

1-1-1972

# Composition for personal growth : program design and evaluation.

Robert C. Hawley

*University of Massachusetts Amherst*

Follow this and additional works at: [https://scholarworks.umass.edu/dissertations\\_1](https://scholarworks.umass.edu/dissertations_1)

---

## Recommended Citation

Hawley, Robert C., "Composition for personal growth : program design and evaluation." (1972). *Doctoral Dissertations 1896 - February 2014*. 2598.

[https://scholarworks.umass.edu/dissertations\\_1/2598](https://scholarworks.umass.edu/dissertations_1/2598)

This Open Access Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by ScholarWorks@UMass Amherst. It has been accepted for inclusion in Doctoral Dissertations 1896 - February 2014 by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks@UMass Amherst. For more information, please contact [scholarworks@library.umass.edu](mailto:scholarworks@library.umass.edu).



COMPOSITION FOR PERSONAL GROWTH:  
PROGRAM DESIGN AND EVALUATION

A Dissertation Presented

By

ROBERT COIT HAWLEY

Submitted to the Graduate School of the  
University of Massachusetts in  
partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

May 1972

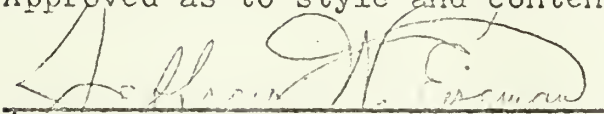
COMPOSITION FOR PERSONAL GROWTH:  
PROGRAM DESIGN AND EVALUATION

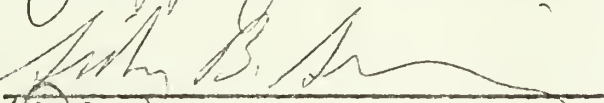
A Dissertation

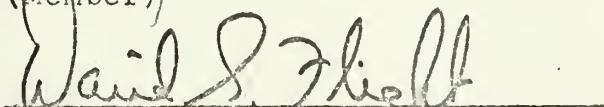
By

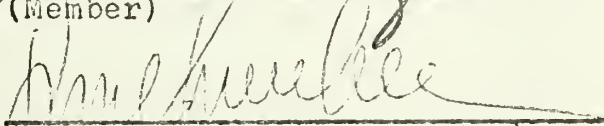
ROBERT COIT HAWLEY

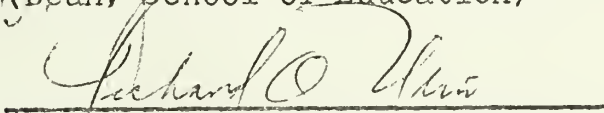
Approved as to style and content by:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
(Chairman of Committee)

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
(Member)

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
(Member)

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
(Dean, School of Education)

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
(Director of Graduate Study,  
School of Education)

May 1972

COMPOSITION FOR PERSONAL GROWTH:  
PROGRAM DESIGN AND EVALUATION

by

ROBERT COIT HAWLEY

© Robert Coit Hawley 1972  
All Rights Reserved

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Many persons have helped to make this study possible. Three great teachers, however, stand out as indispensable contributors not only to the preparation of this work but also to my own personal growth: Dr. Jeffrey W. Eiseman has given me much of his time, his good-natured support, his help in computer programming, and his careful reading and helpful commentary in the preparation of the text. Dr. Eiseman is also responsible in a real way for much of the Composition for Personal Growth program. He introduced to me important techniques such as role-playing, simulation, revealed-difference surveys, and force-field analysis, and important concepts such as the value of reflection in learning, the value of seeking out the multidimensionality of behavior, and the value of interdependence and collaboration. It was due to Dr. Eiseman's suggestion that my own personal growth might be enhanced through interdependence that I undertook the active collaboration which led to Composition for Personal Growth.

Dr. Sidney B. Simon opened new vistas to me in what a classroom could be. His use of small leaderless discussion groups with the teacher as facilitator produced a quantum jump in my thinking. His warm and enthusiastic

support and his generous contribution of ideas and activities have enriched the program and my life.

David D. Britton, fellow student, has been one of my greatest teachers in every sense of the word. Composition for Personal Growth was his original conception. He taught me the value of being generous and of being tough. He taught me the importance of focusing steadfastly on the positive, and he taught me, through his own support and energy, how to be more supportive and more energetic in my own life.

I am deeply appreciative to these three men for their help, and I will always be grateful for their friendship.

I owe a special thanks, with love, to Isabel L. Hawley, editorial consultant, typist, wife, and comfortable critic.

To the teachers and students who have participated in various trials and who have given me all kinds of good ideas for the improvement of the program: Some of your names I know, some I have forgotten, some I will never know--I thank you all.

And finally, I owe a special thanks to the National Association of Independent Schools, and especially John Chandler and Nathaniel French, for setting up the fellowship program at the University of Massachusetts which allowed me to undertake this study.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
I. OVERVIEW: THE TREE . . . . .	1
II. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM . . . . .	11
III. PROCEDURES IN DESIGNING AND EVALUATING <u>THE COMPOSITION FOR PERSONAL GROWTH</u> <u>PROGRAM</u> . . . . .	35
IV. FINDINGS . . . . .	70
V. ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION . . . . .	101
APPENDIX A: TEST DATA FROM EIGHT-WEEK CONTROLLED TRIAL . . . . .	111
APPENDIX B: TABULATED RESULTS FROM STUDENT EVALUATIONS OF TEN-WEEK ELECTIVE . . . . .	123
BIBLIOGRAPHY . . . . .	128



## C H A P T E R I

### OVERVIEW: THE TREE

English, Period 3  
October 18 /1971/

It stands silent out in the open. A very small delicate tree that looks as though you could tip it over simply by breathing on it. It is very vulnerable, for no matter which way you turn there is no protection from attackers. It's very odd compared to the others for this time of year. Instead of turning many different colors, this one particular tree is still green. What few leaves it has are still dark. It most likely was planted for decoration; it's a pity nature, which demands to be free, can be told where to grow and what space we want. It's very young when compared to the others, but yet it's been here for years, watching the world pass it by. There's no way, to me, that this tree could be happy.

The assignment: Go outside and find a tree that is in some way like yourself. Draw a picture of it, and write a description of the tree. Peter Meyer, a teacher of English at Roger Ludlowe High School in Fairfield, Connecticut, invented this activity and used it with his tenth grade "general" class (a euphemism for lowest ability grouping). The paragraph at the top of this page was the work of a girl of fifteen, perhaps the most publicly successful of the writings produced at that time, but its implications for education in general and the teaching of English in particular are far reaching.

First, for Peter Meyer "composition" no longer de-

notes an artificial exercise produced on demand for a person of little consequence (the teacher) who is unlikely to be influenced by the "composition." For Peter Meyer, "composition" offers a chance for the student to reflect upon his experience and to clarify that experience through writing. Meyer sees his role as teacher as a provider of opportunities for self-discovery, in this case through writing. The vehicle for self-discovery that Meyer uses is metaphor, a powerful discovery tool, for metaphor is full of surprises, of chances to make new and unusual connections.

Second, for education and for civilization the description of this tree shouts of wasted life, of the barrenness and sterility of a schoolgirl's life, and of the erosion of human potential from almost two thousand days of forced passivity in the classroom. Frieda Fordham, in An Introduction to Jung's Psychology, likens modern man to a tree, tall because of the material progress and external trappings of our highly technical civilization, but with dangerously shallow roots in our own natures:

Since the development of applied science in the last hundred years, man's material progress has been rapid, but he has moved dangerously far from his roots in the soil [of his own nature]. The taller the tree the deeper its roots should go, but modern man has little relationship with [his own] nature, and so

has become dangerously unstable and a victim of any storms that blow.<sup>1</sup>

Traditional schooling prunes the branches and trains the tender shoots toward its own superficial aims while neglecting the nourishment of the tree--the roots, hidden and silent, lie shallow and small and cannot support the full growth of the plant, hold back the plant from the full realization of the potentialities which were promised in its seed.

The problem is massive: Our schools are vast nurseries where few trees are nourished at the root, and obviously no single program will change the course of schooling very much. Composition for Personal Growth has been prepared as one small tentative step toward the nurture of the roots; it is an attempt to introduce personal growth and self-awareness concerns into the school through the traditional curriculum, by linking personal growth to the teaching of written composition.

The project has been divided into four phases: First developing the theoretical basis; second, designing and adapting materials and activities for the program; third, training teachers to use the materials in the classroom; and fourth, validating the program through controlled classroom tests, through student and teacher evaluations

---

<sup>1</sup>Frieda Fordham, An Introduction to Jung's Psychology (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books Ltd., 1966), p. 119.

of the program, and through unobtrusive measures such as unsolicited comments and observed behaviors of students and teachers using the program.

In developing the theoretical base my colleagues, Dr. Sidney B. Simon and David D. Britton, and I attacked the problem from two sides: What is wrong with the traditional method of teaching composition, and what are important student concerns which should be met through the teaching of composition? We found four major problems with the traditional method of teaching composition: First, the lack of a real and movable audience. While the teacher, who is almost always the prime audience for student compositions, may be interested in his students, it is safe to say that he is rarely interested in their compositions to the point where he might be moved by them. The most unloved task of English teachers is "correcting" those !@#%&#;!%#@%&#&! compositions. Even the committee members who read this dissertation do so with some regret for the time spent. (A dissertation is, in many ways, a great big composition.) Second, the subject of the composition, even the cleverest of subjects, seldom touches the student in any significant way. How can it unless it is generated from the real need of the student to say something that is important to him to someone who is important to him? Third, composition is traditionally taught under the threat of an almost inescapable negative

evaluation. The Handbook for English Language and Composition identifies one hundred thirty-eight ways to say something is wrong with a piece of writing, from Adj,Adv (Adjectives and Adverbs) through ORG (Organization) to WeakExpl (Weak Expletive), each with its own symbol to save the corrector's time and pencil (see Plate 1). And fourth, there is an aura of perfection which surrounds the composition and extends from the fact that it is the one kind of writing which must be subjected to intensive evaluation and which is often compared with or modeled upon a professional piece of writing. (One standard technique in the teaching of composition is to hold up a model piece of prose and then to let the student try his hand at imitating the style and form of the master.)

Paradoxically the first two problems, lack of real audience and unimportant subject matter, leave the student feeling "It's not worth doing," while the second two problems, threat of negative evaluation and aura of perfection, lead to "And I couldn't succeed anyway." And so, while the unreal audience and unimportant subject matter represent a kind of training for cynicism (see Plate 2), the inescapable negative evaluation and the aura of perfection represent a training for impotence.

Attacking the problem from the other side, we have identified three important student concerns which we feel should be met through the teaching of composition: sense

## PLATE 1

**ALPHABETICAL CORRECTION SYMBOLS**

For a list of numerical correction symbols, see chart on pages ii and iii in the front of the book.

<b>Adj, Adv</b> Adjectives and Adverbs	138	<b>Col</b> Colloquial	304
<b>Agr AI</b> Agreement: Alternatives Subjects	78	<b>Conc</b> Use Concrete Words	324
<b>Agr Col</b> Agreement: Collective nouns	98	<b>Concl</b> Revise Conclusion	239
<b>Agr Comp</b> Agreement: Complement	98	<b>Cond Vb</b> Conditional Verbs	79
<b>Agr SV</b> Agreement: Subj.-Vb.	20,77	<b>Conn</b> Connotation	323
<b>Anl</b> Analysis to Restrict Subject	245	<b>Co-ord</b> Co-ordination	177
<b>Apos</b> Apostrophe	415	<b>CST</b> Sentence Structure	15ff.
<b>Appos</b> Appositives	140	<b>CST ECON</b> Economy in Structure	124ff.
<b>Ap Mod</b> Appositive Modifiers	153	<b>Cst Shft</b> Shift in Structure	98
<b>Aud</b> Consider Audience	439	<b>DEV ORG</b> Development	190ff.
<b>Cap</b> Capitalization: Spelling	416	<b>Dict</b> Consult Dictionary	316
<b>Cap Cst</b> Capitalization: Structural	387	<b>Dngl</b> Dangling Modifiers	154
<b>CF</b> Comma Fault	367	<b>Dsh</b> Use dash	390
<b>Cl Mod</b> Clausal Modifiers	153	<b>ECON</b> Economy in Structure	124ff.
<b>Coh</b> Coherence	238	<b>EJ</b> End Juncture	45
<b>Com</b> Use Comma	377	<b>End P</b> End Punctuation	364ff.
<b>Com Clar</b> Comma for Clarity	381	<b>Eq</b> Faulty Equation	90
<b>Com Det</b> Comma to Separate Detail	379	<b>Ev</b> Handling Evidence	262
<b>Com Co-ord</b> Commas with Co-ordinating Conjunctions	382	<b>Ev Ad</b> Check Evidence for Adequacy	262
<b>Com Ins</b> Commas with Inserted Material	378	<b>Ev Confl</b> Check Evidence for Conflicts	254
<b>Com Intro</b> Commas with Introductory Matter	380	<b>Ev Qual</b> Qualify Evidence	263
<b>Com Pos</b> Commas with Matter Out-of-Position	380	<b>Ev Rel</b> Check Evidence for Reliability	262
<b>Com Quo</b> Commas with Quoted Matter	381	<b>Exp Det</b> Expository Details	254
<b>Com Ser</b> Commas with a Series	377	<b>Expi</b> Expletive	120
<b>Com Vbl</b> Commas with Verbals	381	<b>Fact/Truth</b> Factual Details	209
<b>Comp</b> Comparison of Modifiers	139	<b>Fig/Sym</b> Figurative or symbolic language	341
<b>Compound</b> Compound Word Forms	415	<b>Frag</b> Sentence Fragment	19
		<b>GLOS</b> Glossary	487ff.
		<b>Gram</b> Grammar in SVC	38


## PLATE 1 - Continued

<b>Hackn</b> Hackneyed Expressions	342	<b>SP</b> Spelling	384ff.
<b>Hy</b> Hyphenation	415	<b>Sp Diag</b> Diagnose Spelling Problems	427
<b>Intr</b> Revise Introduction	239	<b>Sp Rev</b> Review Phonics	403
<b>Ital</b> Use Italics	387	<b>Sp Rule</b> Review Rules	414
<b>LC</b> Lower Case	416	<b>Spec P</b> Specialized Punctuation	387
<b>Limit</b> Limit Subject	245	<b>Splt Inf</b> Split Infinitive	155
<b>MI</b> Main Idea	245	<b>Splt Mod</b> Splitting Modifiers	155
<b>Mix Fig</b> Mixed Figures	341	<b>Sq Mod</b> Squinting Modifier	139
<b>Mod</b> Distinguish Modifiers	138	<b>SS</b> Sentence Structure	185
<b>Nar Det</b> Narrative Detail	219	<b>ST</b> Style	431ff.
<b>No Com</b> Confusing Comma	382	<b>Sub, Sub Ad</b> Subordination	164
<b>No P</b> Confusing Punctuation	368	<b>Sub Fault</b> Faulty Subordination	166
<b>No ¶</b> No Paragraph	230	<b>Sub Usage</b> Usage in Subordination	167
<b>Nom Cs</b> Nominative Case	63	<b>Sub Wd</b> Subordinating Words	165
<b>Num</b> Numerals	416	<b>Subj</b> Subject Choice	63
<b>O</b> Outline	272	<b>SV Agr</b> Subject/verb Agreement	20, 77
<b>O Ad</b> Outline Adequacy	272	<b>Syn/Rep</b> Use Synonyms	354
<b>O Fm</b> Outline Form	273	<b>Tone</b> Tone	457
<b>Obj Cs</b> Objective: Accusative	100	<b>Trans</b> Transition	238
<b>ORG</b> Organization	190ff.	<b>Trite</b> Overworked Expressions	342
<b>P</b> Punctuation	358ff.	<b>TS</b> Topic Sentence	238
<b>Para ¶</b> Paragraph	230	<b>Usage</b> Proper Usage	304
<b>Paral</b> Parallelism	177	<b>Vb</b> Suitable Verb	77
<b>Parens ( )</b> Parentheses	390	<b>Vb Ch</b> Verb Choice	90
<b>Pass</b> Passive Voice	109	<b>Vb Comp</b> Incompatible complements	98
<b>Ph Mod</b> Phrasal Modifiers	153	<b>Vb Fm</b> Troublesome Forms	78
<b>Pl</b> Plural	415	<b>Vb Seq</b> Sequence of Tenses	80
<b>Pos Mod</b> Position of Modifiers	154	<b>Vb Sp</b> Spelling of Verbs	77
<b>Poss</b> Possessive	415	<b>W</b> Words	278ff.
<b>Pred</b> Predication	98	<b>W Ch</b> Word Choice	336
<b>Pred Adj</b> Predicate Adjective	99	<b>Weak Expl</b> Weak Expletive	120
<b>Pron Usage</b> Pronoun Usage	305	<b>.</b> Period	364
<b>Pur</b> Purpose	198	<b>;</b> Semicolon	365
<b>PV Subj</b> Point of View: Subject	63	<b>:</b> Colon	366
<b>PV Vb</b> Point of View: Verb	79	<b>!</b> Exclamation Mark	367
<b>Quo</b> Quotation Marks	382	<b>?</b> Question Mark	367
<b>Ref</b> Clarify Reference	185	<b>( )</b> Parentheses	390
<b>Rep</b> Repetitions	254	<b>[ ]</b> Insert Brackets	391
<b>Rev, Rev Det</b> Revise	474	<b>// Cst</b> Parallelism	177
<b>Sing</b> Singular	415	<b>// Sig</b> Signal: Parallelism	178
<b>Sl/Col</b> Slang/Colloquial	304		
<b>Slanted</b> Slanted Words	323		


Source: Charlton Laird, Handbook for English Language and Composition (Boston: Ginn and Company, 1964).

TRAINING FOR CYNICISM

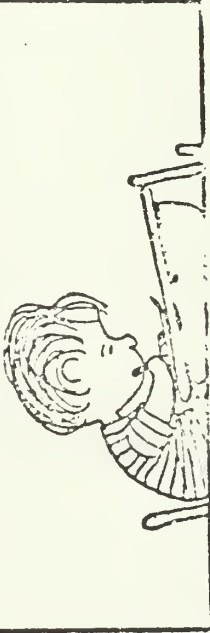
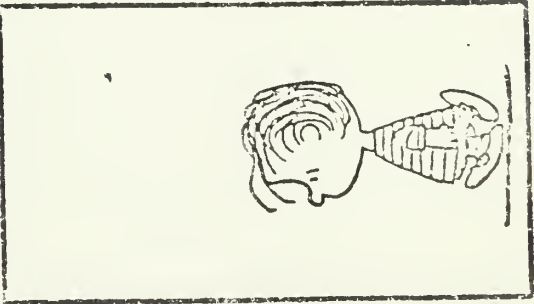
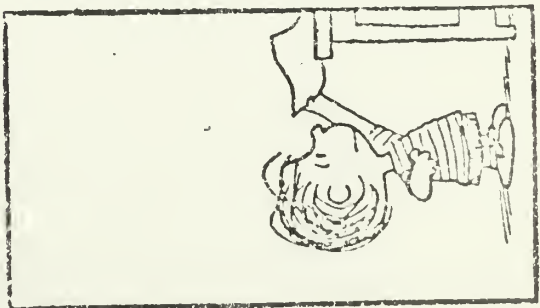
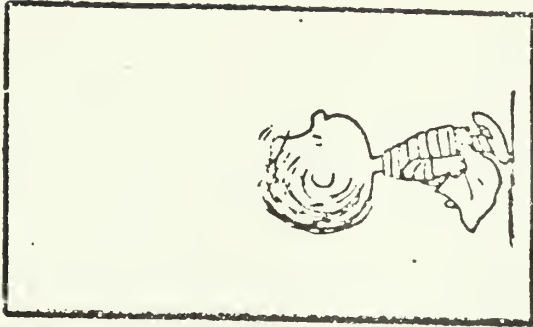
Theme:  
 On returning to  
 School After  
 Summer Vacation,  
 No one can deny  
 the joys of a




Summer  
 vacation with  
 its days of warmth  
 and freedom. It  
 must be admitted,  
 however, that the



true joy lies in returning to our  
 halls of learning. Do not life itself  
 a learning process? Do we not  
 mature according to our learning?  
 Do not each of us desire that

YES, MA'AM?  
 OH...WHY,  
 THANK YOU..  
 I'M GLAD YOU  
 LIKED IT..



AS THE YEARS GO BY  
 YOU LEARN WHAT SELLS!



SCHULZ



of identity, awareness of interpersonal relationships, and the ability to make actions more congruent with personal values. These three concerns we made the subjects for our program. For the real audience, we chose the student himself, his friends and peers, and others whom he thinks he might influence. Writing is evaluated by the student himself, his peers, and other audiences, with the criterion being the clarity of transmission of the message. And the aura of perfection is replaced by considering all the real-life writing activities--lists, letters, poems, notes--to be "composition."

For the second phase, the designing and adapting of materials and activities for classroom use, we keyed value exploring and other personal growth activities to written responses and developed situations where students would share their written and oral perceptions in small discussion groups, often without the teacher as leader-monitor. Activities were chosen which would bear meaningfully on problems of identity, interpersonal relations, and values into action.

For the third phase, teacher training, we wrote a teacher's manual introducing the theoretical considerations as well as giving practical procedures for such things as class movement and trouble-shooting problem behaviors. And we have held a series of weekend training workshops to introduce teachers to the materials and

techniques on an experiential level.

And finally, we arranged several different trial runs of the program, involving approximately 150 teachers and seven thousand students, as first tentative attempts to validate the program. This dissertation will report on four of those trial runs: an eight-week trial in ten schools matched with ten control groups using before-and-after testing, a ten-week elective program for ninth and tenth graders in a suburban high school involving 146 students and five teachers, a ten-week required mini-course for seventh graders in a small country boys' boarding school involving two teachers in a team-teaching situation and twenty-three students, and the miscellaneous trial use of the program by 120 of the teachers trained in the training workshops.

Chapter II will be a discussion of the conceptual framework under which the program has been developed. Chapter III will be a discussion of the procedures used in designing and evaluating the program. Chapter IV will detail the findings of the evaluations, and Chapter V will be an analysis of the findings and a conclusion.

## C H A P T E R I I

### CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

"Composition," complained Frank Whitehead, "hangs around our necks like the albatross. It has long been a burden for both teachers and students, often the heaviest burden; but apparently there is no getting rid of it."<sup>1</sup> And indeed the image of the teacher straining under the heavy load of compositions to grade is a common one-- completed, perhaps, with the obvious signs of dismay when the teacher sees his painstaking corrections pass unnoticed by the students, who take a quick look at the grade and slip the paper into their notebooks. What is the use of all this composition practice? Why spend all this precious school time perfecting a skill which will be seldom if ever used? If a study were made comparing the amount of time adults spend in serious talking and listening with that spent in serious writing, it would perhaps bring into question the value of composition, especially as it is presently taught.

The word "composition" today connotes a thing, often referred to as "the weekly composition" to be handed in

---

<sup>1</sup>Herbert J. Muller, The Uses of English (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston Co., 1967), p. 97.

on Monday, folded along the vertical axis with the name and date neatly on the upper right-hand corner. If we go back to the word compose on the other hand, our why's can be answered, for it is in the act of composing--that is, placing together--the chaotic events that make up existence that we learn how to order and shape our experience, thereby learning more about our lives and ourselves. Composition thus construed allows us to give our experience a name, and by naming to carry out the most fundamental purpose in language, to share experience.<sup>2</sup>

But the sharing of experience is not only an end in itself. It is a valuable decision-making tool, for it is through shared experience that one can enlarge his repertoire of the known and thus make decisions which draw upon a wider data base. The importance of the decision-making function of shared experience grows greater each year, each hour, each day; for as we move into a world in which there is no longer a generally-agreed-upon system of values, and in which the choices confronting us are more numerous, more complex, and more short-lived, our ability to make decisions about our personal future and our social future becomes more and more taxed.<sup>3</sup> This, then, is a

---

<sup>2</sup>John Dixon, Growth Through English (Reading, England: National Association for the Teaching of English, 1967), p. 7.

<sup>3</sup>Alvin Toffler, "An Interview with Alvin Toffler," Trend: A Journal of Educational Thought and Action, VII (Spring 1971), 4.

weighty burden for composition, and not a burden to be shouldered by composition alone. But it implies that composition can be, if not a lark, then at least not the albatross.

During the late summer of 1966 a group of about fifty educators, all concerned in some way with the teaching of English, came together for a month-long seminar at Dartmouth College. Twenty-eight were from the United States, twenty from Great Britain, and one from Canada. The meetings were held under the auspices of the Modern Language Association and the National Council of Teachers of English, both American organizations, and the National Association for the Teaching of English, a British association. This Anglo-American Conference on the Teaching of English, or the Dartmouth Conference, as it came to be known, was supported by a grant from the Carnegie Corporation.<sup>4</sup>

The starting point of the Dartmouth Conference was that English as a school subject is facing a series of critical problems; and while the Conference started on a note of wide disagreement as to exactly what the most critical problems were and how they might be dealt with, by the closing day considerable areas of agreement had been reached.

---

<sup>4</sup>Dixon, p. vii.

Perhaps the most important agreement was in the rejection of the skill and cultural heritage models of English curriculum, and in the affirmation of the personal growth model. The idea of a skill at first seems suited to the narrow field of learning to read and write, and yet when taken in the literal sense skill applies only to minor elements in the total process. And when spelling, vocabulary, and sentence structure, for instance, are culled out and taught as ends in themselves, their very meanings are lost. The more serious limitation of the skill model, however, is not in what it chooses to teach, but rather in what it chooses to ignore. A century of emphasis on the skill model has produced almost universal literacy in England and America, but has left us impoverished in imagination and emotional response.

The first attempt to correct the obvious deficiencies of the skill model produced what has been called the cultural heritage model. Great literature, in offering a criticism of life, could supply the content missing from the skill model. Furthermore, here was a content which would link the elementary schools with the universities. Through literature and with careful explication prepared by Doctors of Philosophy, all that was best in the thought and feeling of Western Civilization could be handed down from generation to generation. And not only would the classics serve to transmit cultural values and feelings,

but they could also be used as stylistic examples upon which the pupils' writing could be based.

In practice, however, the cultural heritage model has its shortcomings. First, the classroom teacher, trained in the careful explication of text and given a suitable content to deliver in terms of the transmission of knowledge, more often than not would suck the very life-blood from the work and deliver up the embalmed and dismembered pieces in reverential awe. One need only cite the almost universal antipathy of youngsters to the "classics" to see the damage caused by this model. Second, and perhaps a more serious limitation is that the cultural heritage model places the stress on cultural as a given, ignoring the culture that the pupil knows as he develops a personal response to his family, his friends, and his environment. It is the vital interplay between these two cultures, that of the child and that of the writer, which can lead to an enlarging of the child's world-view. But by emphasizing the text, the cultural heritage model confirms the average teacher in his attention to the written word, which is the point of strength in his training, as opposed to the spoken word, which is the student's strength.

John Dixon, a participant in the Dartmouth Conference, sums up the cultural heritage model in the following way:

The heritage era put "skills" in their place as means

to an end. But it failed to reinterpret the concept of "skills" and thus left an uneasy dualism in English teaching. Literature itself tended to be treated as a given, a ready-made structure that we imitate and a content that is handed over to us. And this attitude affected composition and all work in language. There was fatal inattention to the processes involved in such everyday activities as talking and thinking things over, writing a diary or a letter home, even enjoying a TV play. Discussion was virtually ignored, as we know to our cost today on both sides of the Atlantic. In other words, the part of the map that relates a man's language to his experience was largely unexplored. (Think of the trivial essay topics that still result from this ignorance.) The purposes and pressures that language serves tended to be reduced to a simple formula--a lump sum view of inheritance.<sup>5</sup>

The personal growth model, which the members of the Conference generally agreed was the desirable direction for the English curriculum, is more difficult to define and is not without its own dangers. The personal growth model begins with a re-examination of the learning process and the meaning to the student of what he does with his language as he uses it from day to day. Language is seen as imposing order upon our experience, offering us a set of choices from which we must select as we build our inner world. But language is a living, changing process, and a word seldom means exactly the same thing twice.<sup>6</sup> Thus the language teaching that will best facilitate personal growth is that which helps to explore and test out new

---

<sup>5</sup>Dixon, pp. 3-4.

<sup>6</sup>S. I. Hayakawa, Language in Action (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1941), p. 149 ff.



possibilities for naming experience and will help the pupil to perceive himself as the organizer of his own experience.

Language for personal growth is learned by experience, not through practice exercises. In the personal growth curriculum students come together to share their living experiences. To do this effectively they move freely between dialogue and monologue, among talking, writing, and drama. Literature, by bringing new perspectives into the classroom, adds to the common pool of shared experience. As each student takes from this pool, he learns to use language to build his own representation of the world, and he works to make this model fit the reality which he experiences. As Dixon concludes:

In ordering and composing situations that in some way symbolize life as we know it, we bring order and composure to our inner selves. When a pupil is steeped in language in operation we expect, as he matures, a conceptualization of his earlier awareness of language, and with this perhaps new insight into himself (as creator of his own world).<sup>7</sup>

Two apparent dangers emerge from the personal growth model. First is the tendency to put aside the conventions and systems of the written language as fettering to the creative mind. The answer here is not a simple one. Certainly one must attend, at least to some degree, to the conventions of spelling and punctuation if one is to be

---

<sup>7</sup>Dixon, p. 13.

understood. At what point does deviation from convention become so great as to cause interference and block out the message? This is a problem which calls for an analysis of the individual situation, taking into account the sender, the receiver, the occasion, and the relative importance of the message. (The more important the message, the higher the level of interference which can be tolerated and the more crucial that the level of interference not ultimately block communication.)<sup>8</sup> The second danger lies in the reduction of all that is implied in the personal growth approach to a simplistic faith in "self-expression." Acting in such faith the teacher can relax, for how can anyone set himself up to judge what the self expresses? But this is throwing out the baby with the bath, for as human beings we live and grow in response to our surroundings, our family, our friends, our teachers.

The sense of our own reality is bound up with our sense of theirs, and both intimately depend on an awareness built up through language. For, of all the representational systems, language is the best

---

<sup>8</sup>In this regard, Herbert Muller points out that the interference factor may be less important than it would first appear:

For once youngsters get really interested in their writing they naturally try to improve it, and may write more maturely than others who are merely carrying out assignments. They may likewise take more pains to avoid errors and do a more workmanlike job. The argument is that creative or personal writing is an excellent way, perhaps the best way, to improve the basic skills of writing and achieve a mastery of language. (The Uses of English, p. 125)

fitted to make a running commentary on experience. . . . In an English classroom as we envisage it, pupils and teachers combine to keep alert to all that is challenging, new, uncertain, and even painful in experience. Refusing to accept the comfortable stereotypes, stock responses and perfunctory arguments that deaden our sensitivity to people and situations, they work together to keep language alive and in so doing to enrich and diversify personal growth.<sup>9</sup>

The Dartmouth Conference, then, called for a new approach to the teaching of English, an approach which Benjamin DeMott speaks of in terms of its significance not merely to the individual but in terms of our national interest:

For the truth is that the gains that could come from releasing the English teacher and student into the living world of their subject hugely outweigh any possible losses. These gains can even be fairly expressed in terms of significant national interests. It is the free man's awareness of himself as possessing a distinct life of feeling, a singularity of response, an individual tendency in time that alone give meaning and relish to the idea of freedom. And in the contemporary state there are massive forces ranged against every small encouragement and stimulation of that awareness, forces blandly denying the dream of individuality and the dream of self-knowledge. The English classroom is, ideally, the place where the latter dream is set under scrutiny, understood, valued and interpreted. To reduce the classroom to a lesser place, to evade the substance of English in the name of stylistics, correctness, acquaintance with the classics, taste tests, colorful composition, is therefore to deny youth a good defense against the fate of mass men.<sup>10</sup>

---

<sup>9</sup>Dixon, pp. 12-13.

<sup>10</sup>Benjamin DeMott, Supergrow: Essays and Reports on Imagination in America (New York: Dell Publishing Co., Inc., 1970), p. 154.

Heady stuff, these ideas from the Dartmouth Conference. The problem, however, remains how to move from the lofty rhetoric of the conference participants to the operation of a work-a-day English classroom. Two books came directly out of the conference and these are of some help. The Uses of English, by Herbert J. Muller, and Growth Through English, by John Dixon, are reports of the Conference itself; the former is for the general reader, the latter for the professional. While these two volumes do give some clues as to how an individual teacher might proceed, they focus on the theoretical framework which emerged from the Conference, and they are both better at telling us what not to do rather than what to do.

Two other books, A Student-Centered Language Arts Curriculum, Grades K-13: A Handbook for Teachers and Teaching the Universe of Discourse, both by James Moffett, a conferee, show the influence of the Conference. A Student-Centered Language Arts Curriculum is the result of a two-year full-time study funded by the Carnegie Corporation through the Harvard School of Education. This book is designed for teachers on the job. It describes and illustrates language activities that students and teachers may engage in from kindergarten into college. Moffett has attempted to integrate his program both in terms of the continuity which is sustained from one general stage of growth to another, and also in terms of the

learning of speech, reading, composition, literature, and drama, which are all interrelated and learned in terms of each other rather than as separate subjects.

Teaching the Universe of Discourse is a companion volume which provides a theoretical rationale for the Moffett program.

Moffett describes his approach in the following way:

I would like to propose a way of teaching the native language that requires almost no textbooks or materials except reading selections and that, indeed, offers an alternative to the installation of a pre-packaged curriculum. Featuring the learner's own production of language, and not incarnated in textbooks, this curriculum adjusts automatically to the students at hand. It is therefore meant for use in any kind of school, public or private, and with any kind of student population, advantaged or disadvantaged, of low or high ability. But what I am presenting is not a definitive, thoroughly tried-and-proven course of learning; it is, rather, a chart for further exploration and a kind of rallying call.<sup>11</sup>

Unfortunately, however, few English teachers have answered Moffett's rallying cry. Many English composition programs still demand that complete, polished essays on subjects of little interest to the student be submitted to teachers for evaluation. Often these young people who are asked to write on uninteresting subjects for no real audience come to view writing either with hostility or as an inconsequential exercise. Paradoxically this contempt

---

<sup>11</sup>James Moffett, A Student-Centered Language Arts Curriculum, Grades K-13: A Handbook for Teachers (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1968), p. 1.

is reinforced with self-doubt, since the unavoidable negative feedback and an atmosphere of adulation of style encourages students to be apprehensive about their ability.

Muller chronicles the Dartmouth Conference's discussion of these problems:

Most students regard the "paper" as a chore, which they perform more or less conscientiously in order to get a decent grade, but too seldom with their heart in it or their whole mind on it. In too many papers they go nowhere in particular because they started with nothing in particular to say and no real desire to say it. They know well enough that writing is hard work, but not that the effort can be exciting.

Hence the problem is how to get them really involved (or as the educationists now say, "motivated"). There is no easy answer, of course, and no one way that is clearly the best way. The seminar considered some possible good ways, but chiefly agreed on what were the wrong ones. . . .

In the first place, children need an audience other than the teacher. They write most easily when they write for the class, are entertained and stimulated by one another's fancies. English teachers forget that with older children an audience is no less important. As Wendell Johnson has complained, teachers fail because they emphasize "writing" instead of writing-about-something-for-someone: "You cannot write writing." Too often they assign the youngsters literary topics for which there can hardly be a live audience except the teacher himself. Meanwhile they have fallen into the routine ways that were deplored in other discussions. They weaken children's confidence by stressing correctness as the main end. They set them to doing grammatical exercises from which they can get no intellectual satisfaction except the achievement of correctness. Pride in good grammar scarcely leads to pleasure in good writing.<sup>12</sup>

Moffett casts the problem of subject matter and audience in terms of feedback and response. He believes that

---

<sup>12</sup>Muller, pp. 100-101.

writing is best learned in the same way that most other activities are learned, by doing and heeding what happens. Under the learning-by-doing system which he proposes, a student writes because he wants to say something of importance to some person or persons of importance to him, and because he wants to achieve a particular effect or set of effects on his particular audience.

He would write only authentic kinds of discourse such as exist outside of school. A maximum amount of feedback would be provided him in the form of audience response. That is, his writing would be read and discussed by this audience, who would also be the coaches. This response would be candid and specific. Adjustments in language, form, and content would come as the writer's response to his audience's response. Thus instruction would be individual, relevant, and timely. These are precisely the virtues of feedback learning that account for its great success.<sup>13</sup>

For Moffett the key to feedback and response is in the subject matter and the audience, for on the one hand if the student does not care about his subject or his audience, then no amount of feedback will cause him to examine the experience in preparation for the next trial. (Witness the student who takes a hasty glance at the grade on his returned paper and does not bother to look at the teacher's "corrections.") On the other hand, if the student does make the effort but gets no response from his audience (How often are papers kept for a week or more by the "busy" teacher?), then there is no significant feed-

---

<sup>13</sup>James Moffett, Teaching the Universe of Discourse (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1968), p. 193.

back to respond to in terms of the next trial.

The quality of the feedback and the significance of the responder are the crucial factors in Moffett's approach. Certainly because of sheer numbers, peers can provide more feedback than can the teacher, but is the feedback as effective or as significant? Moffett cites four reasons why he feels that student feedback is potentially more effective than teacher feedback. First, as a matter of numbers, multiple responses to a piece of writing make it more impersonal and easier to heed. Second, group reactions often can establish through consensus some objective, or generally held, judgments about the writing, and through disagreement, those aspects which involve individual value judgments. Third, it is easier for peers to be candid in their responses because the teacher, who is usually aware of his special significance as a responder, is sometimes afraid of hurting his students. And fourth, students respond to the writing of a peer more in his own terms, whereas the teacher is more apt to focus on those aspects of style and technique which are beyond the cognition of the student. Thus the student can fall into the habit of shrugging off teacher feedback as a manifestation of the generation gap: "Adults don't understand." But when a peer misunderstands him on a matter of importance, the student may respond to that feedback



by accommodation.<sup>14</sup>

The significance of the responder brings out the paradox in the teacher's role. He is both far less significant than the student's peers in the affectional relationship, and far too significant as an authority figure--parental surrogate, civic authority, and dispenser of marks. Taken together these roles distort the writer-audience relationship and often cause the student to respond to the feedback in ways which severely limit his learning to write. He may, for example, become engaged in a constant assessment of the teacher's likes and dislikes and write to please or, perversely, to displease. Or he may react by withholding himself, writing briefly and grudgingly. But, perhaps most damagingly, he may become engaged in the cynical game of outwitting the teacher by catering to his whims and fancies, and through this cynicism he learns to divorce structure from content, the act of writing from the reason to write.

These considerations do not, as they may seem to do, leave the teacher without a job. There are certain things which are uniquely the teacher's responsibility. First is his role as group facilitator--moving students into groups and setting up patterns for group behavior. Second is his role as stimulator of activity, as a provider of en-

---

<sup>14</sup>Teaching the Universe of Discourse, p. 194.

gaging material for young people to write about and respond to. Third, as an additional audience, supplementing the peer audience, and yet aware of his special significance, the teacher can add yet another perspective to the feedback. Fourth and perhaps most important, the teacher can help to clarify problems which students have encountered, but cannot solve, because of lack of understanding of the underlying cause. Here the teacher can bring to bear his special knowledge of transformational grammar and of rhetoric, for example.<sup>15</sup>

This trial-and-error approach which Moffett advocates is in sharp contrast to the avoidance-of-error approach which is often used in the teaching of composition. In the trial-and-error approach (or more accurately, the action-response model) the teacher does not try to prevent the learner from making mistakes. He does not preteach the lesson, pointing out all the possible problems and suggesting solutions to them. He allows the student to plunge into the assignment using all the resources available to him, making mistakes where he must, and then using the feedback to modify his next trial. Errors thus become a valuable learning tool. They are not despised or penalized as they are in the avoidance-of-error approach.

---

<sup>15</sup>Teaching the Universe of Discourse, pp. 191-197.

Moffett points out how the avoidance-of-error approach works against the learner:

The good and bad ways of carrying out the assignment are arrayed in advance, are pretaught, then the learner does the assignment, attempting to keep the good and bad ways in mind as he works. Next, the teacher evaluates the work according to the criteria that were laid out before the assignment was done. Even if a system of rewards and punishments is not invoked, the learner feels that errors are enemies, not friends. I think any learning psychologist would agree that avoiding error is an inferior learning strategy to capitalizing on error. The difference is between looking over your shoulder and looking where you are going. Nobody who intends to learn something wants to make mistakes. In that sense, avoidance of error is assumed in the motivation itself. But if he is allowed to make mistakes with no other penalty than the failure to achieve his goal, then he knows why they are to be avoided and wants to find out how to correct them. Errors take on a different meaning. They define what is good. Otherwise the learner engages with the authority and not with the intrinsic issues. It is consequences, not injunctions, that teach.<sup>16</sup>

Using Moffett's rationale, my colleagues, Dr. Simon and Mr. Britton, and I have devised a composition program which attempts to deal with what we consider to be the four most common problems with composition programs:

- 1) lack of a real audience;
- 2) uninteresting subject matter;
- 3) teacher evaluation which stresses the negative;
- and 4) a perfection-completion syndrome which arises partly from the avoidance-of-error approach and partly from the use of the classics as style models for student writing, and which emphasizes neat, finished pieces of

---

<sup>16</sup>Teaching the Universe of Discourse, pp. 199-200.

writing rather than the process of writing.

Thus the major objectives of our program are to create engaging subject matter for a real audience and to replace the fear of negative evaluation with the sense of eager confidence. We have compiled a series of activities designed to produce written responses, the responses varying in length from one word to a complete essay. The students record these responses in their private journals. Some responses may be written for another member of the peer group to record in his journal. Occasionally sections of the journal are shared with other members of the peer group. The journals contain unorganized data, all more or less relevant to questions such as the following: "Who am I?" "How am I perceived by others?" "Which of my characteristics are common and which unique?" "What do I value?" From time to time the students are given synthesizing activities in which they explore the contents of their journals as an archaeologist might examine the artifacts unearthed in a digging. These journals will not be read by the teacher except in cases where the student asks specifically for consultation. Most evaluation is done in the peer group discussions, where the emphasis is on content and rhetoric (that is, the effect which the writing produces upon its audience--not formal rhetorical theory). The only discussion of mechanics--spelling, punctuation, capitaliza-

tion--comes when the peer group encounters mechanical problems which significantly interfere with the messages.

Many of the activities in the program are also designed to encourage the members of the peer group to engage in discussions which stimulate both linguistic and social growth. Moffett points out the important of discussion to growth in language:

One of the unique qualities of dialogue is that the interlocuters build on each other's sentence constructions. A conversation is a verbal collaboration. Each party borrows words and phrases and structures from the other, recombines them, adds to them, and elaborates them. An exchange may consist of several kinds of operations, or rather, cooperations, such as question-answer, parry-thrust, and statement-emendation. . . .

Inseparable from this verbal collaboration is the accompanying cognitive collaboration. A conversation is dialogical--a meeting and fusion of minds even if the speakers disagree. Of course much conversation is not ideational but consists of ceremonial formulas, admonitions, commands, and exhortations. But where thinking is involved at all, it is joint thinking; dual logos is at work. While participating in this mental duet, we are incorporating the points of view, attitudes, ideas, and modifications of ideas of our partners, even if we openly reject them.

I would like to advance an hypothesis that dialogue is the major means of developing thought and language.<sup>17</sup>

To the extent that dialogue involves the incorporation of the points of view, attitudes, and ideas of the other, it can be said to promote social, and, in fact, moral growth as well as linguistic growth; for it is through the ability to take another person's point-of-view, to

---

<sup>17</sup>Teaching the Universe of Discourse, pp. 72-73.

empathize, that one moves away from ego-centricity towards a concern for the other. This ability to empathize is central to Kohlberg's notion of role-taking, which Kohlberg theorizes is basic to moral development.

This growth-producing dialogue rarely occurs in a typical "class discussion," which could be better described as a series of individual dialogues between the teacher and separate students. (In fact, analyses of class discussions using the Flanders Interaction Analysis have surprised many teachers by the extent to which the teachers dominate "discussions" and by the extent to which the remaining "discussion" time is dominated by two or three students.) The arrangement of the classroom, with the teacher in front of rows of desks, or at the open end of a horseshoe, or even at the head of a table, telegraphs the impression that students can learn only, or at least best, from the teacher. This is underscored by the common practice of the teacher's asking questions to which he knows the answer, so that the students, in bidding for the teacher's approval by getting the right answer, place no value on what other students say.

Even in peer group discussions, of course, there is no assurance that growth-producing dialogue will occur. If the members of the group do not really engage with each other, if they merely hear each other out and wait their turn to speak, then nothing much of educational value will

occur. Two crucial factors in the engendering of discussion are the devising of material which will engage the students in genuine dialogue and the discovery of methods which will foster the habits of questioning, collaborating, and qualifying, habits which make up the give-and-take quality of good dialogue.<sup>18</sup>

Clearly the teacher is the key to the success of such a program. The demands upon his energies and wisdom are far greater than are the demands upon the transmitter-of-knowledge teacher. He must have skills in group process, a knowledge of linguistics, and the wisdom and understanding to intervene to create new learning opportunities but to refrain from intervention where his presence would retard learning.<sup>19</sup>

Such a teacher can create of his classroom, as Benjamin DeMott describes it:

the place--there is no other in most schools--the place wherein the chief matters of concern are particulars of humanness--individual human feeling, human response, and human time, as these can be known through written expression (at many literary levels) of men living and dead, and as they can be discovered by student writers seeking through words to name and compose and grasp their own experience. English in sum is about my distinctness and the distinctness of other human beings. Its function,

---

<sup>18</sup>Teaching the Universe of Discourse, p. 82.

<sup>19</sup>In designing our program my colleagues and I have given special attention to the teacher and are supporting him through the teacher's handbook and through weekend workshops, as well as through on-site and telephone consultation.

like that of some books called "great," is to provide an arena in which the separate man, the single ego, can strive at once to know the world through art, to know what if anything he uniquely is, and what some brothers uniquely are. The instruments employed are the imagination, the intellect, and texts or events that rouse the former to life. And, to repeat, the goal is not to know dates and authors and how to spell recommend; it is to expand the areas of the human world--areas that would not exist but for art--with which men can feel solidarity and co-extensiveness.<sup>20</sup>

The problem of this dissertation is twofold: First, to develop a composition program and classroom materials which incorporate the following principles:

1. The reason for teaching composition is to help the student to analyze, synthesize, and evaluate himself and his world. (By composing--that is, placing together--the chaotic events that make up existence, we learn how to order our past experience and shape our future experience and thereby learn more about our lives and ourselves.)
2. Three important skill areas in the analysis, synthesis, and evaluation of self and world are as follows:
  - a. Self-evaluation: To compose our inner selves, to find out who we are. (Identity.)
  - b. Communication: To share experience and to grow through the sharing of others. (Interpersonal relations.)
  - c. Action: To learn how to make our lives reflect

---

<sup>20</sup>Supergrow: Essays and Reports on Imagination in America, p. 143.



our values through our actions. (Values into action.)

3. The act of composition requires a meaningful subject (as perceived by the composer).
4. The act of composition requires a responsive audience (which could be the composer and/or others).
5. Growth through composition is best achieved through descriptive feedback and response to that feedback.
6. Peer feedback is a rich and usually untapped resource in the developing of composition skills.
7. Teachers can best stimulate growth through composition in the following ways:
  - a. Introducing engaging and stimulating materials and activities and relevant information.
  - b. Facilitating the group processes.
  - c. Offering additional feedback from a perspective which is experientially different from that of the student's peers.
  - d. Consulting and clarifying problems which students have encountered but cannot solve because of lack of understanding of the underlying causes.

The second aspect of the problem of this dissertation is to evaluate the program. Four methods of evaluation are used: 1) Controlled testing of development of certain of the affective skills, in which the program is designed to promote growth, as the result of an eight-week trial;

2) the written evaluations of students at the end of a ten-week elective course; 3) the extensive oral and written debriefing of teachers at the end of a ten-week required course; and 4) letters and other comments from teachers using the program.

C H A P T E R    I I I  
PROCEDURES IN DESIGNING AND EVALUATING  
THE COMPOSITION FOR PERSONAL GROWTH PROGRAM

The procedures and considerations involved in the design of the Composition for Personal Growth program can be divided into six areas: the personal growth components of identity, interpersonal relations, and values into action; the hierarchy of composition skills; positive focus; peer feedback; diffusion strategies; and evaluation.

Identity--Interpersonal Relations--Values into Action

From the vast chaos and sometimes conflicting goals of "personal growth" the designers of the program selected three overlapping areas as organizing principles for the personal growth objectives of the program--identity, interpersonal relations, and values into action. In each area the first of two phases is awareness: helping the young person to become more aware of his own identity--patterns of behavior, preferences, influences, competencies, body; helping the young person to become more aware of interpersonal relations--how he affects others and what he needs from others; and helping the young person to become more aware of his values and to what degree his actions reflect

his values. The second phase is growth: helping the young person to grow as a person, develop his competencies, and cope with his unavoidable shortcomings; helping the young person to grow in his ability to relate to others--to influence, to give and receive feedback, to collaborate, to listen; and helping the young person to make his actions more consistent with his values and to understand those forces that prevent his actions from being consistent with his values.

Identity. One of the most important aspects of identity is the developing of self-confidence to deal with the world. As Erik Erikson, the theorist whose work has brought the term "identity" to general use, points out:

A weak ego does not gain substantial strength from being persistently bolstered. A strong ego, secured in its identity by a strong society, does not need and in fact is immune to any deliberate attempt at artificial inflation. Its tendency is toward the testing of what feels real, the mastery of that which works, the understanding of that which proves necessary, the enjoyment of the vital and the overcoming of the morbid.<sup>1</sup>

True self-confidence comes from an awareness of reality: an awareness of areas and degrees of competence and areas and degrees of weakness. True self-confidence uses this awareness of strength and weakness to plan and provide for possible future events, working to strengthen some areas

---

<sup>1</sup>Erik H. Erikson, Identity--Youth and Crisis (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1968), p. 70.

of weakness while planning around the existence of others. The establishing of self-confidence through realistic self-awareness is one of the aims of the personal growth approach to composition.

In order to promote awareness and growth in the young person's sense of identity, we selected and developed activities which are designed to illuminate some of the following questions:

Patterns and preferences: What patterns of behavior do I notice in my life? To what extent are these patterns the result of conscious planning, and to what extent are they the result of just drifting? What forces do I possess that can help regulate these patterns so that they are congruent with my feelings, preferences, values? What do I prefer? What unconscious desires am I resisting? What are my desires? What do I prize and cherish? What forces do I possess that will help me resist those desires that I feel I should resist, and what forces do I possess which will help me live in closer accord with those values which I prize and cherish?

Influences: What are the influences which have caused me to perceive myself as I do? How has my mother influenced my self-concept? How have my father, siblings, peers, teachers, priest, policemen, television, magazines, advertisements, local architecture, climate, native language influenced what I am? How have these influences

affected my values and beliefs?

Competencies: What are my strengths and weaknesses in terms of perceiving experience and in terms of organizing and storing perceived experience for my present needs and future aspirations? What are my strengths and weaknesses in psycho-motor competence, in terms of body movement and control? What is my cognitive competence, my ability to know and to abstract attributes in order to organize this complex universe? What is my affective competence, my ability to organize and to know what I feel? What is my social competence, my ability to understand and to formulate patterns of relationships among people? What is my volitional competence, my recognition of my aspirations and my perseverance in attaining those aspirations? And what is my aesthetic competence, my ability to grasp the essential order of things and to build and reorder things creatively?<sup>2</sup>

Body: To what extent am I aware of my body--its strengths and weaknesses? To what extent do I accept its limitations?

Interpersonal relations. No man is an island, and with the exception of a few crabbed hermits, no man can live his life without an almost constant interaction with

---

<sup>2</sup>This taxonomy is based on the ANISA model developed by Daniel C. Jordan. See his "The ANISA Model--A New Educational System for Releasing Human Potential," The American Oxonian, LVII (1970), 542-554.

other men. Personal growth involves an awareness of others and of the influence and control of others on one's behavior and attitudes.

In developing the interpersonal relations aspect of the program, we have relied on the three-dimensional theory of interpersonal behavior developed by William Schultz. Schultz identifies three key variables which are present at any time that two or more people are involved with each other in any way: inclusion behavior, control behavior, and affection behavior. Schultz defines these variables as follows:

Inclusion behavior is defined as behavior directed toward the satisfaction of the interpersonal need for inclusion. . . . Inclusion behavior refers to associations between people that might be described by such terms as "interact," "belong," "companion," or "togetherness." The opposite state of affairs from inclusion are described by such terms as, "exclusion," "isolation," "abandoned," or "ignored."

Control behavior is defined as behavior directed toward the satisfaction of the interpersonal need for control. . . . Control behavior refers to the decision-making process between people. Some terms connoting a relation that is primarily positive control are "authority," "dominance," "influence," "leader." Some terms that connote primarily a lack of, or negative control are "rebellion," ". . . follower," ". . . submissive," ". . . milquetoast."

Affection behavior is behavior directed toward the satisfaction of the interpersonal need for affection. . . . In general affection behavior refers to close personal emotional feelings between two people. Affection is a dyadic relation; it can occur only between pairs of people at any one time, whereas both inclusion and control relations may occur either in dyads or between one person and a group of persons. Some terms that connote an affection relation that is primarily positive are . . . "love," "like," "emotionally close," ". . . personal," "friendship. . . ." Some

terms that connote primarily lack of, or negative affection are . . . "hate," "dislike," "cool," "emotionally distant."<sup>3</sup>

In structuring activities which would lead to awareness and growth in interpersonal relations, we developed the following questions as guidelines: How am I perceived by others? In what ways am I like and in what ways dissimilar from others? How much influence do I have over others, and how can I be more influential? Am I satisfied with the quantity and quality of my friendships, and how can I improve my friendships? To what extent do I collaborate constructively with others, and how can I improve my collaborative efforts? How good am I at giving and receiving feedback, and how can I improve these skills? What is the value of self-disclosure, and when and how much should I reveal, how much conceal? What is the value of risk-taking and when and where should I take risks? How good am I at listening, understanding, and empathizing, and how can I improve these skills?

Values into action. One of the most significant but disturbing aspects of value education is, as Eiseman points out, "the finding that adolescents have relatively well-defined values, but do not have the skills and self-

---

<sup>3</sup>Harold Bessell and Uvaldo Palomares, Methods in Human Development (San Diego: Human Development Training Institute, 1970), p. 87.



confidence to live by them."<sup>4</sup> Thus an adolescent can believe in racial equality, for instance, and yet lack the skills to promote this value. Equally disturbing is the indication that many young people who, when confronted with a vast and confusing array of choices and no clear-cut guidelines, drop out or drift along, allowing others to determine the course of their lives and refusing to make value decisions.<sup>5</sup> Alvin Toffler points out the crucial role of value education in our rapidly changing society:

We are rapidly moving into a world in which the choices confronting us will be more numerous, more complex and more short-lived. This change in the decisional climate has produced a crisis in our ability to make decisions about our own personal futures and about our social futures. This is why a new emphasis on values is crucial to any program intended to help people to adapt to rapid change. I must emphasize: this does not mean a return to the traditional position of imposing a single set of values on the students. . . . I think it extremely important for students to be able to make their own values explicit. Any educational process that helps them to make their own values explicit, helps them to clarify their values, helps them in personal relations and decision making.<sup>6</sup>

The final concern of the personal growth approach to composition is with value exploration and clarification,

---

<sup>4</sup>Jeffrey Eiseman, The Deciders (Menlo Park, Calif.: Institute for Staff Development, 1969), p. v.

<sup>5</sup>Louis E. Raths, Merrill Harmin, Sidney B. Simon, Values and Teaching: Working with Values in the Classroom (Columbus, Ohio: Charles E. Merrill Publishing Co., 1966) pp. 4-7.

<sup>6</sup>"An Interview with Alvin Toffler," Trend: A Journal of Educational Thought and Action, VII (Spring 1971), 4.

focusing on the valuing process--the awareness of congruence or disparity between values and action, and an awareness of the forces causing disparity between values and actions and of the skills to move values into actions. To achieve awareness and growth in the valuing process, we have selected and designed personal growth activities aimed at developing skills in the valuing process. Based on the work of Rath, Harmin, and Simon,<sup>7</sup> we have delineated seven skills in valuing--four connected with choosing and three connected with acting.

The personal growth activities in the program which focus on choosing are designed to enhance value-related decision-making through practice in the four following skills:

1. Preferences: What do I prefer? What do I prize and cherish?
2. Influences: How has this choice been influenced by others? By family, friends, school, the media? To what degree is this an independent choice?
3. Alternatives: What are the alternatives to this choice? Have I considered other alternatives carefully?
4. Consequences: What are the consequences of this

---

<sup>7</sup>Values and Teaching: Working with Values in the Classroom.

choice? Am I willing to accept the consequences of this choice?

In moving values into action the program focuses on the three following skills:

5. Public affirmation: Am I willing to affirm this value publicly? What possibilities are open to me for public affirmation? What forces restrain me from public affirmation? Have I publicly affirmed this value in any manner?
6. Acting: Am I willing to act upon this value? What possibilities are open to me for acting? What forces are restraining me from action? Have I acted on this value in any manner?
7. Acting repeatedly: Am I willing to act on this value so that it becomes a pattern in my life? What possibilities are open to me for making of this value a pattern of actions in my life? What forces are restraining me from this? Have I made this a pattern in my life?

### The Hierarchy of Composition Skills

Drawing on the work in creativity of Gordon, Osborn, Parnes, Prince, and Torrance,<sup>8</sup> we have developed a hier-

---

<sup>8</sup>W. J. J. Gordon, The Metaphorical Way of Learning and Knowing (Cambridge, Mass.: Porpoise Books, 1971).  
Alex F. Osborn, Applied Imagination: Principles and Pro-

archy of skills in composition. Most of the process of composition takes place internally, out of reach of the teacher. The teacher may have access to the rough draft and sometimes to comparative revision sheets, but his teaching is severely limited because most of the higher order decisions are made at a point where he has little influence.

Ideally the teacher would be present at the inception of a composition idea, tap the student's mind by some sort of mental stethoscope and accompany him, observing and taking notes as the composition takes shape. He might then be able to prepare learning opportunities that would promote optimum growth in the higher-order skills. But because the teacher is condemned to stand outside the door, waiting for the public utterance, he turns his attention to the lower order skills, and often makes much of syntax, diction, spelling, punctuation, and other mechanics.

Gathering. At the top of the hierarchy is the skill of gathering information. This is the raw material from

---

cedures of Creative Problem-Solving, 3rd rev. ed. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1963). George M. Prince, The Practice of Creativity: A Manual for Dynamic Group Problem Solving (New York: Harper & Row, 1970). Sidney J. Parnes, Creative Behavior Guidebook (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1967). E. Paul Torrance, Encouraging Creativity in the Classroom (Dubuque, Iowa: William C. Brown Co., 1970).

which the composition will be drawn. As with a gold mine, the richer the deposit in the face, the higher will be the potential for the yield of precious metal. A rich piece of writing is the result of the sifting through of rich material. The gathering skill is the skill of evoking a large body of specific images, facts, and details.

Classifying. The second skill in the hierarchy is the skill of drawing inferences and generalizations from the data collected, and then arranging the data, illuminating with specific and pertinent examples and specific details. While many composition teachers do attempt to teach organization and use of detail, this is always done ex post facto or in abstract. The point here is that teachers are not in a position to observe the decision at the point of decision-making because they do not have the skills to monitor the thought processes which lead up to the decision point.

Phrasing I. At the point of public utterance, syntax, or the placing together of words and phrases, comes into play as an important skill. Diction, or choice of words, also falls at this point in the hierarchy.

Phrasing II. The lowest skills in the hierarchy, spelling, punctuation, and other mechanics, are traditionally the ones which receive the most attention. We feel that this is because these are the easiest skills to test and grade. In fact, the reason that many English

teachers place heavy emphasis on Phrasing II and little on Gathering may be that Phrasing II contains the easiest skills to test for and grade, while it is most difficult to test for and grade the skills of Gathering.

Many of the activities in the program have been devised to provide training in the higher order skills of Gathering and Classifying. Brainstorming and other ways of generating a large body of data, such as metaphorical thinking, provide practice in Gathering, while pattern searches and rank-orders give practice in Classifying.

#### Positive Focus

Herbert Otto in a study done at the National Center for the Exploration of Human Potential found that young people, when given a chance to list their strengths and their weaknesses, would list seven times as many weaknesses as strengths.<sup>9</sup> In an informal survey of students at the University of Massachusetts in Amherst, this author has found that in response to the question, "What are the three things you like best about the University of Massachusetts?" twenty percent of the students interviewed were unable to think of more than two "best" things. Most students found the question difficult--they were used to rehearsing their lists of grievances and complaints to the point

---

<sup>9</sup>Lecture, Amherst, Mass., November 13, 1971.

where thinking positive thoughts seemed very strange indeed. School rules tend to be lists of things you can't do. Grades start with a hundred and take points off. The coach reruns films of the game to show his players where they made mistakes. After thirty minutes of chronicling war, famine, political intrigue, and crime, Walter Cronkite says, "That's the way it is." Society has conspired to place upon the nose of each of its members a pair of one-way spectacles, spectacles which focus heavily on the negative.

It is the conviction of the authors of this program that this heavy emphasis on the negative provides a kind of self-fulfilling prophecy, a downward spiral, a gradual diminution of potency. Our program is designed to focus heavily on the positive--listing strengths, twenty things you love to do, your greatest achievements, noting positive behavior in others, etc. This is not to lie about reality or to create the illusion that everything is covered with roses; it is, however, to find real instances of positiveness and to bring them back into focus as life-enhancing forces. The program deliberately and steadfastly avoids the pressure toward balance, toward focusing evenly on the positive and the negative. Day-to-day reality will more than even the balance.

## Peer Feedback

One of the principles of this program is that peer feedback is a rich and usually untapped resource in the developing of composition skills. To utilize this resource we have structured many of the activities so that they can take place in small groups of three to six, insuring maximum opportunities for verbal interaction. The activities are structured so that the compelling subject matter will serve to hold the group together and lead to productive interaction. Because this format is almost always new to both students and teacher, the small group work is itself seen as a skill, and the program makes provisions for training both the students and the teacher in this skill.

### Diffusion

#### A MILKWEED

Anonymous as cherubs  
Over the crib of God,  
White seeds are floating  
Out of my burst pod.  
What power had I  
Before I learned to yield?  
Shatter me, great wind:  
I shall possess the field.

--Richard Wilbur

A study of the diffusion practice of the milkweed might prove instructive to the educational innovator, for many is the man who, despite the old saying, has found the path



to his door overgrown with weeds from want of use, his better mouse traps growing rusty on the shelf. The world will never beat a path to his door until they hear of his mousetrap, see his mousetrap, try his mousetrap. The sub-discipline of research in the diffusion of innovations is yet a budding science, but any serious attempt to design an educational program should have as one of its components diffusion procedures, and these procedures should be based upon consideration of the research findings. Accordingly I have considered the Composition for Personal Growth program in the framework of diffusion theory and especially in the context of the models proposed by Rogers.<sup>10</sup> Attention will first be focused upon the innovation itself, second upon the adoption process, third upon the adopters, and finally upon the change agents.

The innovation. Rogers proposes that the rate of adoption of an innovation is affected by five factors: 1) the relative advantage of the innovation as perceived by members of a social system; 2) the compatibility of the innovation with previous ideas and norms; 3) the apparent complexity of the innovation; 4) the possibility of divid-

---

<sup>10</sup>Everett M. Rogers, Diffusion of Innovations (New York: The Free Press, 1962) (Hereinafter referred to as Diffusion; "Guide Lines to Be Used in Educational Change" (mimeographed: University of Massachusetts School of Education, Seminar 833, Summer 1970) (Hereinafter referred to as "Guide Lines").

ing the innovation for trial purposes; and 5) the communicability of the innovation.

The first factor, relative advantage, must be considered not as it is perceived by the creators of the innovation or by the change agents, but as it is perceived by the target audience, and especially by the decision makers. For Composition for Personal Growth the relative advantages seem real and urgent to the creators and to the change agents, but often seem nebulous to the target audience, and especially to the decision makers. If the decision makers are, as Brickell suggests,<sup>11</sup> school principals and department chairmen rather than classroom teachers, then it is principals and department chairmen who must be convinced that the seeming chaos, noise, and "fun and games" atmosphere which characterize Composition for Personal Growth are advantages to real learning. Here the philosophical arguments and intuitive reasoning of the proponents will not be nearly so moving as will hard figures about cost-benefit and achievement-gain. While these figures will be difficult to compile (especially when there is so much difficulty in determining the goals and

---

<sup>11</sup>Henry M. Brickell, "State Organization for Educational Change," Innovation in Education, ed. Matthew B. Miles (New York: Teachers College Press, 1964), p. 505.

meta-goals of composition), the creators of the program recognize the importance of such an evaluation if Composition for Personal Growth is to make its way in our materialistic society.

In terms of the second factor, compatibility, Composition for Personal Growth runs into conflict with many of the traditional ideas and norms of teachers, of students, and of parents; in addition, it often conflicts with the physical set-up of the schools. The program is at odds with the teacher-centered classroom, emphasis on order and control, the passive role of the student, desks set in rows and sometimes bolted to the floor, competitive grading, and student expectations of learning as the receiving of information from the teacher. In fact the program is at odds with so many of the traditional aspects of schooling that its only hope seems, sometimes, to be that society and thus schools are actually changing much more rapidly than seems to be the case, and this program is designed to meet the demands of a changing society.

In terms of complexity the program seems fairly simple at the operational level, but it is actually complex at the philosophical level. Thus the program can be badly served by the teacher who perceives the outward form but who misses the meaning, who fails to understand the reasons behind each of the activities. To this end the

teacher's guide is explicit about the goals of the activities and gives the teacher a class planning form which attempts to reinforce the need for using the activities purposefully rather than as ends in themselves.

The fourth factor to consider is divisibility. Can the program be divided for trial? Here is one of the real strengths of the program, for many of the activities can be used in conventional classroom settings. Here the teacher and students may have the opportunity to ease into the new approach, expanding the amount of time given over to it and extending the range of activities and goals.

The final factor is communicability of the innovation. It is easy to communicate the form of the program, but much more difficult to convey the meaning. Here the teacher's guide and the workshops are seen as crucial. The meaning of the program is best communicated through experiencing the activities of the program and similar activities designed for teachers. Thus the format of the workshops is largely experiential.

The importance of placing the innovation along these five dimensions lies in the use that the change agent makes of the information gained from the process. Thus in introducing the program, the change agent can be ready with materials and procedures which will quickly acquaint potential adopters with those aspects that can be seen as relative advantages. He can work where possible to make

the innovation more compatible with existing programs, and he can prepare to articulate the importance of incompatible aspects. He can organize the information concerning the innovation to reduce the complexity, indicate ways of dividing the innovation for trial purposes, and be aware of the degree to which he is able to communicate accurately his understanding of the innovation. While change agents often work in these areas without reference to Rogers' model, a conscious awareness of these five dimensions may help the change agent to speed the adoption process.

The adoption process. With regard to the adoption process, Rogers has proposed a five-stage model: awareness; interest; evaluation; trial; and adoption.<sup>12</sup> Wolf suggests that in the case of educational innovations a truncated three-stage model is more faithful to the realities of the situation: an awareness/interest stage; an evaluation/trial stage; and finally the adoption stage.<sup>13</sup> At the awareness/interest stage diffusion is carried by cosmopolite sources--people who travel to workshops and conferences and who read the forward-looking journals in the field. Thus it is seen as important not only to hold

---

<sup>12</sup>Diffusion, pp. 81-86.

<sup>13</sup>W. C. Wolf, Jr., Unpublished report (University of Massachusetts, Summer 1970).

workshops in Amherst but to make presentations at conferences such as the Massachusetts Council of Teachers of English (April 8, 1972), to publish articles in journals such as English Journal and Media and Methods (articles submitted for publication), and to make available copies of the teacher's handbook and activity guide.

It is also at the awareness/interest stage that the process of legitimization must begin. Here the credibility and authority of the sources are important factors in the adopter's decision to pursue the innovation through the evaluation/trial stage. The national recognition of the senior author, Sidney B. Simon, and the use of quoted material from other national figures such as Benjamin DeMott are intended as legitimizing features.

At the evaluation/trial stage legitimization is still a major concern, but here interpersonal channels are more important than impersonal ones. School visits by the change agents, telephone consultations, and personal letters are significant factors in developing and maintaining momentum. It is at the trial section of this phase, when the participants start to innovate in their own schools, that the "localite" influences are most important, and it is here that the building of support teams within the same school and among adjacent schools begins to create the internal force needed for significant change to occur. The support groups within North Quincy High School and

in the Hingham Public School System; the inter-school support systems of the Windsor, Connecticut, Public School System, Loomis School, and Chaffee School, all located in Windsor; and the incipient support group of Greenfield High School, Deerfield Academy, Northfield-Mount Hermon Schools, and Eaglebrook School, five schools within a twenty mile radius, are examples of the development of such systems.

The adoption stage implies full and continued use of the innovation. It seems likely that the first adoptions will take place within the context of modular elective programs such as those being offered at North Quincy High School and in the Hingham public schools.

Adopters. Rogers defines five categories of adopters, each with a salient characteristic: 1) Innovators--venturesome; 2) Early adopters--respected; 3) Early majority--deliberate; 4) Late majority--skeptical; 5) Laggards--traditional.<sup>14</sup>

It is clear that at this point we are dealing almost exclusively with the first two groups. Those who will first adopt the program will most likely fit Rogers' description of the innovator: venturesome, cosmopolite in information sources, including other innovators in their immediate circle of peers, able to understand and apply

---

<sup>14</sup>Diffusion, pp. 168-169.

and build upon complex ideas, and possessing the resources to absorb the setbacks of unprofitable innovations (human resources here in the tolerance of boards and parents and in the willingness to change the place of employment if necessary). But Rogers concludes that this group of innovators are not opinion leaders.

Rogers find that the next group of adopters, the early adopters, are the opinion leaders. While innovators tend to be cosmopolite, early adopters tend to be localite. Early adopters hold the respect and admiration of their peers, who see them as successful, conscientious, and discreet in the use of new ideas. This is the adopter category that change agents in agriculture and medicine seek out to speed the diffusion process, and this is the category to which the developers of Composition for Personal Growth must now turn.

Rogers suggests another useful construction for studying adopters.<sup>15</sup> As a target audience for the change agent, adopters can be divided into two groups: a decision group and an adoption group. The decision group, usually principals, curriculum coordinators, or department chairmen, has the power to accept or reject the innovation, while the adoption group, generally teachers, has the task of carrying out the orders of the decision group

---

<sup>15</sup>"Guide Lines," p. 3.



on the operational level. Thus the change agents should pay particular attention to the decision group both by offering them special invitations to attend the workshops and by meeting with them on their home ground.

There are two more aspects of the decision group-adopter group model which should be considered. First, Rogers points out that individuals embrace an innovation more fully when they feel that they have participated in the planning and decision-making--thus the need for the decision group to be aware of the importance of sharing the planning for change with the adoption group.<sup>16</sup> Therefore, the change agents should work with the decision group in planning department-, school-, and system-wide adoption so that they will design adoption procedures which will include the adopters in the planning process. And second, in regard to the implementation of the program by the adopter group, Brickell points out that one of the most common failings of innovative efforts is that the teacher (adopter) is not given enough help in implementing the new program.<sup>17</sup> Here can be seen the importance of both telephone and on-site consultation and also of the establishment of effective support groups.

The change agent. Rogers lists two principles re-

---

<sup>16</sup>"Guide Lines," p. 7.

<sup>17</sup>Brickell, p. 518.

lated to the change agent.<sup>18</sup> First, the extent of the promotional efforts of the change agent directly affects the rate of adoption. And second, change agents communicate most effectively with persons who are most like themselves. As to this second principle, the present change agents must assess the extent to which they are like the target audience and to what extent they must ally themselves with other change agents more like the target audience than themselves. The implications of the first principle seem as obvious as the principle itself--the greater the extent of promotional efforts by the change agents, the greater the rate of change; and so it becomes a question of engineering to determine those procedures which will produce the maximum effectiveness with the limited resources available to the change agents. It is to the question of procedures that we will turn in the final part of this discussion.

Procedures for change. From the foregoing analysis I have isolated four areas for special consideration in the diffusion of the Composition for Personal Growth program.

First, the legitimization of the program is of prime import. The evaluating work being done for the present study and the evaluation of writing skills and attitudes

---

<sup>18</sup>"Guide Lines," p. 8.

toward writing should help in this process, but this is only a beginning. Further studies, especially those of greater longitude and those involving specific settings such as urban schools, vocational schools, and community colleges must be conducted. And efforts must be made to obtain sanction for the program from organizations such as the National Council of Teachers of English and the Modern Language Association and from opinion leaders and authority figures such as curriculum supervisors and department heads.

Second, the target audience must be identified and reached so that the change agent can create in this group the awareness/interest phase. To the extent that the innovators and early adopters can be identified, these should form the prime target audience so that communication resources are not dissipated. Here it seems essential to resist the temptation to become infatuated with the innovator group, since research indicates that these are not the opinion leaders. Once the way is pointed out by these innovators, the change agents should concentrate on the early adopter group, which does represent the opinion leadership.

Third, there is strong evidence that innovations often fail because change agents underestimate the extent of support which teachers need not only to launch the in-

novation but to keep it airborne.<sup>19</sup> Here the internal support group assisted by telephone and on-site consultation seems to be the mechanism most practical to the program, not only because of the limited resources of the change agent, but also because this forms a paradigm for the student support groups and because internal support must eventually take over as the change agent withdraws from the environment.

Fourth and most important, as one continues to explore the literature on the diffusion of innovations, it becomes more and more obvious that those innovations which succeed are built on what Miles calls a meta-change--a second order change which will lead to further changes.<sup>20</sup> In the Composition for Personal Growth program this meta-change is embodied in the professional and personal growth of the teacher which leads to a change in his or her self-image. Leonard Sealey described this kind of meta-change:

But organizational and curricular changes are merely vehicles for a much more fundamental change. The really important thing is the professional growth of the teachers, and thus the establishment of a climate conducive to such growth. We can see curriculum reform on every hand. The game is not too difficult to play with expert players now prepared to partici-

---

<sup>19</sup>Brickell, p. 518.

<sup>20</sup>Matthew B. Miles, "Innovation in Education: Some Generalizations," Innovation in Education, ed. Matthew B. Miles (New York: Teachers College Press, 1964), p. 648.

pate. Yet the new curriculum materials often fail to touch the child in ways that really seem to matter and do not seem to have affected the teachers to any marked degree. Their self-image is still much the same, and many accept the new materials passively. There is little evidence that curriculum reform has led to the formation of a climate of professional growth in which teachers themselves innovate, make decisions about education, and have the ability and skill to turn ideas into practice. Professional growth involves freedom to integrate in new ways, freedom to make mistakes, and freedom to be one's self. It leads to variation, to an untidy pattern of development, rather than a neat array that can be easily assessed.<sup>21</sup>

And so we return to the milkweed, for the milkweed invests its hope and power for survival and growth into tiny seeds--seeds carrying each within itself the integrity and potential to develop the plant anew in a thousand places. The key is to develop the seeds that grow true. This is the meta-change that is essential for the success of a new idea. Evidence that such a meta-change is occurring will be presented in Chapter IV.

#### Procedures in Evaluating the Program

Samuel Eliot Morrison reports in The Maritime History of Massachusetts: 1783-1860 that in 1833 when ice was first exported from Salem to Calcutta, the natives eagerly bought the new product at a very high price. But their enthusiasm turned to rage as they discovered that they had been

---

<sup>21</sup>Quoted in Edward Yeomans, Education for Initiative and Responsibility (Boston: National Association of Independent Schools, 1967), p. 23.

"tricked"--the ice melted into a pool of common water.<sup>22</sup> Having never seen ice and having no knowledge of the melting process, these natives lacked the conceptual tools to evaluate the innovation. It was beyond their ken.

John Goodlad warns that to evaluate a seminal innovation in education, "the researcher simply cannot go in with his stable research--his conventional criteria, his time-worn measures--and expect to contribute to the advancement of educational practice and science. By doing so, he endangers both." Instead, the researcher must "come to grips with the conceptual underpinnings of the innovation, for if it is truly radical, it will have objectives the conventional instruments of evaluation simply are not designed to measure."<sup>23</sup>

Rosemary Williams, former head teacher at Westfield Infants School in Leicestershire, England, and a leader in the integrated day movement has decried the turn toward a narrow accountability in this country and especially deplores the use of standardized reading tests as an evaluation of literacy. "A true measure of literacy," she contends, "must be found not in simple ability to read, but

---

<sup>22</sup>Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1921, p. 262.

<sup>23</sup>Quoted in Charles E. Silberman, Crisis in the Classroom (New York: Vintage Books, 1971), p. 256.

in the continued desire to read and to grow through reading. How can one say that a person is literate if he leaves school never to pick up a book again?"<sup>24</sup> Miss Williams suggests such measures as library use, book sales, number of persons seen reading books on the subway, etc., as more valid tests of the job that schools are doing in the teaching of reading.

The objectives of education are many and varied; some can be measured easily, some with more difficulty, and some of the most important ones, it can be argued, cannot be measured at all:

John Dewey spoke to the point more than forty years ago. "Even if it be true that everything that exists could be measured--if only we knew how," he told the Progressive Education Association in 1928, "that which does not exist cannot be measured. And it is no paradox to say that the teacher is deeply concerned with what does not exist. For a progressive school is primarily concerned with growth, with a moving and changing process, with transforming existing capacities and experiences; what already exists by way of native endowment and past achievement is subordinate to what it may become. Possibilities," he continues, "are more important than what already exists, and knowledge of the latter counts only in its bearing on possibilities." (Italics in the original.)<sup>25</sup>

Still the job of evaluation must be started. For this study four types of evaluation were conducted: an eight-week trial run involving pre- and post-testing of

---

<sup>24</sup>Lecture, Shady Hill School, Cambridge, Mass., July 17, 1969.

<sup>25</sup>Silberman, p. 257.

experimental and control groups, a ten-week elective course, a ten-week required course, and an accounting of the letters and comments of teachers using the program in other settings.

The eight-week trial. A treatment group was formed, composed of the classes of ten of the teachers who had been trained in the September workshop. The control group was composed of the classes of ten teachers who expressed interest in testing the program and coming to the workshop, but who were unable for one reason or another to attend the workshop.

While it can be argued that the teachers of the treatment group and the teachers of the control group are dissimilar because the willingness to attend a weekend training workshop denotes a dedication which the teachers of the control group lack, it should be pointed out that dedication is only one of many factors which might cause a teacher to attend or not attend the workshop. Family, means of financing, distance, prior commitments, state of health are only some of the other considerations that impinge upon the decision. To check the similarity of the two groups, the Eiseman Five Pole Test was administered to all teachers before the trial run. This a test which can be used to determine a teacher's readiness to use humanistic curriculum effectively. Tests especially designed to evaluate the program were administered by the



teachers to their own classes during the week before the start of the eight-week trial period in September and again during the week immediately following the trial run in November. After each testing the tests were returned to the investigator for scoring.

The schools selected for this testing were all high schools, grades nine through twelve. They included suburban and exurban schools as well as regional schools serving rural and semi-rural areas and one independent boys' boarding school. The schools were spread over the states of Vermont, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, and Connecticut.

Each teacher in the experimental group planned his own units, arranging the materials in the program to suit his teaching style and the needs of his students. While the investigator purposely avoided packaging the materials into pre-planned sequential units, part of the training workshop was given over to planning for implementation. In addition, the teacher's handbook contains a chapter entitled "Teaching the Personal Growth Approach to Composition." This chapter includes the following sections: The Teacher's Role, Establishing Rules and Procedures, Methods for Movement, Getting Started, Developing Listening Skills, Developing Reflection Patterns, Trouble Shooting, Establishing Support Groups, Technical Skills for Teachers of Composition, Caveats, and Planning and Evaluating the Class, including a lesson plan format and a

class evaluation format. During the trial run the investigator was available for both telephone and on-site consultation.

The ten-week elective. This trial was conducted in a suburban high school south of Boston and involved 146 students in ninth and tenth grades and five teachers, one of whom had been a participant at the September workshop. The workshop participant served as the coordinator of the project and was responsible (along with the head of the department) for the training of the other teachers and the supplying of materials. The course was called "Writers' Workshop," and although it was billed as an elective, scheduling problems forced approximately fifteen percent of the students to "elect" the course as the only one available to them at a time allowed for English by their schedules.

The course was conducted from the end of October through January. At the end of the fifth week each student sent a postcard to the investigator evaluating the course up to that point in general terms, and at the end of the ten weeks each student wrote a letter to the investigator evaluating the program in the following three ways: 1) the degree to which the objectives of the program as stated in the teacher's guide were met, 2) an accounting of which of the activities they liked best and least, and 3) their ideas as to how the course could be improved. Other rel-

evant comments were also encouraged. The postcards and letters were read and tabulated by the investigator and responses were sent where appropriate. This type of evaluation can be said to be integral to the program since the letters represent real and important messages sent to a real and movable audience.

The ten-week required course. This trial was conducted from November 1971 through February 1972 in a boys' boarding school in western Massachusetts and involved twenty-three seventh grade students and two teachers, one of whom had attended the September training workshop. The course was team-taught as one section, an innovation in itself in a school that almost always limits the size of its classes to eleven or twelve. The course was conducted on a pass-fail basis, with the criterion for failure that the student must do so little that the teacher could not be of any help to him. The teachers kept daily anecdotal records and met daily for planning and evaluation.

The investigator evaluated this trial by means of a four-hour de-briefing session with the teachers and the head of the department and by an intensive scrutiny of the anecdotal records. Particular attention was given to observed changes in student behavior patterns and attitudes as well as to changes in the degree of willingness to write and in fluency of writing as judged by the teachers. Other non-obtrusive indicators which the teachers used in eval-

uating the program were such things as the number of times that students sought out the teachers outside of class for conversations not directly related to class assignments, tardiness patterns, willingness to stay to finish discussions after the end of the period, change in response to voluntary assignments such as thought cards,<sup>26</sup> change in demand for optional value sheets,<sup>27</sup> and the neatness of papers submitted to the teachers.

In-service teacher comments. One of the most valuable evaluations of the program is the record of unsolicited comments from other teachers now using the program. At this writing (March 1972) there are more than 120 teachers not including the ones referred to in the previous descriptions who have been trained in the workshops and who are now using all or part of the materials of the program. These teachers represent a wide variety of educational settings including inner city schools, free schools, suburban schools, private boys' boarding and day schools, private girls' boarding schools, private coeducational day schools; community colleges, private

---

<sup>26</sup>For an explanation of thought cards see Sidney B. Simon, Robert C. Hawley, David D. Britton, Composition for Personal Growth (Amherst, Mass.: Simon-Hawley-Britton, 1971), p. 54.

<sup>27</sup>For an explanation of value sheets see Values and Teaching, pp. 83-84.

junior colleges, state colleges, private colleges, and state universities. Every level from grade six through college freshmen is represented.

Comments have been taken from these teachers in four ways: 1) unsolicited letters; 2) responses to a questionnaire as an eight-week follow-up to each workshop; 3) comments received at the advanced workshop; and 4) comments received in the course of telephone and on-site consultations. These comments include statements of successes and failures encountered in using the program, suggestions for improving the program, descriptions of special adaptations of activities from the program, statements of perceived changes in student behaviors and attitudes as a result of the program, and statements of changes in the teachers' own self-images as a result of teaching the program.

## C H A P T E R IV

### FINDINGS

#### The Eight-Week Controlled Trial

Of the four methods of evaluating the program reported on in this study, the eight-week controlled trial was the one disappointment. This was because a statistical analysis of the data collected from the pre- and post-testing failed to show a significant difference between the experimental and control groups. Although the experimental group scored ahead of the control group in every category, the differences were so small that no inferences as to the effect of the intervention can be drawn. (See Appendix A for Summary Tables.)

Several findings of a non-statistical nature can be reported however. First, there was no significant change between the pre- and post-testing for either the experimental or the control group. This suggests the possibility that the factors which the investigator was measuring are much more stable and less subject to change than expected. A second possibility is that the subjects simply remembered their approximate responses to the pre-test and responded similarly on the post-test as a matter of consistency.

Second, four of the ten control group teachers and one of the ten experimental group teachers did not return the post-tests. The reason given in all cases was time pressure to complete the regular course requirements, but the inference can be made that the fact of testing itself, as seen by some teachers, is a greater pain and nuisance than the investigator originally supposed. This inference is supported in part by the comments of four of the nine experimental teachers who did complete all the testing to the effect that, while they enjoyed the program itself, the testing was a "down" for themselves and for the class.

Third, there was no significant change in the students' perceptions of the teachers' role in the class for either group despite the fact that based upon both the teachers' own comments and observations of the investigator all the teachers in the experimental group were operating under quite a different format from that which they had operated under before the eight-week trial. Are teacher behaviors so stereotyped in students' minds that they don't perceive the difference? Or do students notice the difference but feel that it does not represent a real change in the teacher's role?<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>Another possible explanation is that the questions did not tap the changes that students may have perceived in their teachers. For the questions used see Appendix A.

And fourth, seven teachers reported lack of cooperation and/or hostility from the students in taking the tests. This finding was corroborated by the large number of answer sheets which were either left partly blank or apparently filled in without regard to the questions (as, for instance, all answer spaces filled in under "three" would indicate). Besides the normal antipathy toward testing, here was a test that would not appear on the record against the student, and the hostility might have been used as a safe protest against all testing. Or the students may have rebelled against taking a test whose purpose seemed hidden from them. Or they may have been registering a safe vote against school in general. In any case, it is apparent that an investigator cannot count upon the unquestioning cooperation of unknown students in this kind of assessment, and it is for this reason that we now turn to other less obtrusive forms of evaluation.

#### The Ten-Week Elective

During the fifth week of the ten-week "Writer's Workshop" students from two of the five sections of the course wrote postcards to me evaluating the course up to that point. I received cards from forty-seven of the fifty-eight students in the two sections. Seven students were absent on the day of writing; four others did not write



cards or did not mail them (presuming the cards were not lost in the mail.)

Of the forty-seven cards eight contained a generally negative evaluation, ten contained a mixed or moderate evaluation, and twenty-nine contained a generally positive evaluation. The following postcards have been selected as more or less representative samples. All of the negative cards will be quoted but only part of the moderate and positive ones. In each case the body of the postcard will be quoted in its entirety. Here, as in the letter excerpts that follow, I have silently corrected irregularities of spelling and punctuation,<sup>2</sup> but in every case the original syntax has been retained.

Of the eight negative evaluations the following two complained that the course was childish:

You just thought this childish course up to make a fast buck. Any dumb cluck could have thought this one up. --Anon.

I don't know if it's the course or the teacher but this class is like being back in kindergarten. --Boy

One student found the course to be unimaginative and "old hat":

I think that most of the activities in this course are not nearly as good as they're cracked up to be.

---

<sup>2</sup>Mechanical errors were, in fact, few in number. Corrections have been made for ease of reading and so that the reader may avoid irrelevant conclusions, especially as the comments unfavorable to the program contained a higher proportion of mistakes than did the favorable comments.

The idea of journals is as old as the hills and twice as dusty. I don't think that anyone particularly enjoys writing about their own experiences, whether real or imaginary.

P. S. I guess it's back to the old drawing board.

--Anon.

One student thought that it was a waste of time and money:

You shouldn't have made up this type of course. It was a waste of your time and the taxpayers' money. Most of the projects we have done were too stupid to do. So I think you should change this course.

--Boy

One wished that there had been more "finished" writing:

The Writer's Workshop isn't everything it should be. I found that it wasn't everything I wanted to learn. Listening to everyone helped, but I wanted to write things like short stories. I found things I liked but it wasn't enough.<sup>3</sup>

--Boy

And the three following either found the goals unclear or did not find the program stimulating:

Wow, I don't get this course because I don't know what we learned or what we should have learned. Please explain what we were supposed to learn.

--Anon.

The Writers' Workshop course that I am in I do not like so much. Parts of it are boring and I get nothing out of it. Although the course is better than English grammar and other regular English things.

--Anon.

I have my doubts about this class. I don't like writing very much so a class like this doesn't appeal to me very much. I will say, though, that if you were trying for an unusual course, you've found one here.

--Boy

---

<sup>3</sup>While the philosophy of the course does not discourage a student who wants to write a short story from doing so, several students had the impression that they would not be permitted to write short stories for the class.

Because the ten moderate evaluations were generally bland and lacking in real substance, I will quote only three:

I just wrote to tell you that this course, "Writer's Workshop," is all right. The activities are pretty interesting, but I don't like the group activities.  
--Anon.

It's O.K. if you like the teacher, but I don't so no English is better. --Boy

I think this course was fair. Some of the things we did were good and others were boring and ridiculous. But it was interesting most of the time. I think if you make a few changes this course could be a great success. --Boy

Of the positive evaluations some were pleased with the opportunity to participate. Here are two examples:

Your course is very interesting and in most activities a lot of fun. I think the ones you participate in are the most interesting and the most fun. Ones like the Ahab experience. I like the course a lot. --Girl

I think this class is very good. I wish that I could stay in this class for the rest of the year because you don't sit around learning how to write verbs and things like that. In this class you do many things that I enjoy doing. --Boy

Some, as the following two, were pleased to get to know other members of the class and the teacher better:

I enjoyed this course very much. I enjoyed myself and got to know different students better. Also in this course I could express my ideas, my problems, and most of all, I got to know the teacher. I really like it.  
--Girl

I have enjoyed the work you sent us here in Writer's Workshop. This second term course was fun. We had the chance to work in groups with all kinds of kids throughout the classroom. And we were able to express what we thought about something and to hear what the

other kids had to say about what we were doing. I really enjoyed this class very much. It was a lot better than my other English class. The work you sent was great. --Girl

Several, like the two examples below, made mention of self-knowledge and self-discovery:

In my opinion your English program has taught us how we can really come to know ourselves and our friends in a more understanding and meaningful way. --Girl

I feel this course on Writers' Workshop is a good way for people to look at themselves by writing down their thoughts and analyzing them. Sometimes it's hard to see the purpose of this course but other times your thoughts reflect your true character. It's also hard at times to write down what you really feel. --Girl

Most frequently mentioned among the positive evaluations was the growth in language skills. Here are five examples:

This course has been excellent in opening up pathways to help extend the area of writing. I think, though, more time should be allowed for the writing itself. It has helped me to express my thoughts. --Girl

I think that this course is good exercise for your imagination and it is sort of strange but also it is fun. --Girl

I feel that the elective "Writers' Workshop" is a good start for students who really do like to write. It makes everyone part of this course. It helped our imaginations expand and most everyone now can speak freely with other students and the teacher. --Girl

This course is great for letting everyone know what they are like and how they feel about certain things. If you want to be a good writer this course puts you into situations that are weird but interesting, and sometimes in suspense. --Boy

I'm writing to say that I enjoyed the English program you designed for us at \_\_\_\_\_. This course has let the students be more open and creative with their writ-

ings. I was really impressed! Thank you very much.  
--Girl

During the last week of the ten-week "Writers' Workshop" the students were asked to write me letters containing their evaluations of the course. The goals of the program were read to them by their teachers, and they were asked to comment on the extent to which those goals had been achieved during the ten weeks. They were also asked to comment on which they thought were the best activities and which were the worst. Finally, they were encouraged to make any other comments about the course and the program and to suggest improvements if they wished.<sup>4</sup>

From the one hundred forty-six students enrolled in the Writers' Workshop, I received one hundred nineteen letters. Eighteen students were absent on the letter-writing day, and nine others either did not write or did not mail their letters (assuming that no letters were lost in the mails). Since the students were offered the opportunity to remain anonymous, no follow-up could be made on the missing letters.

While it was much more difficult to divide the letters into three groups as had been done with the postcards, sixty-seven of the letter evaluations were judged generally favorable, forty-two were judged moderate, and ten were

---

<sup>4</sup>For a tabulation of these suggested improvements and of "best" and "worst" activities see Appendix B.

judged generally negative.

The following excerpts are quoted not to be representative so much as to be articulate statements of individual positions. Although letters from every section of the course are included, there has been no attempt to present a balanced view of all sections or of the work of all teachers. In no case will I quote an entire letter.

Some students felt that the course didn't offer any real work or "things to learn":

The reason why I said that we need a new course is because you don't have anything in it that involves any learning, like the old English classes. These courses are all right to have once a week as a special period. A lot of kids like reading, doing work, which this course doesn't have. This course would be good for an elective course like shop or art or something that isn't required. --Boy

I think that some of these courses are really stupid; in English class you are supposed to learn things--not just screw around with dumb courses. When a kid is in college if you misspell a word, that's three points off with some teachers, I think that knowing how to spell is more important than doing this. --Boy

Others found privacy a real issue:

I think the course was good some of the time but it was bad most of the time because what I do is my own business and I don't have to write about things like that and I don't like to be bugged about it. You people are too nosy and a bunch of assholes so mind your own business. --Boy

It seemed as though we were almost forced into making friends and discussing our lives with them. Teenagers just don't make friends by force. --Girl

But in at least some of the cases where privacy was an issue, a change in the classroom procedure could be help-

ful, as the following two comments indicate:

I didn't like the idea of a journal because she told us everything we wrote in it would be private but then she'd tell us she was going to read it or that one other person had to read it. --Girl

I think groups are good but if you had close friends in the group with you, I think you would get more done. Cause I was in a group where no one knew each other and we sat there like bumps on logs. Your friends would understand you don't want an F for goofing around. The kids take too much advantage of any opportunity to talk or make trouble. That's the main problem. --Girl

Some students agreed with the philosophical goals of the course but did not see how the classroom work reflected them. Here are two examples:

I agree with your philosophy but I don't think this class has reflected it, and I suppose it was supposed to. I think the most needed improvements would have to be a better group of kids and perhaps a different teacher who can relate better to kids. --Girl

One thing I don't understand is how your course answers all the questions you expect it to. As for your personal relationship questions, I should answer. I think that if I could answer these questions about myself, then your course would be a great advancement in the field of English. --Boy

Others, such as the student quoted next, were unimpressed with the theory:

I think your theory is dumb and it's so boring. That's why I never came. --Girl

Some students re-discovered some of the concerns that the program is based upon. Below are two comments on responsive audiences and meaningful subject matter:

The teacher, Miss \_\_\_\_\_, taught the course really well. I liked the idea to be able to move around and

express myself freely, but you have some non-realistic ideas. When you have to write on something you put down your feelings and views on something, but when you have to write on something you care absolutely nothing about, you put down a lot of stuff to make it look good. --Girl

I see why our teacher didn't correct our papers--so students wrote just the please the teacher. Because when you knew the teacher wasn't going to read it, you'd write more freely. --Girl

And here is one comment on the importance of group processes:

As for group discussion I really liked it because I was new in this school and hardly knew anyone when I came. Group discussions gave me the opportunity to meet and find out about different people in this school. I really enjoyed it. --Girl

As with the postcards, many of the letters commented on the development of language skills. Here are two examples:

In this course I learned language and writing. I noticed that working in groups I could express my ideas and I'm able to communicate with other people, and most of all make new friends. --Girl

This course helped me to think about the things I said more clearly than I ever did before. --Boy

Some saw the uses of authority and freedom as an important issue. One student continued to see the teacher in a highly authoritarian role. Here is his comment:

I didn't learn by doing. I didn't learn anything. This course was a farce. I didn't write for the people, I wrote for the teacher. Mrs. \_\_\_\_\_ did a pretty good job but she couldn't make all of the assignments interesting; most of them were awful. Discussions were really dumb, we never discussed the assignments, we just fooled around and talked about the day and what was going on, and when the teacher



came we made like we were trying. Discussions never work unless there's a teacher standing right over us. I liked the freedom in the classroom though. I liked the groups that were good, but if you got in a group with a stranger, you were afraid of people and you didn't get anything done. --Boy

Another student suggests that the uses of freedom must be learned as a skill:

There is one basic bug in this course, and that is because the students in this course are used to being told what to do, to being programmed like computers and not to be individualized thinking. Hopefully we will learn and then the basic bug will disappear.  
--Boy

Others found the freedom rewarding:

In this course I did learn certain things by doing them. Our teacher wasn't a big authority. When we wrote about a certain thing she let us really express our feelings, and she also had respect for our opinions. She never butted in and said that you're doing this wrong or that wrong. . . . We didn't even discuss things as we should have done in our group. The kids didn't really talk to each other if they never did before. If they weren't friends then they couldn't be friendly. The tenth graders treated us ninth graders pretty unfair I think. They thought they were running the whole class. . . . This course helped me to grow up just a little bit. I learned to be a little more friendly. --Girl

I will say that how I am and what I appear to others is sometimes different. My teacher through the class was very good. She did let the students say anything they wanted to so they could express themselves.

Discussions were good. I got to know the other kids much better. Thought cards were excellent! I really enjoyed listening to them. It was really fun. The freedom in the room was good too. I don't like to feel all cramped up in a room. So walking around and being in a group made the difference.

On the whole I enjoyed the class. I thought it was very interesting. Hope you write back so I can see how you feel about my opinions. --Girl

If you could spread this course to other schools, you'd have quite a letter writing project, plus,

you'd be creating jobs for the Post Office. Well, anyway, it's an interesting course, with a special kind of freedom to express one's feelings built right into it. --Boy

Students often commented on the opportunity to get to know the teacher better. Here are three examples:

I really liked the letters to the teacher; it's a good way to get to know the teacher and for the teacher to get to know you. The teacher should always have to tell you when she's going to make you read what you wrote. --Girl

I think this course helped me in many ways. In finding myself and my feelings about people and about other things around me. One part I really enjoyed was writing a letter to the teacher every week. It really helped me a lot. --Girl

What was the best thing about the whole ten weeks was the thought cards. It got so good that I ended up looking forward to sharing one thought a week with other people.

Was writing a letter to the teacher your idea too? Well, if it was, it was a great idea. It gave us a chance to get to know her without going right up and talking to her.

I'm not sure whether or not there was too much self-growth involved, but I learned a lot about myself and I learned to express myself through writing.

--Girl

There were many comments about self-knowledge and personal growth. The first one below is especially interesting because it points to the presence of an attitude which does not usually exist in the traditional classroom--the legitimacy of students talking to each other meaningfully:

Actually I thought this course was pretty good. We found out a lot about ourselves and our way of writing. . . . I agree with you and your theories on this program. Especially where the student seating

is concerned. I found that sitting in a circle with my three friends I could communicate to them. But when we would sit in rows I'd feel lost and it was hard to talk to the rest of the kids in the room.

--Girl

The next wondered whether the growth that occurred was in the direction that the program wanted:

Through this course I was supposed to have personal growth. I did. What I am wondering is did I grow in the manner the course was supposed to make me? I am now able to cope with group discussions. When I first came I was uptight about letting my feelings out. . . . Your course is good. Probably the best I've been in.

--Boy

The following comment reflects the need common to many students to have foreknowledge of the purpose of an activity:

For most of this course, I thought some of the activities were useless, kind of dumb, and without a purpose. But, after hearing the goals that are to be accomplished, I can see how some of the activities fit in.

For example, in the blindfolded conversation, you cannot see the facial expressions of the people in your group. You don't know whether the other people accept or reject your ideas, and I tend to think about what I had said and I am more aware of what I am doing.

And in the activity where a group has to make a bridge out of newspaper, the people are more self-conscious of what they say and do because of the observers. Although I was an observer, I could see how some of the bridge-builders are more self-conscious of what they say and do. And I think that these and other activities develop self-awareness and consciousness which obviously reach the goal of personal growth approach to composition. --Boy

Others commented on the value of introspection:

This course may not have helped with my problems directly but it taught me to dig into myself to find the answers. I was one of those people who have trouble looking into myself, but not anymore. This course taught me to look for the answers a little

harder because they are there.

The time we stood on one foot [Ahab Fantasy] taught me to find solutions to problems no one else could answer but myself. --Boy

I think the course was good. The course made you take a look at yourself from the inside. It made you search yourself. Comparing reactions shows the differences between people. Some parts of the course are good--some aren't. But it's a good course.

--Boy

This course really didn't help me very much. It helped me see my values. In other respects it didn't have much effect. When we listed the ten most rewarding experiences, I got a clearer view of my values. This was my favorite activity because it helped me the most. --Boy

For some students the program gave new insights into the attitudes and behavior of others. Here are three comments:

When discussing things it was fun to look back and understand the kids' reasons behind their writing. It was a clear way to see others' points of view. I found that I came in my group to express myself more easily. I don't think it helped me to understand myself except for the one assignment on the boy and his violin. But it helped a great deal in the understanding of others. I don't know if it gave me more self-confidence. I know I now have more self-confidence, but that's probably because of being on Student Council, maturing at home, maturing socially, and it's just an overall thing.

There was almost total freedom in the class which was good. If we went different places it would increase the feeling of freedom. I now feel different about the school. I really can't attribute it to this course, but it might have helped. --Girl

I think that this course helped me socially. I can talk to other people easier now. I can learn from people's reactions to different assignments just what kind of a person they were. If they didn't cooperate, you could judge them what kind of a person they were. This really made me despise some of the kids. There were many ways of judging the people in the class. I

like getting in groups by myself without the teacher's direction as to who goes where. Sometimes I'd get placed in a group of jerks who wouldn't cooperate and so the whole assignment was a waste of time.<sup>5</sup> Everything we had to do was always clear. The freedom in the class helped me grow socially. Our teacher would get us started on an assignment but she'd never do the whole assignment for us. This gave us a sense of responsibility. This course was really worth your while in writing it. You accomplished most of the things you tried to. It made the English class a class I looked forward to going to each day.

--Girl

This course didn't change my views, values, or personality. It brought to light my characteristics which I feel I already know. I'm very stable. It did, although, help me realize that the majority of my generation is unindividualistic, uncreative, extremely social conscious, and very apathetic. It makes me sad to realize these facts. (I am considered odd because of my wild imagination, my individualistic personality, etc., but I would not change any of them. These characteristics make me a person.)

The course helped me to better understand my personal priorities. Perhaps my journal work best reflects my inner self. I am now better able to reveal myself in my writing because I did not have to worry about criticism, about my spelling and grammar, or even about my ideas. It also helped with my reactions with others, because we were able to open up, let our true personalities emerge from the depths of our unconscious being. --Girl

The following two comments are especially important because each reports a newly felt need for a change in the student's own behavior, and the second comment reports significant

---

<sup>5</sup>The reader may wonder whether such a program as this can be good if one of the outcomes is to have participants despise others. Certainly the designers of the program deplore such an outcome. It seems apparent from this and other comments that in some sections insufficient time was devoted to community building--a flaw for which the designers have accepted responsibility and which they are working to correct through a greater emphasis on community building in the revision of the program.

behavioral change as the result of the program:

This course helped me to know who I really am, it brought out feelings I have been hiding inside. It also taught me how to overcome my strong feelings against something and to try to understand both sides.

Yes, this course did help me, it helped me to come out of my shell and explore new and different people. I can now say I have more patience with others who feel different than I do about something. I have also realized that you can't sit back and wait for friends. --Girl

I think this course helped me a lot. I really found out who I was and what I was doing. It made me feel better just to know I can do what I want.

I think writing down our own feelings and things we liked to do helped me a great deal to find out who I was and what I like to do. I like to write down how I feel and what I think. It makes a Better Person out of me.

A few questions were answered. One question about my friends helped a lot, because I found out the kids I hung around with stepped on me so I got out.

--Girl

And finally, below are three comments that speak to the heart of the matter, for it is one of the fundamental principles of this program's approach to personal growth that the classroom be a joy to be in:

I'll tell one thing, it really made the end of every day fun because you just had a chance to think about these questions and write what they mean to you. Some of these questions were hard because you didn't understand them, but once you did you wrote a good reaction. I think it was a great course and really made the term better. --Girl

I would like to say that this course was different. It wasn't like the English classes I've had before. I can honestly say that I always came because I liked to, not because I had to. --Boy

It's a nice course. I wouldn't mind staying here all year round. --Girl

In summary it seems apparent that, while a few students found the class useless and a waste of their time, many commented that some kind of personal growth was taking place as a result of the program. Some students felt a new awareness of themselves, their teachers, other students, and of the existence of group processes. Some focused on issues such as freedom and authority, privacy and openness; others on skills for communication. The degree to which the students felt that they gained from the program seemed to be related to many variables, including their own initial expectations, the degree to which they understood the goals of the program, the degree to which they felt that the goals of the program were important to them, and the skill and understanding of the teacher. And finally, there were some students who actually admitted that they looked forward to the class and enjoyed taking part in the Composition for Personal Growth program.

#### The Ten-Week Required Course

This trial took place in a small boys' boarding school as a replacement for the standard ten-week unit on expository writing. Two of the four seventh grade sections were combined and team-taught by two teachers, one of whom had been to the September training workshop. Each teacher had a copy of the teacher's handbook as did the

head of the department, who helped set up the program and contributed his advice and criticisms. The following findings have been organized from a four-hour de-briefing session with the two teachers and the department head. The debriefing included extensive references to the teachers' anecdotal records. The findings are divided into three sections: problems encountered, changes reported in student attitudes and behaviors, and changes reported in teacher attitudes and behaviors.

The most difficult problems encountered had to do with student expectations. The teachers felt that many of the students were continually trying to push them back into authoritarian roles, roles that they were making a conscious effort to change. Thus while the teachers were encouraging the students to take on more responsibility for their own learning and conduct, the students were trying to force the teachers to impose discipline upon them.

The students complained that they weren't being given enough specific things to learn, and they yearned for some good old grammar rules to memorize or spelling words to learn. They seemed to worry that they were falling behind in the race to acquire knowledge. And there were complaints that they weren't getting their money's worth. None of the students had been exposed to team-teaching, and many felt that they were being cheated by being placed in a class twice the size of their regular



classes. Whenever there was a problem in classroom control (and such problems occurred frequently during the first few weeks), some students would suggest that if only the classes were separated and the folding partition between the two rooms closed, then there would be no acting-out problems. (The teachers described this as being almost a bribe on the part of some students.) The attitude of many of the students seemed to say, "You're the teacher, you tell us what to do." So thoroughly had they been conditioned to give up the initiative for their own learning that they needed to be taught how to take it back.

The other problems were mechanical, though nonetheless real: Each day the partition had to be opened at the beginning of the period and closed at the end. The desks and chairs had to be moved into a circle format and then often broken into smaller group arrangements--all this in a thirty-five minute period. Many activities had just time to get fully started before the bell would ring. In some instances the teachers felt that half an activity was worse than no activity at all.

The teachers noted the following five things as the most important changes that they saw in student behaviors and attitudes during the ten-week program: First, the prejudice of some of the academically more gifted students that they were better and more worthy than the others was broken down. The teachers cited several instances where

they felt that these more gifted students recognized the importance of some of the contributions of less gifted students to small group discussions and to the class as a whole. Second, the less gifted students began to realize that they could say things in class that were valid and important. The teachers reported that these less gifted students began to volunteer more frequently and speak for longer periods during small group and class discussion. Third, many of the students became both more sensitive to others and more aware of group processes. Comments dealing with the process of the discussion as opposed to the content began to appear. For example, one of the teachers remembered overhearing someone say, during one of the small teacherless discussions, "Wait, you've interrupted, John hasn't finished what he was saying." Fourth, there seemed to be a growing ability to use the class meeting effectively. Whereas early meetings were given to complaints and boisterous behavior, class meetings toward the end of the ten-week period became serious discussions, mostly about the progress of the class, the problems encountered, and the possibilities for overcoming problems and making better use of class time.

Finally, the teachers noted several specific instances where students seemed to grasp themselves and become suddenly more responsible for their own behavior and more interested in their own learning. The teachers re-

ported several cases where students came to them on their own time to discuss the style and content of their writings (mostly the voluntary thought cards). Neither teacher could remember an instance when one of his seventh or eighth grade students had come to him with a piece of writing for discussion or advice before this. In another instance a boy who for several weeks had sat on the outside of the circle at class meetings, seemingly taking little part in the discussion or process of the class, moved into the circle and became an active participant. This behavior signaled a distinct change in his attitude toward class and school. The teachers admitted working quietly with this boy in other ways, but they felt that at least some part of his change in attitude and behavior was due to the program.

Here are some other specific instances which the teachers gave as indications of changes in student behaviors and attitudes attributed to the program: Although the thought cards were made optional after the third week, about eighteen of the twenty-three students continued to turn them in each week. Letter writing continued on a voluntary basis throughout the term, and students kept an active bulletin board of responses from Congressmen, state senators, and other public figures including the school's headmaster. "Underground" newspapers began to spring up-- another indication of meaningful messages being sent to

responsive audiences--and the newspaper idea spread to other classes, so that by the end of the term there were student-written, edited, and published papers occurring in the seventh, eighth, and ninth grades. Finally, the teachers reported that the tone of the class meeting on the final day of the course was unlike that of the last day of any other course that the teachers had taught. There seemed to be a general regret among the students that the course was coming to an end and a feeling that the class was just beginning to come together and to know itself.

The teachers reported several changes in their own teaching styles as a result of the program. First, they both felt that they could no longer use the traditional classroom format with rows of student desks facing the teacher's desk and blackboard. Second, they reported that they had begun to enlist student participation in setting goals for their classes and in organizing the classes. Third, they have incorporated many of the activities of the program into their other classes, making use of small group discussions, role-plays, rank-order and forced-choice questions, brainstorming, and thought cards. The teachers spoke of a new awareness of the legitimacy of short expressions, thought cards, lists, "I learned... ." statements, letters and postcards as pieces of composition.

And finally, the teachers felt that they had gained a new understanding of group processes in the classroom.

The teachers also pointed out several changes in their perception of their own role. First, they saw themselves as seeking ways to give back to the student the initiative for his own learning. Second, they felt the need to represent themselves as real people rather than as stereotyped teachers in the classroom. Third, they felt the need to see the students as real people rather than primarily as performers of tasks. Fourth, they no longer perceived themselves as skill trainers, concerned primarily with the narrow goals of spelling, punctuation, vocabulary building, paragraphing, etc. Instead they perceived their task as teachers to be promoting personal growth goals such as those represented by the program.

As a last finding, the teachers reported that not only English teachers but also those teaching history, French, and science have begun to incorporate thought cards, small group discussion, brainstorming, group reports, role-plays, and other activities of the program into their teaching. Of the full-time faculty of twenty-eight, nine teachers are now using copies of Composition for Personal Growth.

#### Teachers' Letters and Comments

One of the most gratifying forms of evaluation has been the letters and comments that my colleagues and I have

been receiving from teachers who have been using the program. Most of the quotations that follow come from unsolicited letters and will be marked (L). A few have been unsolicited spoken comments to this author, and these will be identified as (SC). Finally, there are a few comments that are drawn from the open comment section of a questionnaire which was used to evaluate the effect of training workshops. While the main part of that questionnaire deals with the workshop itself and is thus outside the bounds of this study, some of the open comments report on the actual use of the program in the classroom, and these will be identified as (Q).

The two following comments highlight the joy that the classes have brought to students:

The program itself is fantastic--first week feedback forms are 32 to 3 in favor--the complaint being that it's too personal. 8 kids say it's the best class they've had in high school--hurray for everybody.

--Teacher, public high school  
eastern Mass. (L)

So far "your" comp program has been a whopping success with the 8th grade class experiencing it. Most of the kids feel the activities to be real fun. (So do I.) I've developed writer's cramp from answering "letters to the teacher"--but it's worth it because of the improved relationships--I think--between the kids and me. Anyway, we're all learning--and enjoying this a lot more.

--Teacher, public junior high,  
central Mass. (L)

The following three note growth in the students:

More than anything else, I have found that the general classroom approach suggested by the workshop has helped to improve communication within my classes.

More than ever before the students are talking with each other rather than just answering the teacher's questions.

--English teacher, private boys' boarding school, Conn. (L)

My kids are becoming much more open about their feelings and about expressing feelings about others in the group in a positive way--it's a gradual process, and beautiful to watch!

--Open classroom teacher, ages 8-10, Montreal, Que. (Q)

I appreciate your program more each day. I think I am finally developing a feel for the activities--a sense of how they can be combined, related, expanded. To test the program informally, I departed from the CPG and for about four weeks taught a traditional English unit that I had done successfully about four years ago. The results were nearly disastrous. Although I don't think the CPG Composition for Personal Growth program went off perfectly, the more traditional program really made the students an angry, hostile group. The fragile atmosphere of tolerance and general good will changed. They became destructive--back-biting, rankling, and so forth.

I've returned to the PG activities and in Thursday's meeting we will discuss the two different approaches.

--English teacher, public high school, southern Conn. (L)

Below are two letters in which teachers pass on comments from their students:

I'm so grateful and excited over this program. . . . I have reaction sheets from two senior classes--comments: "discussions we had made us think. Even though you gave the idea, that just got us going and it was just right for promoting discussions and arguments." "We learned through your crazy questionnaires who we are." "I enjoyed all the activities that made us think." "I enjoyed the activities, which made English fun. They gave me a chance to write down what I feel about a particular idea or concept."

--English teacher, public high school, eastern Mass. (Q)

This is the seventh such message I've received since using the personal growth material--I never received

one in the previous eight years:

"Dear Mr. \_\_\_\_\_,

"I want to tell you that I respect you so much. You're feelings you share with everybody. You open yourself up so much and you face the truth. You have helped so many kids, and my friends to see things differently. . . . You have helped me to understand myself. And that everyone feels the same as I do but so few people really show it. And you bring out people's feelings. You've helped me because I can say things differently with people. And because you make me more confident. Because, if you show your feelings in front of the whole class then I can learn to show my feelings to people too. Because people like you for showing your real feelings, not dislike you."

--Teacher, public high school,  
central Conn. (L)

A curriculum coordinator sees the program as stimulating the professional growth of his teachers:

Perhaps one of the most significant values of the approach is to stimulate teachers to look at their own practices and at the composition process in new ways-- and to trigger their imaginations for more creative and enthusiastic teaching.

--English curriculum coordinator,  
public school system, western  
Mass. (L)

And another curriculum coordinator sees in the program a hope for the future:

Anyway--on with Uptaught [Ken Macrorie] and Postman and Weingartner [Teaching as a Subversive Activity] and so on. And now you people. And maybe there will be less need in the future for one of our graduates to write Return of the Son of the Son of the Son of the Son (and so on) of the Student as Nigger [Jerry Farber, The Student as Nigger]. And so it goes. (But you know that.)

--Language arts curriculum co-  
ordinator, K-12, public school  
system, southeastern Mass. (L)

Below are comments from three teachers who classify



themselves as being on the "traditional" end of the continuum:

The strengths of your program reach out toward my classroom weaknesses. . .

--Teacher, independent day school,  
Ohio (Q)

There are so many good ideas and directions in your plan [the Composition for Personal Growth program] that just to keep them in mind has served to make me more flexible in my traditional activities--reminded me that I do--and always have felt that the positive approach, i.e. showing concern and respect for my students, gets the best results--is also the only way I can live with them--with this mutual regard--so thank you for more ways to open ourselves to one another.

--English teacher, public high  
school, eastern Mass. (Q)

I'm finding out how much I have been relying on old-time authoritarian muscle to keep these kids in line and how impossible that muscle is in this kind of a workshop. . . . The best days with the program are those days when I am most relaxed and the kids aren't being bugged by too much me. . . . I'm also discovering how much I have been the central talker in the classroom and how little the kids know about how to proceed without me. . . . However the stuff is great and I'm enjoying what I'm learning about myself as well as what I see the kids learning.

--English teacher, public high  
school, Westchester Co.,  
N. Y. (L)

The following three comments show how the program is spreading from the original workshop participants:

I have at least four people in my department using my red book [Composition for Personal Growth].

--English teacher, public high  
school, Conn. (Q)

I received such IMMENSE success through the program that a number of other teachers have borrowed the red book and are using it. Oh yes. I also let some

interested students use the book and prepare classes on it. These were fantastic.

--English teacher, public high school, eastern Mass. (Q)

I've been asked by my department chairman to present a demonstration at the Middle School Seminar. . . . I'm just ecstatic because now more people will learn about your program and all those fantastic things. Oh joy, joy, joy!

--Sixth grade teacher, public school, eastern Mass. (L)

The two following comments point out the effect of the program on the relationship between the teacher and the students:

I am so gratified by the closeness that has developed between my students and me since I began the thought-sharing ideas. We communicate on a totally different level, I understand them better and am aware of their individual concerns. No longer do I see a sea of faces confronting me. Their attitudes toward the class have become much more positive as have mine.

--Sixth grade teacher, public school, eastern Mass. (Q)

I've been using your ideas in the classroom and both the kids and I are enjoying them tremendously. Thank you. (Learning many wonderful new things about the kids.)

--English teacher, public high school, Vermont (L)

And finally below are the comments of nine teachers who have come to see either themselves or teaching in a new light:

I have gained an entirely new view of teaching. . . .

--Teaching nun, Roman Catholic high school, eastern Mass. (L)

I've been teaching for almost 40 years at all levels from grade 7 to grad students and adults. But I think I'm doing the best work ever now--thanks to a new

attitude, a new philosophy, and new approaches!  
 --Professor, state college,  
 eastern Mass. (L)

You remember the activity we did of which the end result was a poem about moments? Well, I did this exercise with all my classes and got fantastic results. (Have I told you how much your conferences have changed my outlook on teaching English and my performance in the classroom?--both for the better.)

--English teacher, public high school, northern Vermont (L)

The activities I have used have met great response from my students! I feel good about arriving to school with colored paper and tinker toys and feel rewarded after class. Comp. for Personal Growth has brought about some of my most memorable exciting moments in teaching! (Some of my students openly admit English is fun!)

--English teacher, public high school, eastern Mass. (L)

I used your materials and activities for two straight weeks. They revitalized and rejuvenated me and put new energy into the class.

--English teacher, public high school, New Hampshire (SC)

Our brief association with you has already led to good experiences in the classroom and better feelings about ourselves as teachers.

--Husband and wife teaching in boarding school, western Mass. (L)

I just feel good about myself in class--more vital, more a real person--and I know it makes a difference to the kids.

--English teacher, public high school, western Mass. (SC)

Students seem brighter and more caring, and I realize that it's because I am brighter and more caring of them.

--English teacher, boys' boarding school, western Mass. (SC)

The person on whom your Composition for Personal Growth program has had the greatest impact is me. Certain activities have enabled me to learn a great deal about the kids at a deeper level, which I know

is paying off with my being better able to bridge the communication (and generational) gap. I believe I'm more effective in small-group and individualized work. I've had to re-think a great deal of my own values and attitudes and my teaching strategies and techniques--which has been a really good experience.

--English teacher, 8th grade,  
public school, eastern  
Mass. (L)

Of course, these comments are neither representative nor a random sample of all of the teachers who have participated in the workshops. Undoubtedly there are those who have found no value or no success with the program, but I have received no letters from them. (And in any event the designers of the program have never intended that it would or could be satisfactory to everybody.) However, the teachers who have written report a new joy in teaching, a new understanding of students, and, perhaps most important, personal and professional growth.

C H A P T E R V  
ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION

The Eight-Week Controlled Trial

When a very large thermometer is placed in a very small glass of water, the chances are that the thermometer will change the temperature of the water to the extent that the reading will be more a reflection of the temperature of the thermometer itself than that of the water. To measure a minute shift in the temperature of a very small glass of water, a subtle, unobtrusive instrument of delicate precision must be used. Unfortunately the unobtrusive instruments devised for measuring the effects of personal growth education are not precise, and the precise instruments are not subtle. And as we have seen, no less a figure than John Dewey has said that personal growth cannot be measured.<sup>1</sup> Certainly, upon reflection, it was highly naive of this investigator to expect that an intervention of approximately thirty-two hours broken into tiny discontinuous fragments could create a measurable change in attitudes and behavior patterns which had been built over the more than ten thousand hours of a ninth grader's school history. Added to this background, the student con-

---

<sup>1</sup>Silberman, p. 257.

tinues to spend eighty percent of his school day with "business as usual" and its restraining effect on personal growth.

An analysis of the findings of the eight-week controlled trial indicates that student attitudes and behavior patterns are much more stable than the designers of the program had previously supposed. Many high school students seem to have tuned out school to the extent that they are no longer aware of changes in the physical setting. And at least some students may have discounted school to the extent that they are unwilling to allow it to obtrude into their real lives, their lives outside of school.

Here are some of the implications from this trial for the redesign of the program: First, wherever possible personal growth activities should be introduced at an earlier age, and to that end a coordinate program should be developed for younger students.<sup>2</sup> Second, ways must be found to create a supportive atmosphere within the school for personal growth classes so that the effect of the brief time spent in English class is not dissipated and negated by an apathetic or antipathetic environment. Double peri-

---

<sup>2</sup>Persons concerned with the integrated day concepts of primary school education have often voiced concern over the follow-up in the middle elementary and junior high school grades, and the developers of this program see the personal growth approach as one possible line to take.

ods, coordinate English-history or English-science courses, and the use of student and faculty support groups are some examples of ways of creating a more supportive environment. And finally, both students and teachers need a clearer idea of the goals of the program and the reasons for working toward personal growth goals.

### The Ten-Week Elective

While the results of the ten-week elective are not precisely quantifiable, the fact that over half of the students wrote favorable letters of evaluation for the program is viewed as a significant achievement by the investigator, especially in the light of the comment from one of the teachers in the trial to the effect that the students get so little chance to voice an opinion about anything that goes on in school that they are likely to use any opportunity to register a "no" vote, no matter what the question is.

The comments from the letters and postcards indicate the need for several changes in the program: First students were often unaware of the objectives of the program until the teachers read excerpts from the teacher's guide at the end of the course. Certainly there is no reason to withhold the objectives of the program from the students; in fact, since it is the philosophy of the program that the students should have some degree of control over the

direction of the program and the ways in which the objectives are pursued, there seems to be good reason to explain the objectives as fully as possible. To this end a series of mini-lectures or short essays for students on identity, interpersonal relations, values, positive focus, etc., should be developed to outline some of the personal growth objectives.

Second, the need for earlier and more continued emphasis on community building became apparent from the letters and postcards complaining about students' being placed in discussion groups with strangers. Less threatening bridges need to be used before throwing students into groups of total strangers to work on personal growth activities.

Third, teachers need more training in the use of the materials and in the flexibility to introduce other activities to meet student needs. For instance, several students expressed the desire to write short stories, but since this was not mentioned in the teacher's guide, some of the teachers felt constrained to stay with the activities in the guide and therefore missed the opportunity to take advantage of the interests of students. Another case of the need for more teachers training was that of the teacher who tried to conduct the activities of the program using the traditional seating arrangement of rows of desks



facing the teacher and blackboard. This, combined with the practice by this teacher of using grades to enforce discipline, had an extremely depressing effect on discussion.

Fourth, the question of grading the program needs more study and direction. It is apparent that the program is basically antithetical to grading, but it is equally apparent that few of the public schools where the program has been tried are anywhere near to giving up either numerical or letter grades. To this end it might be possible to develop a series of contract forms so that the individual student and teacher could agree on objectives and on the manner of evaluation.

And finally, it is worth considering under what conditions the program might lose so much effectiveness as to be no longer feasible. The compromise with grades is one consideration; others are time, space, and support. In this trial the forty-minute periods were often found to be too short to allow activities to develop to sufficient depth. An additional burden was placed on one of the classes because its forty minute allotment was broken into two twenty-minute sections, divided by a twenty-minute lunch period. It was extremely difficult for the teacher to establish any kind of continuity under those conditions. Another compromising condition was the physical setting. Not only was the school housed in a dreary,

heavy, early twentieth century building, but the chairs in most classrooms were attached to the desks so that close groupings of the small group discussions was impossible because the desks kept the students too far apart for satisfactory conversation.

One final compromising situation to consider is that of support from faculty and staff. The chairman of the English Department threw his whole support behind the program, and the principal seemed basically sympathetic; but the teachers using the program reported some undercutting by their colleagues in other disciplines. Complaints from other teachers ranged from too much noise and movement to the fact that students who had just come from English class seemed restive and unable to sit still and listen attentively for long periods. On the whole, despite these compromises, the program seemed worthwhile to enough of the students and teachers so that it is being repeated this spring and will be expanded next fall. The coordinator of the program is aware of the compromising situations and is working to overcome them.

#### The Ten-Week Required Course

An analysis of the findings of the ten-week required course indicates three main problems that the teachers encountered. First, student expectations form a much more

important part of the effectiveness of the program than the teachers had realized. Much of the first few weeks was spent in trying to justify the program in the light of the traditional expectations of the students. Thus, while they were pleased that there was to be no required homework they were uneasy that they might not be getting their money's worth, or that they would be falling behind in the race to acquire knowledge and therefore lose out at secondary school admission time. The teachers felt that with a foreknowledge of this problem, they would be able to handle it more effectively next year, and next year's students would have expectations conditioned by the experience of their schoolmates this year.

Second, as in the ten-week elective, the physical setting tended to compromise the effectiveness of the program. The thirty-five minute periods were so short that often the activities of the class had barely begun before they were terminated by the bell. The teachers found that in these cases it was futile to try to continue the activities in the next day's class because the immediacy of the activity was lost. In planning for next year the teachers indicated that a double period, seventy minutes, twice a week might be preferable to the five thirty-five minute periods.

Third, ten weeks seemed too long to work on composi-

tion alone, and, in fact, the teachers did introduce some literature into the ten-week course. Next year the teachers intend to further the integration of composition and literature, using personal growth activities in the literature component as well as in the writing component.

The findings also indicate the occurrence of what this investigator has come to see as the greatest strength of the program: the change in teachers' behaviors and attitudes toward using multiple modes of instruction within the classroom and towards seeing students and their classroom selves less as role-players and more as whole persons. The fact that the teachers are using the activities from Composition for Personal Growth in their other classes and the fact that other teachers in both English and other disciplines are using the activities indicate that the effectiveness of the program is not restricted to the composition classroom but is, in fact, producing a change in the larger school. And the fact that the teachers report seeing themselves and their students in a more human light indicates that the Composition for Personal Growth program may be producing personal growth in the teacher as well as in the students.

### Teacher Comments--Conclusion

The most important finding from teachers using the program is this: The teaching of the program seems to produce personal growth in the teachers. This is the meta-change, that second-order change which produces further change. The teachers feel good about themselves, renewed, energized. Their enthusiasm spreads to colleagues and to students and the chain reaction begins.

As of this writing I am aware of two two-week summer workshops and one one-week summer workshop being conducted by teachers who have been using the program this year. In addition, I am aware of five in-service day workshops and three parent demonstrations which have been put on during this year by teachers currently using the program. But numbers are not of first importance. In fact, an uncontrolled chain reaction can produce destruction and waste; it is the controlled chain reaction which produces usable energy. And it is the quality of growth rather than the quantity which will determine the ultimate success of this program. While the teachers in their own comments speak of their personal and professional growth, this growth has not as yet been adequately measured, and it is, perhaps, this task which must be the first undertaking in the further development of the Composition for Personal Growth program.

A P P E N D I C E S

APPENDIX A:  
TEST DATA FROM EIGHT-WEEK CONTROLLED TRIAL

TABLE 1

STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE, SECTION ONE:  
CONTROL, FRIENDSHIP, INTERDEPENDENCE,  
TEACHER INVOLVEMENT, STUDENT INVOLVEMENT,  
VALUES INTO ACTION

Question	Mean Difference: Pre-test minus Post-test <sup>a</sup>		Standard Deviation	
	Exp. <sup>b</sup>	Cont. <sup>c</sup>	Exp.	Cont.
Questions 1, 2, and 3: Self-perception of control over others:				
1. Compared with others in your class, how often can you get others to do what you want them to do? (1) very often (2) often (3) occasionally (4) seldom (5) rarely	0.17	0.06	1.05	1.13

<sup>a</sup>The higher the difference the greater the gain.  
E.g. for Question 1 if the pre-test score were 5 [rarely] and the post-test score were 2 [often], then the difference of 3 would be the gain in self-perception of getting others to do what one wants them to do.

<sup>b</sup>Experimental group--122 cases.

<sup>c</sup>Control group--91 cases.

TABLE 1--Continued

Question	Mean Difference: Pre-test minus Post-test		Standard Deviation	
	Exp.	Cont.	Exp.	Cont.
2. How often are your ideas appreciated and used by others in this class? (1) very often (2) often (3) occasionally (4) seldom (5) rarely	0.40	0.15	1.11	1.06
3. How much influence do you have over the way others in this class think and act? (1) high influence (2) a good deal of influence (3) some influence (4) a little influence (5) almost no influence	0.21	0.26	1.14	1.15
Combined self-perception of control over others (questions 1, 2, and 3):	0.62	0.42	1.69	1.90
Questions 4, 5, and 6: Self-perception of friendship:				
4. How satisfied are you with what others in this class think of you? (1) highly satisfied (2) quite satisfied (3) moderately satisfied (4) a little dissatisfied (5) highly dissatisfied	0.27	0.13	1.00	1.08



TABLE 1--Continued

Question	Mean Difference: Pre-test minus Post-test		Standard Deviation	
	Exp.	Cont.	Exp.	Cont.
5. How satisfied are you with the amount that others in this class care for you? (1) highly satisfied (2) quite satisfied (3) moderately satisfied (4) a little dissatisfied (5) very dissatisfied	0.28	0.13	1.00	1.04
6. How satisfied are you with the number of friends that you have in this class? (1) highly satisfied (2) quite satisfied (3) moderately satisfied (4) a little dissatisfied (5) very dissatisfied	0.19	-0.01	1.17	1.19
Combined self-perception of friendship (questions 4, 5, and 6):	0.47	0.12	1.75	1.67
Questions 7, 8, and 9: Self-perception of interdependence:				
7. To what extent do you and the other members of your class like to work together on school work, with and without the teacher's permission? (1) a great deal (2) quite a bit (3) some (4) a little (5) very little	0.07	0.36	1.58	1.49

TABLE 1--Continued

Question	Mean Difference: Pre-test minus Post-test		Standard Deviation	
	Exp.	Cont.	Exp.	Cont.
8. How often do you and other members of your class do things together outside of school time or telephone each other? (1) quite often (2) often (3) occasionally (4) seldom (5) rarely	0.08	0.00	1.59	1.19
9. To what extent do you think of other students in the class as persons to help and be helped by? (1) a great deal (2) quite a bit (3) some (4) a little (5) very little	0.02	-0.25	1.24	1.11
Combined self-perception of interdependence (questions 7, 8, and 9):	0.10	-0.25	2.25	1.68
Questions 10, 11, and 12: Teacher involvement:				
10. To what degree does the teacher participate in the activities of this class? (1) very high participation (2) high participation (3) moderate participation (4) some participation (5) little participation	-0.17	0.24	0.94	0.98

TABLE 1--Continued

Question	Mean Difference: Pre-test minus Post-test		Standard Deviation	
	Exp.	Cont.	Exp.	Cont.
11. What part of the class time does the teacher spend talking to students? (1) almost all the time (2) a good deal of the time (3) some of the time (4) little of the time (5) almost none of the time	-0.19	0.07	0.89	1.01
12. Considering all the things that you expect to learn in this class, how many of them do you expect to learn from the teacher? <sup>d</sup> (1) most things (2) quite a few of the things (3) some of the things (4) a few of the things (5) almost none of the things	-0.31	-0.25	0.94	1.09
Combined teacher involvement (questions 10, 11, and 12):	-0.50	0.18	1.37	1.55
Questions 13, 14, and 15: Student involvement:				
13. To what degree do students participate in the activity of this class?	0.36	0.28	1.04	0.98

<sup>d</sup>The post-test version of this question reads as follows: "Considering all the things that you have learned in this class, how many of them did you learn from the teacher?"

TABLE 1--Continued

Question	Mean Difference: Pre-test minus Post-test		Standard Deviation	
	Exp.	Cont.	Exp.	Cont.
(1) very high participation				
(2) high participation				
(3) moderate participation				
(4) some participation				
(5) little participation				
14. What part of the class time do the students in this class spend talking to each other?	0.59	0.09	0.95	1.01
(1) almost all of the time				
(2) a good deal of the time				
(3) some of the time				
(4) little of the time				
(5) almost none of the time				
15. Considering all the things that you expect to learn in this class, how many of them do you expect to learn from other students? <sup>e</sup>	0.61	0.20	1.04	1.15
(1) most things				
(2) quite a few of the things				
(3) some of the things				
(4) a few of the things				
(5) almost none of the things				
Combined student involvement (questions 13, 14, and 15):	1.20	0.28	1.56	1.38

<sup>e</sup>The post-test version of this question reads as follows: "Considering all the things that you have learned in this class, how many have you learned from other students?"

TABLE 1--Continued

Question	Mean Difference: Pre-test minus Post-test		Standard Deviation	
	Exp.	Cont.	Exp.	Cont.
Questions 16, 17, and 18: Self-perception of values- into-action:				
16. In general, how often do you speak out about what you believe is morally right and wrong? (1) quite often (2) often (3) occasionally (4) seldom (5) rarely	0.26	0.04	1.17	1.25
17. How often do you communicate in writing to others in and out of the class about what you believe is morally right and wrong? (1) quite often (2) often (3) occasionally (4) seldom (5) rarely	0.49	0.07	1.53	1.44
18. How much of the time do you do what you really believe is right and re- frain from doing what you really believe is wrong? (1) most of the time (2) often (3) occasionally (4) seldom (5) rarely	-0.03	0.01	1.27	1.39

TABLE 1--Continued

Question	Mean Difference: Pre-test minus Post-test		Standard Deviation	
	Exp.	Cont.	Exp.	Cont.
Combined self-perception of values into action (questions 16, 17, and 18):	0.46	0.08	1.93	1.91

TABLE 2  
STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE, SECTION II  
SELF-CONCEPTS

Question: This section consists of twenty adjectives. For each adjective mark space

- (1) if the adjective very often describes you.
- (2) if the adjective often describes you.
- (3) if the adjective occasionally describes you.
- (4) if the adjective seldom describes you.
- (5) if the adjective rarely or never describes you.

Adjective	Mean Difference: Pre-test minus Post-test <sup>a</sup>		Standard Deviation	
	Exp.	Cont.	Exp.	Cont.
1. Friendly	0.04	0.01	0.99	1.26
2. Aggressive <sup>b</sup>	-0.07	-0.55	1.48	1.83
3. Cautious	0.05	0.09	1.61	1.66
4. Self-centered	0.36	0.28	1.64	1.77
5. Confident	-0.04	0.02	1.57	1.27
6. Apathetic	0.42	0.36	1.84	1.95
7. Conscientious	-0.03	0.11	1.67	1.80

<sup>a</sup>The larger the difference the greater the gain:  
E.g. for Question 1 [friendly] if pre-test score were 4 [seldom] and post-test score were 2 [often], the difference of 2 would denote the increase in friendliness as the student perceives himself.

<sup>b</sup>Raw scores on all even items [negative concepts] have been reversed so that all final scores indicate positive self-concepts. I.e. the larger the mean difference on item 2, the less aggressive the student seems to himself at the end of the course in comparison to the time of the pre-test.

TABLE 2--Continued

Adjective	Mean Difference: Pre-test minus Post-test		Standard Deviation	
	Exp.	Cont.	Exp.	Cont.
8. Submissive	0.23	0.18	1.97	1.72
9. Adventurous	-0.08	-0.24	1.64	1.67
10. Bored	-0.28	-0.50	2.01	2.15
11. Dependable	0.06	0.21	1.27	1.77
12. Shy	-0.31	-0.15	2.00	1.76
13. Efficient	0.16	-0.03	1.45	1.54
14. Lazy	-0.12	-0.07	1.70	1.78
15. Energetic	0.07	-0.28	1.48	1.69
16. Dominant	-0.42	-0.24	1.52	1.73
17. Considerate	-0.03	-0.07	1.26	1.76
18. Reckless	-0.49	-0.66	1.52	1.98
19. Enthusiastic	0.03	-0.21	1.35	1.51
20. Argumentative	-0.27	-0.36	2.07	1.69



TABLE 3  
STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE, SECTION III  
EMPATHY

---

Question: Now think of the student who is here in this class today that you know best. (You have already put his name in the answer sheet.) This section contains the same twenty adjectives that you just did in Section II. For each adjective you are to guess what the student that you know best marked:

- (1) if the adjective very often describes him. (He thinks.)
- (2) if the adjective often describes him. (He thinks.)
- (3) if the adjective occasionally describes him. (He thinks.)
- (4) if the adjective seldom describes him. (He thinks.)
- (5) if the adjective rarely or never describes him. (He thinks.)

---

Adjective	Mean Difference: Pre-test minus Post-test <sup>a</sup>		Standard Deviation	
	Exp.	Cont.	Exp.	Cont.
1. Friendly	-0.10	-0.04	0.98	1.04
2. Aggressive	-0.40	0.07	1.16	1.15

---

<sup>a</sup>The absolute difference between the friend's actual score and the subject's estimate was computed for both the pre-test and the post-test. The post-test difference was then subtracted from the pre-test difference to give the gain (or loss) in empathy. E.g. for question 1 friendly if friend's real score on pre-test were 2 and subject's estimate were 4, then pre-test difference would be 2. If friend's real score on post-test were 3 and subject's estimate were 2, then post-test difference would be 1. Pre-test difference (2) minus post-test difference (1) equals a gain in empathy of 1. The higher this difference the greater the gain in ability to empathize.

TABLE 3--Continued

Adjective	Mean Difference: Pre-test minus Post-test		Standard Deviation	
	Exp.	Cont.	Exp.	Cont.
3. Cautious	-0.03	-0.07	1.23	1.22
4. Self-centered	-0.13	-0.03	1.33	1.42
5. Confident	-0.16	-0.06	1.10	1.03
6. Apathetic	-0.23	0.08	1.28	1.30
7. Conscientious	-0.23	-0.25	1.16	1.21
8. Submissive	-0.25	-0.20	1.38	1.28
9. Adventurous	-0.14	-0.10	1.31	1.49
10. Bored	0.03	0.04	1.27	1.26
11. Dependable	0.05	-0.11	1.11	1.29
12. Shy	-0.09	-0.08	1.48	1.54
13. Efficient	-0.02	-0.01	1.08	1.19
14. Lazy	-0.21	-0.19	1.37	1.17
15. Energetic	0.07	0.02	1.11	1.29
16. Dominant	-0.04	-0.08	1.18	1.05
17. Considerate	0.02	-0.10	1.20	1.27
18. Reckless	0.07	-0.21	1.39	1.30
19. Enthusiastic	-0.07	-0.31	1.07	1.25
20. Argumentative	-0.06	-0.33	1.26	1.34

APPENDIX B:  
 TABULATED RESULTS FROM STUDENT EVALUATIONS  
 OF TEN-WEEK ELECTIVE

TABLE 1  
 "BEST" AND "WORST" ACTIVITIES

Activity <sup>a</sup>	No. of Times Mentioned as Best	No. of Times Mentioned as Worst
Thought cards (54-55) <sup>b</sup>	5	1
Family sayings (92)	1	-
20 things I love to do (72)	1	-
Weekly reaction sheets (55-56, a35, a36)	1	5
Favorite things ending in <u>-ing</u> (f16)	1	-
Lemon identification (96)	4	1
Hour diary (58)	1	4
One-way glasses (93)	1	8

<sup>a</sup>This list is comprised only of the activities listed as "best" or "worst" in the students' evaluation letters. It is not a complete list of activities used in the course. It should also be noted that each section of the course functioned independently. Therefore, some of the activities listed were experienced by all classes, some by only one.

<sup>b</sup>Numbers in parentheses after activities are page references to Composition for Personal Growth. Where no page reference is given, the activity is one used in the training workshop but not included in the book.

TABLE 1--Continued

Activity	No. of Times Mentioned as Best	No. of Times Mentioned as Worst
Ahab fantasy (79)	3	11
Boy and violin story (88)	2	4
Fantasy about becoming a different person	1	-
Here and now words in journal (70-71)	1	-
Writing first page in journal	1	-
Journal	2	1
Free writing in journal	1	1
Group writing and performing of play <sup>c</sup>	17	14
Magic box (88)	5	-
Cocoon fantasy (80)	11	1
Happy junk mail (a2)	-	1
Blindfolded conversation (97)	-	1
Self-collage	4	2
Bridge-building with fish- bowling (99)	12	2 <sup>d</sup>

<sup>c</sup>It is clear from the responses that some students enjoyed the composing and disliked the performing aspect of the play, and some felt the reverse. Because of the freedom of the response format, however, it is impossible to separate the two components in any valid way.

<sup>d</sup>One student explained his negative vote here on the grounds that he was assigned as an observer but wanted to build.

TABLE 1--Continued

Activity	No. of Times Mentioned as Best	No. of Times Mentioned as Worst
Blindness fantasy	2	-
Self in twenty years	2	-
Letters to the teacher (56-57)	8	2
Examining arms and hands (96)	-	2
"I am.../The group sees me as..." statements (92-93)	1	-
10 most satisfying experi- ences (a9-a10)	1	-
Writing letters (57, a1-a3)	1	2
Your bedroom fantasy (78-79)	1	-
Ten commandments (a31-a33)	1	25 <sup>e</sup>
Desert island brainstorm (74-75)	8	4
Stranded on island--forced choice (97)	2	-
What to take in case of fire-- forced choice	2	-
Job committees (e.g. class news- paper, bulletin board)	2	1
Small discussion groups	1	-

<sup>e</sup>In at least one class this activity, which involves much sharing of material of a highly personal nature, was experienced in arbitrarily assigned groups at the beginning of the course before any sense of community had been established.

TABLE 2  
SUGGESTED IMPROVEMENTS

Suggestion	No. of Times Mentioned
More time to do the activities	2
More time to express selves freely (in group discussions)	2
More teacher involvement	1
More emphasis on volunteering and the right to pass	1
Have work sheets mimeographed rather than copied from blackboard	1
More special projects	1
Go to different environments (e.g. city, country), sit down and write	1
More writing	3
Less writing	1
More free writing	7
More interesting topics to write about	2
Eliminate writing in journals	1
Get away from writing about ourselves	1
A lot more writing of reactions	1
Eliminate weekly reaction sheet	1
State goals of course at beginning	3
Give reasons for doing particular activities	2
Write short stories	3

TABLE 2--Continued

---

---

Suggestion	No. of Times Mentioned
Eliminate job committees (e.g. class newspaper, bulletin board)	1
More letter writing	1
Writing more to real people	1
Less "you have to do 10" (ideas get silly)	1
More small group discussions with own friends	3
Eliminate arbitrary assignments to small discussion groups	8
More choice by students of activities to participate in	1
Let students give ideas for activities	2

---

---

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Bessell, Harold, and Uvaldo Palomares. Methods in Human Development. San Diego: Human Development Training Institute, 1970.
- Brickell, Henry M. "State Organization for Educational Change," Innovation in Education, ed. Matthew B. Miles. New York: Teachers College Press, 1964. Pp. 493-532.
- DeMott, Benjamin. Supergrow: Essays and Reports on Imagination in America. New York: Dell Publishing Co., Inc., 1970.
- Dixon, John. Growth Through English. Reading, England: National Association for the Teaching of English, 1967.
- Eiseman, Jeffrey. The Deciders. Menlo Park, Calif.: Institute for Staff Development, 1969.
- Erikson, Erik H. Identity--Youth and Crisis. New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1968.
- Fordham, Frieda. An Introduction to Jung's Psychology. Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books, Ltd., 1966.
- Gordon, W. J. J. The Metaphorical Way of Learning and Knowing. Cambridge, Mass.: Porpoise Books, 1971.
- Hayakawa, S. I. Language in Action. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1941.



- Jordan, Daniel C. "The ANISA Model--A New Educational System for Releasing Human Potential," The American Oxonian, LVII (1970). 542-554.
- Miles, Matthew B. "Innovation in Education: Some Generalizations," Innovation in Education, ed. Matthew B. Miles. New York: Teachers College Press, 1964. Pp. 631-662.
- Moffett, James. A Student-Centered Language Arts Curriculum, Grades K-13: A Handbook for Teachers. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1968.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Teaching the Universe of Discourse. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1968.
- Morrison, Samuel Eliot. The Maritime History of Massachusetts: 1783-1860. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1921.
- Muller, Herbert J. The Uses of English. New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston Co., 1967.
- Osborn, Alex F. Applied Imagination: Principles and Procedures of Creative Problem-Solving. Third Revised Edition. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1963.
- Farnes, Sidney J. Creative Behavior Guidebook. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1967.
- Prince, George M. The Practice of Creativity: A Manual for Dynamic Group Problem Solving. New York: Harper & Row, 1970.

- Raths, Louis E., Merrill Harmin, and Sidney B. Simon.  
Values and Teaching: Working with Values in the Classroom. Columbus, Ohio: Charles E. Merrill Publishing Co., 1966.
- Rogers, Everett M. Diffusion of Innovations. New York: The Free Press, 1962.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Guide Lines to Be Used in Educational Change,"  
Mimeographed: University of Massachusetts School of Education, Seminar 833, Summer 1970.
- Schultz, William C. A Three Dimensional Theory of Interpersonal Behavior. New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1960.
- Silberman, Charles E. Crisis in the Classroom: The Remaking of American Education. New York: Vintage Books, 1971.
- Simon, Sidney B., Robert C. Hawley, and David D. Britton.  
Composition for Personal Growth. Amherst, Mass: Simon-Hawley-Britton, 1971.
- Toffler, Alvin. "An Interview with Alvin Toffler," Trend: A Journal of Educational Thought and Action, VII (Spring 1971), 3-4, 27-28.
- Torrance, E. Paul. Encouraging Creativity in the Classroom. Dubuque, Iowa: William C. Brown Company, 1970.
- Wolf, W. C., Jr. Unpublished report. University of Massachusetts, Summer 1970.

Yeomans, Edward. Education for Initiative and Responsibility. Boston: National Association of Independent Schools, 1967.



