/Composition Pedagogy:

Overviews:
42. Berlin, James A. “Contemporary Composition: The Major Pedagogical Theories” (1982)

Disciplinary History

Expressivist Perspectives:
61. Elbow, Peter. Writing without Teachers (1973)
63. Murray, Donald M. A Writer Teaches Writing (1968)

Cognitive Perspectives:
64. Britton, James, et al. The Development of Writing Abilities (1975)

**Social Perspectives:**

**Cultural Perspectives:**
82. Harkin, Patricia, and John Schilb, eds. *Contending with Words: Composition and Rhetoric in a Postmodern Age* (1991)
86. Severino, Carol, Juan Guerra, and Johnella Butler, eds. *Writing in Multicultural Settings* (1997)
88. Street, Brian, ed. *Cross-Cultural Approaches to Literacy* (1993)