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A basic communications curriculum model for collegiate students with marginal and/or varying degrees of learning skills competency.

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A BASIC COMMUNICATIONS CURRICULUM MODEL FOR COLLEGIATE

STUDENTS WITH MARGINAL AND/OR VARYING DEGREES

OF LEARNING SKILLS COMPETENCY

A Dissertation

By

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fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

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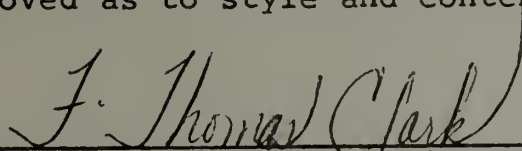
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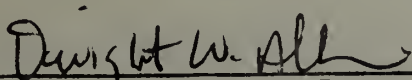
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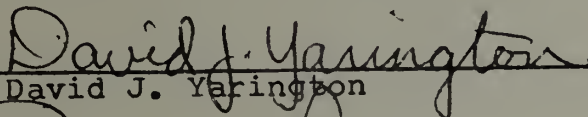
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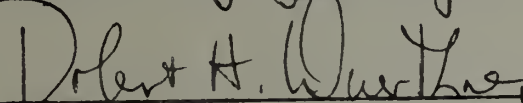
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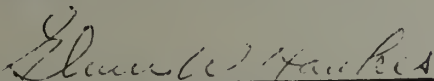
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Dedication

The product of an education is the person. A dissertation is only one fractional part of the educational process. This book in no way represents the total effort involved in completing a doctoral degree.

Rather than dedicating only this effort, I want to dedicate my entire doctoral program, the years of learning experiences, of personal growth and development, to two very important persons without whom I quite literally would never have been able to do this:

To

Marti and David Yarrington

though each a very distinct and individual person, each believed in me when I didn't.

"The teacher gives not so much of his knowledge, but of his faith and his lovingness."

Gibran

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ABSTRACT

This study proposes a curriculum design which accurately meets the learning needs of those minority students in higher education whose previous academic experience, due primarily to institutional racism, lacks adequate instruction. As a result, their competency level in basic communications skills is marginal. The model provides an understanding of the academic plight of this student clientele, as well as a combination of theory, attitudes, methods and organization which work in unison to facilitate improvement in reading comprehension, grammatical usage, expository writing and study skills, i.e., a developmental program for those skills prerequisite for survival and success at the college level.

The model is employed by first assessing the learning needs and characteristics of the clientele and to develop from these educational needs a composite program of skills acquisition which meets these needs head-on. The six component parts of the curriculum model are: 1) diagnosis of learning needs; 2) prescription of learning strategies to meet needs ascertained; 3) performance-based criteria; 4) as much individualized instruction as necessary; 5) use of specific learning methods for the implementation of the model; and, 6) flexibility in the degree to which the component parts of the model are utilized to meet individual learning needs.

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INTRODUCTION
BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

My interest in communications skills, especially with regard to college preparation, began over ten years ago when, as an undergraduate, I majored in English and minored in education for the specific purpose of teaching English at the secondary level. After three and one half years of teaching in the United States, I joined the Peace Corps in 1966, training in language and TESL at Columbia University, and taught in Kenya, East Africa for two years. On my return to the United States I received a fellowship from the U. S. Office of Education to complete my master's degree in education in the English for the Disadvantaged Program.

During my work for the master's degree I became involved in the Committee for the Education of Black Students (CCEBS), the program for all minority students at the University of Massachusetts. For the past four years I have been teaching freshman courses in Rhetoric for the CCEBS Program. The Rhetoric courses are the equivalent of the basic English Composition course; however, the difference in the CCEBS Program being that it begins with the student's level of skills competency and has no more than ten students per course section. I helped design these courses which emphasize improvement in reading comprehension and basic writing skills. I have also written and taught a study skills course for CCEBS. Besides my teaching, a year ago I became a staff member of CCEBS in the position of the Coordinator of the Skills Component. In this capacity I designed, implemented

and administered a summer program for in-coming marginal students.

Primarily, my interest has been in facilitating learning in a program which is established after students' needs are assessed. At CCEBS I was involved in creating learning experiences which meet student needs with positive learning experiences using specifically designed and clearly delineated objectives. Implicit here is the process of diagnosis and performance-based criteria. It seems to me that performances may be broken up into educationally "digestible" blocks in order for the student to proceed at his own rate. This method ensures that success will be programmed to counteract the usual dosage of negative academic experiences which may be prevalent. Students, then, do not proceed to the next performance until there is demonstrable proof that they have acquired a specific skill. The emphasis is to move in the direction of individualized instruction, which is possible if classes are small enough and the instructor is also a diagnostician. In short, what I have learned and what I now strongly advocate is that, if education is to be at all efficacious, it must be individual and prescriptive.

In 1972, the Director of CCEBS, Dr. Lawrence Johnson, Ph.D., was named President of Roxbury Community College, a new two-year institution and an attempt on the part of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to reach minority students. Knowing my work at CCEBS, Dr. Johnson wanted me to work on a consultant basis to devise and construct a viable curriculum for the Communications Skills Component of Roxbury Community College. The curriculum was to be a model for the anticipated clientele of the college, viz., those minority

college students with marginal skills and/or varying degrees of communications skills competency, usually as a result of an educationally disadvantaged background.

What follows here, then, is not a dissertation in the usual sense. As stated in the first chapter, there are very few studies concerning or involving minority students at the collegiate level; hence, it has been impossible to base the dissertation on scholarly investigations. This is most unusual. The dissertation's most unusual characteristic is that the design for the curriculum and the needs assessment and rationale upon which it is based are results of four years of observations and instruction of CCEBS students at the University of Massachusetts.

Therefore, this work is not attempting to be a dissertation in the traditional, scholarly sense of the word. As there is little scholarship on the subject, this would be impossible. At the same time, it is very serious and important work. It would seem to be the obligation of those in higher education to meet the needs of those who are the unfortunate victims of a disadvantaged education, and particularly the educational needs of those persons in the minority communities who desire academic advancement. It would also seem, under these more arduous circumstances, with the lack of precedent-setting models and scholarship, that it indeed constitutes a most worthy task for the doctoral candidate. It seems to me that if the candidate himself, with his repertoire of educational expertise, is the true product of the university, he should be capable of analyzing a situation and devising a means to meet educational needs. This work is an attempt

to meet such urgently felt educational needs.

CHAPTER-BY-CHAPTER SYNOPSIS

Chapter I: Statement of the problem. The first chapter pre-
cisely defines the nature of the problem. In general, the problem is
to determine exactly how to facilitate the acquisition of communications
skills for those minority group college students who, due primarily
to a previously disadvantaged education, possess only marginal skills
ability and/or varying degrees of skills competency. Many of these
students have been observed to have normal intelligence and intellect-
ual capacity. It would seem that the problem is not to be found in
the students themselves, but in their previous environment and/or
academic experience. An important distinction is made: It is not
the student who is disadvantaged but his previous education. In
general, it is the lack of competent instruction in his previous
education coupled with the environment of racism with its concommitant
poverty of environment, which are the causes of problems for many
students.

Discussion is presented concerning an investigation into the
literature found in the area concerned. Mention is made of the great
fund of literature on communications skills for collegiate students.
However, it is emphasized that there is next to nothing written for
or about minority college students in the communications skills area.
Again, much has been written about the so-called "educationally dis-
advantaged student;" yet, very little has been written for or concerning
these students at the collegiate level, except to note that their lack

of skills ability was an indication of their disadvantaged condition.

With the advent of open admissions, with the great number of emerging community colleges, with the wider population of students to be reached, a new approach to communications skills must now become a part of the college curriculum. The basic communications skills of reading comprehension, expository writing, facility in spoken language, English as a Second Language, and study skills must now be a part of the initial curriculum for all entering freshman college students who have need of increasing their facility in any or all of these areas. The need is known. The population is there. The mandate is clear. However, if these communications skills curricula are to be effective, they must meet student needs. To facilitate the acquisition of skills, the program must be based on the assessed educational needs of the specific educational population it seeks to assist. In the case of those college students with marginal skills the curriculum design for communications skills must be an antidote to the causes of their being educationally disadvantaged. In addition the curriculum must also be flexible in order to meet the needs of individuals.

It is obvious that the place of skills in the college curriculum is most important. They are the sine qua non prerequisites for learning in higher education. It is with these tools and their utilization that the minority student will be able to have the freedom to choose what kind of life he is to lead. The skills-tools will provide an opportunity for him to extricate himself from the confines of poverty, or the results thereof, and provide him with the employment and vocation which he desires.

Chapter 2: Characteristics of the clientele. The second chapter presents the specific characteristics of the clientele for whom this curriculum model is designed. These characteristics are taken from observations rather than from studies, of which there are very few regarding minority college students and communication skills. In general this chapter describes these minority college students whose communications skills are minimal and whose educational background is frequently disadvantaged. Evidences of the problems which these students frequently, but not always, must face are listed. Common behaviors which are sometimes exhibited by students in this category are catalogued as well as analysis and interpretation of some of these behaviors. This chapter is presented with a view toward a further understanding of these students and their problems. Difficulties such as frequent previous academic failures and the fact that too many students from an educationally disadvantaged background have not had the opportunity to produce knowledge are discussed. The absence of positive reinforcement is noted as well as other obvious problems frequently observed of students, who, through no fault of their own, find themselves to be victims, and, therefore, deficient in skills. The student's psychological state and his typically high anxiety rate are also discussed.

The major idea behind this chapter is to enable the reader to recognize, know, and, as a result, understand the plight of students in this predicament. If facilitators understand the students they are better equipped to provide learning experiences for them. A successful curriculum cannot be created to facilitate communications skills without knowledge of the student clientele.

Chapter 3: The model communications skills curriculum. Chapter

Three explains the curriculum design which meets the educational needs

discussed at length in Chapter Two. The basis of the curriculum model

is the needs assessment. The curriculum attempts to put together

components parts which, when all work together, combine to meet the

assessed educational needs of these specific students.

The curriculum presented is directive in that, due to the notice-

able lack of direction in the earlier education of this student

clientele, a firm regimen and framework are sometimes needed. Direction

is necessary for the student's security: A program which has structure

which he can see will give him the feeling that he is in college. The

structure and the regimenting are also necessary for skills acquisition.

This is a six part model. No one part is effectively operant

without the other component parts. It is the instructor in his prime

role as facilitator-diagnostician who decides the degree to which each

student's individualized program utilizes each of the functioning parts.

For example, some students may work better on their own with less direc-

tion or structure than may be needed by other students. The idea is

for the professional staff to learn student needs and learning styles,

and, to utilize the six component parts to the degree deemed necessary

for optimum performance for each student and thereby to meet individual

learning needs.

The model attempts to meet the educational needs of the clientele

in the following six ways:

1. diagnosis

2. prescriptive education

3. performanced-based criteria

4. a direction toward individualized instruction

5. specifically designed learning strategies

6. flexibility in implementation of the design

It is emphasized that this is only a model, that is, it is not a panacea; nor does it pretend to have all of the answers. It is one approach which may be employed if it fits the needs of a particular clientele in a particular situation at a given time.

The design begins with diagnosis. The rationale behind this is that it is impossible to prepare learning experiences for students whose learning needs are not as yet manifest or known to the facilitator. Diagnosis also provides for homogeneous grouping in which individual needs may be more exactly met.

Before course work begins, students will not only be diagnosed for their academic strengths and weaknesses, but they will meet for personal interviews with both the academic and personal counselors in order to work out a mutually agreeable and more highly individualized program of study. The concerted effort of the professional staff facilitates learning activities, exercises and experiences which are as individualized as possible. Not only is the content individualized so that student is not required to re-learn what he may already know, but the learning experiences are designed so they may be adapted to the student's learning style. In a sense then, the learning experiences which follow the initial diagnosis and the counseling interviews would be prescribed. If learning experiences are to be most effective, they must be both individual and prescriptive.

In addition to these component parts working together, the curriculum is performance-based. Performance-based criteria are utilized primarily because of the nature of skills. Skills are, by definition, something which is done, performed, accomplished. Once the student can perform, once there is demonstrable proof that he can do a particular skill, he then moves on to the next prescribed step in his individualized program.

Various learning strategies, involving all of the component parts of the curriculum model, are suggested for possible use by the facilitator. (More learning strategies are mentioned in the descriptions of the course workings in Chapter IV and Appendix I.)

One of the most important parts of the curriculum design is the flexibility in implementing the component parts of the curriculum. Obviously, if individual needs are to be met, the same degrees, strengths, and amounts of structure will be different for each student. The curriculum design offered here should provide for all of these learning needs. Within the framework of this model, it should be possible to accommodate varying learning styles, learning rates, and individual programs of study as well as group work. It is here that the instructor in his important role of facilitator-diagnostician meets student educational needs by sitting down with each student and mapping out a viable plan of action, utilizing the component parts of the curriculum model to the exact extent and degree necessary for that particular student. Flexibility means that the other five component parts are proportioned and modified to meet individual student needs.

Chapter 4: <u>Organization of the developmental skills curriculum</u>
<u>model</u>. The purpose of this chapter is two-fold. The first part
demonstrates the process or method by which the component parts of
the communications skills curriculum model is implemented within the
overall framework of the total course of study. Emphasis is placed
on the inter-relatedness of the component parts of the communications
curriculum with the total college curriculum. This is achieved pri-
marily through the coordinated effort of the administrative, instruc-
tional, counseling, and support staff.

The second part of the chapter describes the organization of the
skills curriculum. The student selection process is discussed as well
as the process by which the curriculum is delivered: Lab periods,
tutorials, and the various skills courses, their content and sequencing.

Chapter 5: <u>Summary and discussion</u>. This work first analyzes
the plight of minority group college students who possess only mar-
ginal or varying degrees of communications skills ability. It is
observed that, in general, this condition is the result of racism in
the United States, with its concommitant poverty of environment and,
more specifically, that manifested in inadequate instruction. An
effort is made to understand and define the predicament in which these
students are so often victims. The specific educational needs are
explored. It is on these specifically delineated educational needs
that a communications skills model is constructed. The primary aim of
the six-part model is to accurately meet head-on the educational needs
of this particular student clientele. Not only are the educational

needs and objectives presented, but also practical suggestions are offered in the form of the organizational set-up, the implementation of the skills curriculum, the various courses, and other strategies for the facilitation of skills. Both theoretical and practical considerations are designed to provide a vehicle for positive learning experiences to meet specific learning needs.

Appendix I. In Appendix I, the writing course is written out at length. It is explained in detail precisely how the various component parts of the curriculum are put into effect within a course structure. Included are suggested strategies for use in the courses in skills facilitation.

Appendix II. Appendix II contains the content divisions for the Study Skills Course together with a study skills list of trouble areas. A brief description of a logic course follows. At the end, there is a list of recommended texts; 1) for the various skills areas; 2) for faculty reading and 3) for possible works worth noting.

C H A P T E R I

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Investigation into the literature concerning the student from an educationally disadvantaged background indicates that a great deal has been written on the subject. Many studies naturally center on the elementary and secondary levels of formal educational institutions in the United States. In general, each of the studies lists and categorizes the myriad ills which plague the students who have fallen victim to the vagaries of a disadvantaged academic background. It is, of course, well known that a great number of students from an educationally disadvantaged background[1] are members of racial minority groups. These students are predominately from the large, urban ghettos in America. A careful examination of the body of scholarship on the disadvantaged indicates that, in general, it is not the student himself who is disadvantaged, but his previous academic experiences which are found wanting. It may be the case in a number of instances that, concomitant with the lack of adequate instruction, there may be socio-economic conditions so unfavorable as to contribute greatly to the individual's educational problems. However, in any case, it is important to note that the learning problems faced by the students from such a background are generally from causes extraneous to the individual and indicate nothing about his innate intelligence, ability, or talent.

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[1]Fantini, Mario D., and Weinstein, Gerald. The Disadvantaged: Challenge To Education. Harper and Row, New York: 1968, p. 6.

One of the most frequently cited evidences distinguishing the student from an educationally disadvantaged background is the inadequate degree of communications skills competency for an individual of his chronological age, or years in formal academic training. It seems to be characteristic of the student from an educationally disadvantaged background that his learning skills experience is limited. The general consensus then, as well as the logical conclusion, is that it is highly unlikely that such a student will reach the college level.

Perhaps because the greater majority of students with an educationally disadvantaged background from minority groups in the United States do not go on to the college level, few studies indicate any involvement or mention of minority students at that level. In fact, there seem to be precious few studies of minority students at the level of higher education in any area, other than psychological studies. And, it is obvious that in researching the literature in the area of communications skills, there is a great amount written about skills in general and even about skills for those college students from educationally disadvantaged backgrounds. However, once again, in the literature concerning basic learning skills, there is nothing written concerning the specific educational needs of the minority student. The closest the literature comes to uniting the two elements of minority students and communications skills is to note the limited skills experience of such students at every level of formal education as one of the indices for determining if a student's previous academic experience is to be considered "educationally disadvantaged." In short, there are no useful studies which involve communications skills with college

level minority students. As William Moore, Jr., wrote in the only
book which deals in part with communications skills for minority
students, Against the Odds: "I am unaware of a single source reporting
the preparation of teachers for the educationally disadvantaged students
at the college level."[2] It seems that there are no studies in curri-
culum for skills or any other educational area for the benefit of
college minority students.

It would seem to be logical that if one of the most fundamental
educational needs of minority college students from an educationally
disadvantaged background is competency with communications skills, then
studies need to be done and compensatory programs at the college level
need to be developed and implemented. Some progress is being made in
this area with the advent of open admissions policies, of offering the
benefits of higher education to a wider population. Naturally it would
appear to be a concomitant feature of the more encompassing admissions
standards to provide developmental programs for this particular student
clientele.

Thus far, very few attempts have been made to design curricula
to facilitate learning skills competency for minority college students.
Few institutions have addressed themselves to the educational needs
of this student group in the form of viable programs which render an
educational service. Since most of the students are victims of the

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[2]Moore, William, Jr. Against the Odds. Tossey-Bass, Inc.,
San Francisco: 1970, p. 70.

public school system in the United States, it would seem that the government, under the aegis of the state higher education facilities, would be the first to attempt to rectify the situation.

This present work is a suggested curriculum design to meet the communications skills needs of minority college students. This model represents a means, a combination of means and methods, specifically appropriate for the particular clientele: The college-level minority students, who, as a result of the disadvantages of negative academic experiences, demonstrate only limited communications skills ability and/or varying degrees of learning skills competency. The curriculum design will be based on the assessed learning needs of those students who have already been observed, and it will be implemented in such a way as to meet these same educational needs. The model attempts to include the positive antidotes to the assessed needs ennumerated at length in Chapter II. The model exists as an exact response to the specific problems of skills learning manifest by this student population. Any model which hopes to be effective cannot, under any circumstances, simply ignore the educational needs or the factors which influence those assessed needs. The problems which caused a normally intelligent youth to end up, after years of formal education, without the necessary communications skills competency will still be present. These causes, if they remain present, will continue to have their effect. They will not merely go away nor will they take care of themselves. Therefore, while the curriculum must address itself to the facilitation of skills learning for this group of college students, it cannot help but also address itself to the causes, the source of

the problems. No curriculum no matter how many so-called "teaching machines," scanning machines, innovative lesson plans, or dynamic presentations, will be effective unless it addresses itself to the causes and sources of the previously disadvantaged education.

This curriculum model should be seen as a flexible guide. Because of the nature of the curriculum, the fact that it involves individual students and myriad individual differences, the model must be flexible. In this sense it is a guide; it is intended as a direction to a professional and well-trained staff. This staff, in its day-to-day involvement with the students, will change the curriculum model as student learning needs require. This model is not to be viewed as a panacea, but rather as a suggested core, a program which can be built upon and bent. This very important student-centered approach will increase the likelihood that individual differences will be included in the method of facilitating skills learning. This in turn will boost the probability that they will read and write better. The essential qualities of a curriculum must of course be present. The staff must be highly competent communications skills instructors who are non-racist. They must have the drive and temperament to work with developmental classes for those students who need them. The attitudinal aspect of staff implementation of the curriculum cannot be emphasized enough. Their attitude toward their students must be positive; they must not have racist or negative attitudes and they should be willing to learn from their students in order to work satisfactorily with and for them.

The place of skills specifically in the community college curriculum

is that of the core, the basis of the entire educational effort.
Communications skills are the learning tools upon which everything is
built. They are prerequisites to Twentieth Century living. Skills
are not content or factual learning. Skills, by their nature involve
doing, an action. Hopefully, a facility in skills will bring more
participation in a wider variety of life's activities. Skills will
most certainly help in the tasks of problem-solving, not only for
academic work, but, also, for negotiating life. Skills should serve
as the basis for providing each person an opportunity to advance to
the fullest, to maximize his capabilities. For example, if students
learn the process of analysis when studying literature, they will be
in a better position, hopefully, to analyze their own lives and any
circumstances in which they may find themselves. In effect, skills
should enable students to learn whatever they wish to learn, even to
the extent of assisting them in deciding what type of person they wish
to be.

This curriculum model is not education in a vacuum, but a response
to the specific needs of a particular student population. Because
of racial hatred in the United States, no minority person has escaped
suffering, suffering for which there exists no mere words. American
racism has taken its toll and had its psychological effect on each
and every minority person unfortunate enough to live in the United
States. For the majority of this population, it would seem to make
them stronger psychically and socially in their own communities; but,
after the observation which has been done, it is a wonder that all
minority persons in this country are not insane because of the

persecution which they endure daily. It is truly a monument to them
that they remain as psychically "together" as they are. The forces
which unjustly oppress them are forces from without. This must be
seen and recognized. Because these forces are influences upon the very
person, and learning involves the person, how then can a model for
learning ignore the influences upon, and the causes of such a powerful
determinant? Most hideously, the minority communities in the United
States suffer from poverty. In essence, poverty is a prison, a lack
of freedom. One's life is determined. There are few choices. Most
of the determining factors in the life of a person imprisoned by
poverty are from forces from without. A learning model which responds
to real life, to genuine human needs cannot ignore the problems of
the learners it seeks to assist. The skills training which the student
receives will provide him with an education which will give him choices:
The degree of learning he desires or the employment he wants. He
should end up with the freedom to choose. These very real exigencies
cannot be ignored by anyone who is seeking to facilitate learning
experiences for persons from minority communities. To do so would be
to ignore the persons themselves. Any program of learning experiences,
if it is to be efficacious, must be both individual and prescriptive.
The individual and his personal struggle are too intimately involved
to be ignored.

A curriculum, is, by its very nature, an operation which effects
learning as its goal. It is an operation; it is an on-going active
process and cannot exist merely on paper or in a book. The actual
process involves the interaction between the professional facilitator

and the learner. This is the real curriculum. A book which contains
the curriculum design is merely the recipe that gives direction to the
whole effort. It may be a reference, a resource, the background to
the total end-product, i.e., the learning, skilled person. The book
may be a viable beginning, a means of uniting the faculty in a con-
certed effort. It may serve as a base for the effort of facilitating
learning, but it can be no less than all of this. Each learner is
distinct, and each learning situation is different. Everyone nods
their heads in agreement to those two facts, but few seem to <u>act</u> on
them.

In short, the curriculum may offer information, suggestions, a
viable student-centered approach to the learning needs of a particular
clientele, but, it is primarily up to the professionally trained,
experienced instructors, using their own repertoire of experiences
and techniques, to pick out the right combinations for the needs of
a particular person in a given learning situation.

C H A P T E R I I

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE CLIENTELE

Introduction

With regard to any educational model, it would seem logical from the outset to delineate exactly for whom the model is intended. However, it is amazing that, in practice, too many educators endeavor to provide a set or sequence of learning experiences prior to their knowing the educational needs of their students. A common practice at the level of higher education is for a professor to design and write his course months in advance of his first meeting with his students. There is nothing wrong with planning; however, the evidence in practice seems to point to courses being written and, afterwards, students being fitted to the course. Implicit here is the mental set of expectations which the facilitor possesses about his future students. What if the expectations the instructor has of his future students are far and away above the students' capabilities? What happens then?

It would seem obvious that in facilitating learning experiences for students, the existing level of attainment of the students must not only be taken into consideration, it must also be the only point of departure. Where else, then, could one begin? Unfortunately, what seems most obvious is not at all the case in practice. It would seem that very few institutions of learning take this fact into consideration. Most unfortunately, this seems particularly true at the level of higher education. Next, it would seem doubly obvious that it is nearly impossible to create a series of learning experiences for one or

a group of students who are as yet unknown. By the very nature of the act of facilitating learning for someone else, the "someone else" is implied. Or, to view it another way: Knowing the particular needs and learning style of an individual greatly enhances the likelihood that a more efficacious modus operandi will be found to facilitate the individual's learning. It is finally coming to the fore that facilitating a learning experience for someone else is what "teaching" is. The emphasis hopefully will swing from "teaching something" to helping someone learn. The emphasis is on learning. And if the emphasis is on the student's learning rather than the "teacher's teaching," then what great change is involved? The greatest demonstrable change seems to be in the person of the learner.

Somehow, in the past, again particularly in the area of higher education, the primary emphasis in teaching has been on the course content. It would seem that a more effective philosophy would be a combination of the content with the learning style of the learners. First, the point of departure must be from the learners' present level of attainment. Second, the learning style of the students must be studied and considered in any action plan. It is from a professional study of not only the content but also the learners that the educational needs of the students will be manifest. If the content is presented in such a way that it agrees or matches with students' learning style, and it is not over their heads; then, obviously, the effectiveness of the effort will be increased. More learning will take place as a result.

With regard to establishing a skills curriculum, it is even more

important to know the learners. This is because of the nature of skills, which will be discussed at length later. Let it suffice for now that courses in learning skills and the communications skills are not, by their very nature, content subjects, whereas history, literature, or philosophy may be considered content courses because they are based on the student's knowledge of a body of material at the end of a course. In a strict sense, very little of skills courses would be concerned with factual knowledge. By definition skills are something which one _does_, as opposed to that which one knows. For example, one may know from books all there is to know about how to fly an airplane and yet be unable to fly one. Because reading comprehension skills, listening, writing, or study skills, are something which a person does, then there is little content in such a course. All the more reason in skills courses for the professional facilitator to know his learners and how they learn. If, in fact, they are going to learn to _do_ something, _they_ must be taken into great consideration.

Now, if a curriculum for skills development should not be established without some knowledge of the learners, what do we know about the person of a student in higher education whose previous education is disadvantaged, who comes from a minority group in a white-dominated, racist country, who, as a result, has only limited learning skills?

What follows are some of the characteristic traits of students from minority groups who possess only marginal skills, or varying degrees of learning skills competency. It is most interesting to note, first of all, that although this study relates to work with and for minority students, these characteristics are by no means limited

only to minority students. On the contrary, it would seem that these characteristics are found among many students up and down the socio-economic spectrum. The characteristics of minority students who have as yet only marginal communications skills will be recognized as applicable to the many students of every race and background now entering colleges across the U.S.A.

Definition of the Clientele

What is the definition of the student with only marginal skills? Before the characteristics of this student can be discussed, it is important, first of all, to define who this particular client is. The student admitted to a college or university with only marginal skills is a person who usually possesses innate intellectual capabilities; but, for a variety of reasons which will be discussed, has not been provided with the academic background of his peers. Primary among those items lacking in these students is an academic background which provided success. This is perhaps one of the most common denominators among college students with marginal skills. In their previous academic experience, success was not a factor which was programmed or built in to reinforce learning. Hence, very little positive pro-duction followed. Without occasional success, a human being is little inclined to produce anything.

> The terms high risk, marginal, educationally disadvantaged, academically unsuccessful, and the like are used interchangeably to specify students whose erratic high school records, economic plight, unimpressive standardized test scores, and race/culture/ class distinctions, succeed in placing them at a disadvantage in contention with the vast majority of students applying for entry into college. The students appear to have little prognosis for success. Yet, many of them possess those intangible qualities

of creativity, personality, and tenacity which counteract the customary indicators of academic prowess.[3]

In defining who these students are, particularly minority students who happen to fall into this category, it is important to realize that it is not the student who is "disadvantaged;" it is not the student who is "marginal." It is the student's previous academic experiences which were "disadvantaged," not the person or the innate qualities of the individual. If the student is not "marginal," then possibly neither is his potential as a student "marginal." It has been found that often his skills attainment is marginal due to his previously limited academic past, where racism, economics, or other reasons have left the student with few communications skills. It should be immediately pointed out that most of the reasons why any student arrives at college with only limited learning skills ability are found outside of the individual student's control. In fact, it would seem that the student's responsibility is nil, compared to the apparently overwhelming effect of his prior formal "education." Unfortunately, this prior experience is evidenced from working with minority students and there are no studies available regarding skills and their lack among minority college students. Therefore, it is a mis-nomer to speak of a "disadvantaged student" when in fact it is not the student at all who is disadvantaged, but rather his formal education which is disadvantaged. Hopefully, the characteristics mentioned below will reinforce this conclusion.

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[3] Ibid. p. 5.

Hence, as well as the type of reinforcement and the environment, it is the learning experiences in which he was nurtured which have combined to create the minority college student with only marginal skills. It has been seen in the work which some institutions are attempting that students in this category are quite as capable of learning within the academic system of the secondary and collegiate levels as they are of negotiating the perils of the streets of the American ghetto. In fact, there is a great amount of intelligence, not to mention ingenuity, in evidence in the manner in which these particular students negotiate their personal lives.

It would also seem that this category of student would be quite capable of learning if properly and professionally understood. It would seem that it is the inherent duty of those who call themselves professional educators to take into consideration more than merely the content they wish to promulgate. All too many who call themselves educators, particularly those in higher education, are too often heard bemoaning the intellectual caliber of a student. The medical doctor certainly does not berate his patient for having a broken bone. He is a professional, and he accepts the situation and the persons in it and does his best to facilitate health, given the circumstances. Just as the doctor of medicine nourishes health, so the instructor, if he is truly professional, seeks to understand his students and their background in order to more effectively facilitate learning.

Evidence of the Problem

Now that there exists a general idea of who the clientele is in this category of students with marginal skills, the evidence of

the problem will assist in further defining who these students are,
and, hopefully, further delineate their particular learning needs.
Again, it is to be reiterated that these are general qualities often
or frequently found among minority students with marginal skills
experience. It would be unlikely to find all of these characteristics
in one person and certainly not to the same degree. What follows are
merely general evidences of the problem of minority college students
with disadvantaged educational backgrounds.

Frequent academic failure. One of the most notable evidences
of a student in this category is the high incidence of frequent
academic failures. It would seem that to many of these students,
the primary lesson learned in their previous schooling was failure.
Although the teachers may have thought they were merely teaching
lessons, what they were teaching in behavioral terms is failure. In
other words, they were not attempting to program successful learning
experiences for their pupils. It is most important to note that not
only the slow learner or the student whose native intelligence is not
that high are the victims of this absence of built-in success, but also
other students who for many reasons incur a teacher's disfavor are
considered failures.

The lack of achievement or success in the academic past creates
a multitude of problems, some of which will be discussed below. And,
as will be seen, many of the characteristics are frequently interrelated.

Production of knowledge. It would also seem that all too fre-
quently students with marginal skills lack another very important
aspect of a positive academic background: They have not produced.

Probably due to negative experience, the vicious circle of the failure syndrome, the student has not had the opportunity to succeed at gaining any knowledge. Gradually, over the years, he begins to believe what he is taught by all of his academic failures: He is inferior as a student. Concomitantly, because the positive impetus of the learning experience is not part of his academic life, he never masters a body of knowledge. He never feels the pride in accomplishment of academic achievement. Worse still, he does not know the thrill of discovering for himself. It is a sad commentary on our academic institutions that so many matriculate through them without having benefitted from positive experience into which has programmed the educational objective of having each student know the positive thrill of discovery for himself.

Motivation. Consequently, and particularly as a direct result of the student's frequent academic failures and the absence of the thrill of discovery, he becomes unmotivated or "turned off." It should be noted that the reaction of giving up under the circumstances described is only an intelligent and rational conclusion. Every person in his daily life depends to some degree on the feedback he receives from other people. In this way an individual measures his particular skills and abilities. He learns that he is considered good at some things and not-so-good at others. If the student is taught by teachers that he is not a good student, that he is an academic failure, it is only a matter of time before the student begins to believe it. After all, he reasons, are these not professional people, who know what they are about, who have experience? It is all the more horrifying when a student is taught failure because of a racist attitude of

the teachers. A child in his early years of schooling is vulnerable and is no match for an adult.

Intelligently enough, the student is not eager to try, lest, of course, he fail yet again. The human psyche is able to endure only so much negative reinforcement. The individual begins to protect himself against consistent failure. By not participating, there is no possibility of failure. The individual redirects his motivation to an endeavor in which he can succeed. He becomes a sportsman, an automobile buff, a hustler, a man of the street, a criminal, or an addict. Each psyche will protect itself. It is necessary for each person to feel that he is accepted in some arena of the human endeavor. It has been seen in so many cases that physical and psychological poverty of environment and negative reinforcement received in academic institutions are very direct causes of what is termed "lack of motivation" in the academic realm. In most cases, it would seem that the students who are "academically unmotivated" merely learned the lesson they were taught.

If the learned failure syndrome attacks the psyche to such a degree that the individual cannot endure or cope with it, a neurosis begins. In the journey of the mind toward neurosis there are typical demonstrations or reactions of those who are trapped as a result of the frequent failures. There are the seemingly unpredictable outbursts of rage, usually over some apparently inconsequential matter--- the proverbial straw which breaks the camel's back. Flailing out at anything or anyone; the accompanying measure of disorientation with life around the individual, not knowing where to turn, or what to do,

but not feeling a part of, for example, what is going on in school are also typical. Frequently, as the individual withdraws from his life as a student, he begins to ease into a world of his own. For example, a student's whole life may be automobiles or guns. Lastly, a most telling trait; there are no heroes, although it would seem that most young people, particularly young adults at the secondary and collegiate levels, would have need of emulating models at this stage in their development. Sometimes, however, the individual cannot emerge from his withdrawal long enough to see the world and find a hero. In a racist society where would a minority person find a hero? When all of the experiences of a minority person are added up and weighed, it is truly a wonder, that most are not driven completely mad by the consistently hostile and vicious "society" of the United States of America.

Communications skills deficiency. It naturally follows that a student who is a victim of negative reinforcement and frequent academic failures, compounded by the injustice of racism and the frustrations thereof, will be found to be deficient in learning skills when and if he arrives at the college level. It is not at all unusual for students who have suffered through the thoroughly explained and widely accepted descriptions of compulsory miseducation, to be deficient in the communications skills area. These skills usually include reading comprehension, expository writing, listening, spelling, usage, punctuation, and speech. Any individual suffering through years of programmed failure is likely to be deficient in any or all of these areas. In most cases, however, because students usually possess normal intelligence

or above, they grasp ideas well enough, but have difficulty express-
ing themselves adequately. A compounding problem is the fact that one
particular student may have varying degrees of competency in many of
the skills areas. His reading level may be equivalent, for example,
to fourth grade yet his ability to communicate orally may rank at
secondary level standards; yet, his writing ability may measure lower
on a standard scale than his reading. This is one of the most diffi-
cult problems with which to deal in facilitating learning experiences
for such an individual, not to mention a group of individuals in this
circumstance. Characteristically, each college student with marginal
skills usually possesses varying degrees of skills competency.

Learning rate. Although intelligence among marginal students is
usually around the norm, there is a high incidence of persons whose
rate of learning is slower than average. So many people in education
seem ignorant of the fact that the rate at which a person learns has
little or nothing at all to do with their intelligence. Even if some
obeisance is given this concept, few classroom instructors act upon
it. Usually this educational concept is couched in general terms
which state that not all students learn at the same rate. Most
instructors would agree, march into their classrooms, and make a
presentation or teach a lesson from which it is clearly assumed all
or most students will benefit! The teacher agrees intellectually
with the learning rate concept, but does not act on it. Hence, many
students at the primary and secondary levels, who do not learn at
the same rate as most of their classmates are labeled "slow;" but,
in this case, slow meaning unintelligent. Somehow in our "society"

speed is of the utmost importance. Those who learn more slowly are left out.

Efficient study. Since the college student with marginal skills probably did not seek success in the academic realm and since he is quite likely to have given up years ago, he usually does not know how to study very efficiently. This, of course, is mainly because he has not actually attempted to study due to the fear of failure. Consequently, primarily because of lack of use, the student quite often manifests symptoms of poor memory and/or poor concentration.

Changes in life-style. Another observable characteristic of the student with marginal skills regards the subject of change. Frequently, the individual has experienced few changes in his life or life style. Many students in this category apparently grow up in the same geographical area and seldom travel outside of it. Hence, the students who tend not to succeed academically often desire the same life style of their peers. Usually the individual desires "success" in terms of acceptance into this peer group, according to the limited, parochial norms and mores of the peer group. It is not uncommon to find individuals endeavoring to sustain themselves within these confines where they maintain the values of the status quo of their immediate environment. This is natural. However, at the same time, it would seem to limit a desire for other varied or outside experiences. This lack of interest in the outside world definitely effects the students' willingness to learn, or, more basically, effects his preparedness to cope with change. Again it must be pointed out that his parochial attitude is usually reinforced by negative academic

experiences. It would seem that the primary or secondary school would

be the place wherein an individual would come into contact with the

outside world through the study of other peoples, cultures, values,

and ideas. However, if the student is taught, via negative learning

experiences, to reject the school, then there will be few positive,

broadening learning experiences he received there. It would seem that

the educational institution is the cause of further isolation and

narrow parochialism.

Outside stimuli. If the students' environment is narrow and

parochial, and in particular, if it is a remote rural area or a city

ghetto, it may be assumed that the amount of outside stimuli will be

minimal. Homes tend not to have newspapers or magazines. They

usually have only the T.V. or radio. There are almost never any books.

Hence, students have little occasion to see people, including family

or friends, sitting and reading. The renowned teacher, Mrs. Bette

Duffy Fiorillo, when asked what type of reading program she would

devise for the early grades, wisely suggested that there be a com-

fortable, carpeted room with easy chairs in the school, so that senior

citizens or anyone, could come in, sit comfortably and read. If the

youngsters saw these adults actually enjoying reading, observed

Mrs. Fiorillo, it would do more good than all the programs and teach-

ing machines. Usually, as children, students described above were seldom

or never read to by adults. Obviously then, reading as sheer enjoyment

is almost unknown to most college age students with marginal skills.

Students actually prefer reading comics and attending popular films,

which is quite often the only stimuli from the outside they receive.

Behaviors Exhibited

Introduction. What are some of the observable behaviors fre-
quently exhibited by college level students who possess marginal
and/or varying degrees of communications skills competency? The
following is a series of behaviors which may indicate to the facili-
tator that a student, particular a minority student, has been caught
up in the syndrome described in the previous pages. Again it must
be reiterated that these behaviors are usually the result of the ill
effects of prior negative academic, social, and economic factors con-
trolling the student's life, and, most importantly, it is almost
always the case that the student has had little or no control of these
aspects of his previous life. In short, professionals must realize
that the students who act out such behaviors are, almost inevitably,
victims in some sense. It takes a most professional person to remain
cool and collected in the face of some very emotive and volatile
acting-out. It is especially important for white instructors to
understand minority student behavior, to learn from them what it means,
why it is there, and from whence it comes. Frequently the behaviors
exhibited by minority college students are the antithesis of what
obedient, mild-mannered, white, middle-class, WASP people are brought
up with. In the face of these behaviors it is easy to become upset,
excited, and respond with repression. It would seem that if a student
is exhibiting a behavior, especially if it includes strong emotional
feeling, the first thing which should occur to the professional is
the question "Why?" Why is this student acting in this manner? What
is the student endeavoring to have the facilitator understand? What

is the student attempting to teach? This would be the unflappable and more thoughtful attitude of the professional. A student who manifests the evidences of a disadvantaged education, for example, is not going to walk in the classroom and trust any instructor immediately. The minority student could not be intelligently expected to trust or relate in any way to a white instructor immediately. Although it is racist for whites to discriminate against minority people, it is only intelligent for minority persons to be mistrustful of whites. It is a caution in view of the white dominance of the society and economy of the country. Whites have been the enemy for more than 300 years! It is only intelligent to hate the enemy until the individual white proves that he is trying not to be racist. White instructors too often become upset over behaviors which they think are "reverse racism." It is up to the truly professional educator to "read" and to analyze behavior to ascertain what it means.

Class contributions. One behavior-indicator of the problem which students with marginal skills exhibit is that they tend not to contribute during class sessions. It is usually rare for such a student to actually volunteer a comment. An indicator that the student may have communications skills problems is that he responds only when called upon to do so. His reluctance is obviously due to the fact that, he lacks the skills with which to communicate. He will prove particularly reluctant if he has been out of practice for years, due to one or a number of possible reasons previously mentioned. And, if the student is from the minority community and in a classroom situation with a majority of educationally "advantaged" white students,

he will be more reluctant to speak up. He does not wish to be em-
barrassed by fear of using incorrect grammar in such a circumstance.
As a consequence, this student will be quiet and keep to himself. He
tends to feel intimidated by the inadequacy of his lack of prior
education, particularly in the communications skills area.

Attitude toward academia. It is not at all surprising that many
of the students in this category exhibit behaviors which indicate that
they hate school. This, of course, includes a healthy hatred of the
institutions of learning, as well as the teachers, books and courses,
which go along with the institution. It must be known and realized
by the person who attempts to deal effectively and professionally
with these students that this positive hatred of learning institutions
is a learned behavior. Somewhere along the line in his "academic
career," the student must have been taught to hate academia.

"Negotiating the system." Another frequently exhibited behavior
is great facility in "negotiating the system," that is maneuvering
around rules and directions. Since the student has long since been
pushed out of the academic arena, he demonstrates that he is agile,
facile, and intelligent in another area. Most minority students are
quite adept at negotiating life in the ghetto, especially the dangerous
life of "the street." This expertise carries over into the academic
institution where a student will prove ingenious at disruption and
creative at extricating himself from work or obligations. Of course,
any professional will see in this behavior a positive indication of
intelligence.

Evidence of intelligence will often be found in the fact that a

student is unusually knowledgeable and capable in some non-academic area. This knowledge is, of course, indicative of an interest which an observant professional will be quick to capitalize on.

Relationship with authority. Due to the previous academic milieu in which the student with marginal skills, particularly those from minority groups, was brought up, he usually exhibits behaviors which demonstrate a poor relationship with authority. The "enemies" in the past have been the teachers and the administrators. Again, this is to be recognized as learned and understandable behavior. The negative learning experiences, together with the concomitant failure syndrome adds up to a resulting alienation which is real and felt. In effect, these minority students have been given an inferiority complex by persons in positions of authority and then cast out. For example, the mathematics teacher who berates students publicly for not knowing the correct answer to a problem is not teaching much math. What he is most assuredly doing is teaching students to hate school, hate teachers, and, in this case, hate mathematics.

Personal Characteristics and Behaviors

Academic anxiety. The student with only marginal skills, or with lesser degrees of skills competency in some areas, will come to the institution of higher learning with a high degree of anxiety. This is particularly true of those who come from an educational background which is disadvantaged. The anxiety must not be swept under the carpet. If it manifests itself, it must be seen for what it is. Particularly, the symptoms and results of the anxiety must be seen for what

they are: The fact that a highly anxious person will be easily dis-
tracted, whether in class or trying to study privately; he will mani-
fest high test anxiety; and he will, in general, tend to manifest
symptoms of the pre-college failure syndrome, that is, the fear of
failing at anything academic. Also, he fears not being able to succeed
or accomplish as, to date, he usually has not received any type of
reinforcement for an academic accomplishment.

Because the individual student described in these terms is so
thwarted in his academic efforts, he tends to seek his success in
other areas, as has been mentioned. He will try his luck at sports
or hustling or drugs. He will affect being worldly wise, aloof, or a
"big man." It should be noted that, since one can endure only so
much failure, he is attempting to solve his own problems, in these
behaviors, he is endeavoring to function as an adult.

Frustration level. Yet, because of the compounding of all of
these symptoms and circumstances, the student is usually highly frus-
trated. The lack of success and the absence of reward force him to
give up. He tends to be embarrassed by the failure syndrome. The
pressure is primarily parental and societal, and it is intense. At
the same time, in the face of all of this, the student tries to hold
great expectations for himself, of a career and life-style, which often
exceed any real assessment of his qualifications. Hence, in his
appearance, he will sometimes attempt to dress expensively on the
assumption that if you can't be a success, then you can appear to be
a success. For minority students this seems, partly, to be evidence
of being a victim of a consumer society in the materialism of white,
Western culture.

Long range goals. The student with marginal skills is so unsure of his future that he tends to live merely for today. It would seem he fears that if he sticks his neck out, he will fail again. He tends to take problems as they come without realistic planning for the future. He does not seem to really believe that he can succeed. So, usually, he tries not to think about it; but, it would seem he does think about it a lot, which increases his anxiety. The student frequently endeavors to cover up in front of others. Often, such students have been seen to hide behind apathy and cynacism, or by just trying to appear blase.

Minority student problems. If the student is Black or from the Spanish-speaking community, all of the above mentioned problems are compounded. The minority student will have studied "Whitey" and will be well schooled in how to deal with a white-dominated, racist society. Again, this particular body of knowledge, as well as the know-how and its implementation in surviving in the streets, is indicative of intelligence. The student with few academic skills will, therefore, be reluctant to commit himself academically; he will be more reticent; he will trust less easily; and he will be unlikely to request any help with his world. This is doubly true for the student who is from the minority community.

Self-consciousness. Because of his feelings of inadequacy, particularly in the college atmosphere, the student with marginal skills will tend to be very self-conscious. He will often hide what he truly thinks and feels not only because he is in a new situation as an incoming freshman, but also because of the numerous reasons given above. He has been made into a person who is usually extremely sensitive and wary.

On the other hand, his personal behavior may be thought to be bizarre if he is, occasionally, inexplicably outspoken. Perhaps, in this instance he is over-compensating for his feelings of inadequacy. In line with this he may try on various roles or affectations, usually in an effort to cope with his total situation.

Concomitant with all of these possible circumstances and syndromes, the student who has come through much of what has been described almost always abhors phoniness. He can sense a phoney person almost immediately, and will usually manifest acute feelings of hatred. Also, he usually does not confide in anyone except his closest friends.

Learning style. It must be noted from casual observation, since there are no studies, that most college students with marginal skills, or varying degrees of communications skills competence, usually utilize only one learning style. That is to say, when the student is actually learning, in other words, when he is teaching himself, he has no repertoire of learning methods. Most students at the collegiate level, whose prior education is not disadvantaged, have been trained to employ various learning methods suitable for different occasions and purposes and useful with particular materials and with the various disciplines and subject matters. The student from the educationally disadvantaged background usually has difficulty adjusting to varying learning situations, materials, and subjects which necessitate a repertoire of learning techniques. This seems most frequently the case with those students who "gave up" striving within the academic sphere at an early age. As a result, they were never taught and have never had an occasion to implement such learning methods.

Obviously, the victim of a disadvantaged education will manifest poor study habits when he arrives at college level. His attention span will be shorter than most due to lack of practice with his intellectual faculties. His powers of concentration regarding academic learning will also be poor from lack of consistent use as well as from the absence of high teacher expectation. Concentration, it is to be noted, increases when practiced.

Due to a combination of some or all of these traits, the student with marginal skills does not usually complete what he begins. As the series of failures of the past loom large on his psychic horizon, as the pressure mounts, as time runs out and his feelings of inadequacy run high, he tends to quit because he is easily overwhelmed. Therefore, there is seldom that all-important feeling of satisfaction.

All of this, then, is almost guaranteed to ensure that his academic performance will be poor. In defense against this mounting sea of inadequacy, the student may tend to adopt a role of casual indifference, or some other psychological stance to compensate for his impending defeat.

Summary

In the event that an attempt is made to create an effective model for the facilitation of communications skills for the minority student at the college level, the historical, social, economic, psychological, and educational problems mentioned in this chapter must, absolutely, have an intrinsic influence on the design. The model cannot be efficacious if it deals only or merely with learning or communications

skills. If a design model is going to be effective it must rest firmly on the foundation of meeting the students' educational needs. Because of the involvement with human beings, it is imperative that their learning needs be assessed and the design of the model respond exactly and precisely to those needs. The psychological element cannot be ignored. This is particularly the case with regard to the facilitation of learning experiences for those persons who are the victims of the racism and discrimination so prevalent in the United States today. On the contrary, if the model attempts to specifically respond to each need, on every level, not only will the likelihood of learning academic skills be enhanced, but also the individual, with positive reinforcement, will be better prepared on all levels to face a hostile environment. The model must address itself and respond to all needs.

C H A P T E R   I I I

THE COMMUNICATIONS SKILLS CURRICULUM MODEL

Introduction

The goal in education of facilitating the emergence of the self-
actualizing person,[3] that is, as A. Maslow advocates, the individual
with the capability at every level--psychically, socially, and academ-
ically, who is able to maintain the freedom of control of his own life,
would seem to be the right of every man in the world today. In
industrial Twentieth Century America, the task before a person who is
endeavoring to put all of his capacities to work for himself is thwarted
if he does not possess even the basic learning tools, the communica-
tions skills. If he cannot comprehend what he reads; if he cannot
speak his mind; if he cannot express himself accurately on paper; if
he does not know how to research information he needs; if he cannot
make clear, logical judgements; if he cannot reason clearly, how then
will he continually grow to the fullness of his capability? With the
basic learning tools, the communications skills, it would seem the
individuals' chances for continual growth toward self-actualization
in Maslow's terms would be immeasurably enhanced.

It has been shown that in the United States of America, members
of minority groups have consistently been denied access to the benefits

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[3]Maslow, Abraham. <u>Toward a Psychology of Being</u>. Van Nostrand,
New York, 1968.

of learning. Frequently minority students of normal intelligence have endured years of compulsory mis-education and, primarily due to the rampant racism in the United States, they have emerged from their years of schooling without the competency in the basic communications skills required in American society, not only or merely for success, but also for survival.

In order to rectify this problem it has finally been realized in some pockets of conscience in higher education that the colleges and universities have an obligation. With this realization and even with some action on the part of a few, has come the obvious conclusion that in any attempt to serve those minority college students with only marginal skills, the educational needs of this particular group must be met. There is no denying that young minority students are seeking entry to college. They are serious. They hope to make the education they receive work for them and their respective communities.

The question remains: How may the educational needs of those minority college students with marginal skills from an academically disadvantaged background be met?

The Model: Overview

The primary objective of this curriculum model is to maintain a viable means to effectively meet the educational needs of those college minority students who possess only marginal communications skills competency. The purpose of the model is to attain a means of responding to the needs of those college minority students whose previous educational background is seen to be disadvantaged.

One of the most noticeable items lacking in the learning experience of minority college students is communications skills competency. It would seem to be the key to further attainment, academic and otherwise. The problem, then, is how to best provide genuine communications skills competency for this particular clientele.

To provide skills competency, it is essential that the model respond to clearly observed educational needs. It is most emphatic in that it is at this precise point that there is a divergence in philosophy from the mass of higher education. Rather than the subject-content of a particular course being the point of departure, the model is designed to be flexible and to bend to meet the learning needs of this student clientele.

The educational needs enumerated in Chapter II, by their very nature and by the deliterious effects of their causes, must be met at every level. (See chart next page.) The series of academic failures so prevalent among the educationally disadvantaged must be considered by the component parts of the model. It must be kept in mind that students from such an educational background often have not had the opportunity to produce knowledge. The model must respond to this need. If the student has seen a past history of academic frustration, the curriculum design must take this frustration into account. If students are from diverse backgrounds and cultures, the model must include them and answer their learning needs. Neither can the model ignore those students who are understandably "turned off" and unmotivated. If it so happens that some of the student clientele learn more slowly than others, this too must be taken into consideration. And,

Table 1

List of General Educational Needs

The following is a list of educational needs covering every level and aspect of life related to or effecting academics. These needs are frequently manifest in college students with marginal skills and/or varying degrees of skills instruction:

Students need:

an opportunity to produce

self-confidence

self-discipline

positive reinforcement

to succeed academically

reduced academic anxiety

to know how to deal with frustration

personal success and the inner security it brings

to adopt an individual learning style, with flexible alternatives

a frame of reference

to be secure in his world (with the academic world supporting him,
     not tearing him down)

motivation

skills as learning tools

study habits

to know how to study

to have someone trust him

Table 1 (cont'd)

to contribute to the common good

to feel personal worth

self-knowledge

counseling

direction

instruction

to like learning and to see its value.

lastly, the complicating factor of varying degrees of skills exper-
ience and competency, where students having varying levels of skills
ability in different communications areas, must be included in a model's
design. All of the mitigating factors in the student's total develop-
ment as a person must be addressed by the curriculum.

Clearly then, the causes of the student's learning problems must
be met squarely by the model. This is so even if the curriculum is
concerned specifically with communications skills since the causes
of the problems which effect skill performance must be clearly
addressed. In other words, it would be rather naive to think that
educators could address themselves to the issue of the various com-
munications skills and not also address factors which directly effect
skills acquisition.

The model must address itself to the provision of a series of
academic successes in order to restore any lack in self-esteem or
confidence, academic and otherwise. These factors have a great bear-
ing on skills learning. The model must be built to provide positive
reinforcement and support in order to counter-act the negative academic
experiences of the past. The production of knowledge must also be an
integral part of the model's facilitation for the student. Viable
means, methods and strategies must provide students with the prere-
quisite tools of study, learning, and research. It is clear from the
great problems which students from a disadvantaged educational back-
ground face, that the individual's personal motivation must be followed
up at each step of the way. Through all of the means and modes of
operation of the model, there must be facilitated for the student a

reduction in anxiety and an increase in self-esteem and overall self-confidence.

In order for the educational needs of the student to be met and, simultaneously, for the communications skills to be facilitated, the model bases its operation on a unique combination of factors designed to respond flexibly and viably to this dual goal. It is designed not only to facilitate the acquisition of communications skills; but, also, at the same time, in the very procedure and process of facilitating skills learning, to facilitate skills according to a manner which will respond to all of these aforementioned educational needs. This is the unique property of this particular skills model. It attempts to equip a particular clientele with skills ability; yet, in so doing, by the strategies and methods of the very facilitation of this skills learning, it simultaneously responds to reversing the deliterious effects of the individual's disadvantaged education. It also has the advantage of recognizing and taking into account the fact that each and every minority student from a disadvantaged educational background is a different, distinct, individual human being. Also, as should be obvious, not every student will manifest symptoms of the educational disadvantages enumerated. The model's design contains unique properties which enable all of these variables to be considered and dealt with as effectively and as expeditiously as possible.

How then is all of this to be effected by only one model design? Of obvious necessity the design must have component parts in order to meet various needs, and, simultaneously, to facilitate skills learning.

There are six essential component parts which are discussed in detail later in the chapter. They are:

1. diagnosis

2. prescriptive education

3. performance-based criteria

4. a direction toward individualized instruction

5. specific learning strategies for implementation of the model

6. flexibility in implementation of the design.

Each of these six essential elements work together to the extent necessary to meet the educational needs of the individual learner. It is most important to emphasize that all of these five elements are integral parts of a working unit. Although they may not necessarily be involved to the same degree in the case of each student, they are all present in the overall functioning of the model. In fact, they are so integrally connected that they _must_ all be present in order for the curriculum design to be effective.

<p align="center">The Method</p>

Needs assessment and diagnosis. The first consideration given each student when he enters the college is that his individual needs must be known and assessed in order to effectively plan his learning experiences. The more accurately his educational needs are assessed the greater the likelihood that his learning will be more efficacious. The diagnostician administers the pre-tests, the instruments of measure designed to ascertain each individual's exact skills ability. The academic counselor learns about the student's previous educational

experiences, his academic past, his future plans, and his expectations and aspirations in the college. The personal counselor will endeavor to learn about the student's attitudes, particularly his attitude toward formal education, and any pressing personal or mitigating problems which might affect the student's academic performance.

When the academic counselor, in consultation with the personal counselor and the diagnostician, has placed the student in various courses, the facilitator's first task will be to continue the diagnosis, particularly within the first month of the semester, to further ascertain the student's precise educational needs within the confines of the particular discipline of the course.

From this extensive diagnosis, all the facilitators consult with the diagnostician, the personal and academic counselors, and the Director of the Skills Program to make certain that the student is, in each of his course sections and categories, homogenously grouped and personally placed for the learning experiences he needs. This meeting is repeated at the end of the first month in order to make any required changes. Students who demonstrate greatly improved ability may be easily moved to more challenging sections of the same course.

Prescription. Once the individual's needs are thoroughly diagnosed, a process which never ceases as the facilitator's role includes that of diagnostician, the facilitator begins the second step of the process. In consultation with the diagnostician, he begins to prescribe the series of precisely delineated learning experiences and influences necessary for each student. Each student will have his own style or styles of learning diagnosed. The facilitator will strive to

provide learning experiences which will, at the outset, fit the indi-
vidual's learning style. Later, as the individual progresses, he
should develop a flexible repertoire of learning styles for varying
purposes and situations. The effort on the part of the facilitator
will be to provide the exact remedy in the right amount or to the
precise extent. If the student is not given more than he can accom-
plish, he will have a built-in success. The facilitator will deliber-
ately have designed and planned the learning experiences to produce
an academic success along with skills learning. The method of pre-
scription ensures that positive reinforcement will be built into the
individual program for each student. As has been observed, if educa-
tion, particularly skills education, is going to be relevant and
effective, it must be individual and prescriptive.

Instruction. If the students are in small class groups of no
more than 10 or 12, this means that individualized instruction does
not exist in the strictest sense. In the curriculum design then,
there is a direction toward individualized instruction. Within the
context of the small class, and particularly in the lab sessions, the
facilitator-diagnostician will endeavor to meet as closely as possible
the actual individual learning needs of each student. For example, as
described in the section on the writing courses in Appendix I, it
is possible to have 10 students in a course and 10 different writing
objectives for each.

Performance criteria. It is implied through this method that the
various skills to be learned are clearly delineated for each student.
By the very nature of skills as something which one does or accomplishes,
for the purpose of this curriculum design they will not be considered

learned until there is demonstrable proof. For example, it is one thing, in facilitating the learning of study skills, to make presentations about the various methods of note-taking. Simply because the various methods have been explained does not in any way ensure that the student is _able_ to take notes. He may _know_ more about note-taking than he did previously, perhaps even enough to pass a test on note-taking, but that he himself is in any way proficient at taking notes is not ensured. The facilitator of skills must be certain that his students demonstrate skills competency. He may tape some lectures given by the students' instructors in other disciplines and have the students practice note-taking from these lectures or from books, until the students actually perform this skill adequately. By the very nature of skills, any skills curriculum must be performanced-based. If the skills are clearly listed as educational objectives, and there are activities which will ensure that the student will be able to practice in the performance of the objectives, then the student will be able to build a performance-based skills repertoire. Once the student demonstrably proves that he can perform a skill, he moves on to the next performance objective.

Learning strategies. Lastly, there are the strategies which the experienced facilitators will utilize in facilitating the curriculum. Besides diagnosis, the individual and prescriptive routes, and the performance-based criteria, there exists the repertoire of methods and learning strategies used by the experienced skills facilitator.

Most importantly, the model attempts to begin to meet the student at his present level of communications skills competency. It does not

attempt to meet him at the mythical "college" level or any level other than that diagnosed as his own. It is hoped that the courses the student will be taking simultaneously in math, science and the humanities will also attempt to meet him at his demonstrated level of experience or competence and will provide him with the positive reinforcement of built-in academic successes. It would seem irrational to utilize any other point of departure in an attempt to provide meaningful learning experiences.

Implementation

Introduction. In order to more accurately place students according to their degree of experience in the various subject areas, and according to their manifest educational needs, the skills course listings, the descriptions of the skills courses, their categories, and sequencing will be found in Chapter IV. Those which are suggested for credit and non-credit, as well as those which are prerequisites and required courses are listed accordingly.

Most of the courses in the Communications Skills Program will meet 3 hours per week, with an additional 2 hours of lab. In this way, the students will feel that they are in college, having class only 3 times per week; however, on the other two days they will have lab sessions, which ensure that skills students have practice each day, five days per week. As has been noted, learning skills are done or performed, and daily practice is of the utmost importance in skills learning. It is the primary purpose of the class session to furnish the student with presentations and with direction in course work. It

is the function of the lab, discussed at length further, to provide a
facilitator-supervised session in which the student, then and there,
attempts to accomplish and practice what was presented in previous
classes. Hopefully, the lab sessions will be in a room other than the
one used for skills class in order for the student to distinguish
between class and lab.

The courses in English as a Second Language will meet five times
per week as a class. By the nature of the subject and by the intense
need of non-native speakers to master English as expeditiously as
possible, this will be necessary in order for these students to
negotiate courses in other disciplines. E.S.L. students will be
provided with a language lab 5 days per week. Simultaneously, they
may take courses such as math in their own language in cases where
it does not matter in what language the material is learned as long
as the terms are also taught in English.

It is well known that learning about skills and then endeavoring
to inculcate them is a very time-consuming business. It must be
emphasized that it takes _time_ to inculcate skills. Most of all, skills
acquisition requires practice.

According to this model, the student should not have to waste
time relearning skills at which he is already accomplished. The
curriculum should be suitable for meeting his learning needs at his
exact level of skills experience. At the same time, with the diagnosis
and his personal learning style known by the facilitator, he should be
able to begin to work immediately at his own rate. With the built-in
success factor, his motivation should increase, thus moving towards

irradicating any previous negative academic experiences. Almost immediately, the student should have the feeling that he is in college and that this is a place which is going to serve him, to meet his educational needs.

Of course, facilitators as well as the personal and academic counselors will oversee each student and his progress. In serious cases, where a student does not seem to be improving or benefitting from the skills curriculum, it will be the facilitators' and counselors' duty to point out that the college level is just about the last chance a student has to gather the skills prerequisite for success and survival in an industrialized country in the 20th centruy.

Recommendations. It is recommended very strongly that in a search for admissions, older, more mature students be admitted. Those persons who have the capacity to do college-level work, and who have several years in the proverbial "school of hard knocks," have been observed to make more highly motivated and successful students.

In the initial years of the institution's growth, the tone will irrevocably be set for years to come. If a serious no-nonsense college atmosphere is desired, the recommended procedure is to accept serious, older, more mature students first. Particular reference should be made to veterans and to persons who are already out working and striving for themselves. They know something of life and hopefully they have learned the importance of an education. By striving on their own they have exhibited the best credential possible for gaining admittance to the college: Self-motivation. Students of this calibre are more likely to ensure that the college does not gain a

reputation for being just another glorified high school.

With the opening of a new college and a new purpose and mission comes the once in a lifetime opportunity to do it right--the first time. The Skills Component of the college must have direction and continuity. With time, it should be changed. But, at the outset, there should be no confusion exhibited by the college or the staff.

Even if it requires three years for some students to matriculate, primary emphasis should not be on the quantity of students served, but on the quality of demonstrable academic ability provided. The reputation of the college as a serious institution for adult minority college students will be made or broken in the first year. Hence, it is imperative that all of the professional staff be united and "together" in their efforts.

If students receive the above-mentioned services and professional attention; if they are allowed no more than four courses without permission; if the skills facilitators are professionally trained and united as a viable, working team by in-service training; and if there are classes, labs, and tutorials, all of this should add up to academic success. The students should emerge not only with demonstrable skills in writing, reading comprehension, etc.; but, even more importantly, with the pride and self-confidence which only accomplishment brings.

It is hoped that this curriculum design, if implemented by the facilitators upon whom it primarily depends, will be able to respond to the educational needs described in Chapter II and will begin to facilitate the basic learning tools and will help the student to negotiate a more independent and continually self-actualized life.

What follows are detailed descriptions and discussions of the component parts of the skills curriculum: Diagnosis, diagnostic testing, performance criteria, performance objectives, cross-disciplinary objectives, and a discussion of the direction toward individualized instruction.

Diagnosis. The primary difficulty in evaluating the capabilities of minority students with marginal skills is that almost all standardized tests are culture-bound. As yet there do not seem to be any tests representative of the minority groups in this country. To the extent that the instruments of measure are culture-bound, they will be found to be inaccurate.

In any institution of higher learning, accurate measurement for placement is important; but for the clientele for whom this model is designed, it is of the essence. Most notable is the fact that most students with only marginal skills ability are terribly self-conscious about the fact that their skills are inadequate. One of the worst situations which could befall them would be placement in a course section which is either beneath or beyond their skill level. There would be much psychological damage if this were allowed to occur. On the positive side, the diagnostician who evaluates learning abilities and disabilities must be as accurate as possible in order to provide the Director of the Skills Program and the facilitators with correct information in order for each student to be effectively placed and have his particular educational needs met.

Also, due to the extant racism and the condition of so many inner-city secondary schools in the country, it is exceedingly difficult to

glean from school records any true indication of a student's capacity or capabilities. Again, diagnosis is even more difficult as the previous negative academic experiences of the elementary and high schools further obscure learning deficiencies. It often cannot be determined whether some grades indicate relevant promotions, "social promotions," or simply a racist teacher.

What can be accomplished given these problems? First of all, the diagnostician can identify physical disabilities or malfunctions and visual or auditory problems. Secondly, with regard to writing, the incoming students may be given a pretest where they receive a topic and are told to write about it. This constitutes a writing sample. Not much information may be garnered from such a sample concerning specific disabilities; however, the writing sample does provide for easy recognition of obvious writing training and ability. Positive aspects of training and ability will be noticeable among both native speakers and non-native speakers immediately. As for the measured accuracy of those students without obvious training or ability, they may be grouped homogeneously, and, after a few weeks, reshuffled between sections until groupings which are homogeneous as possible are attained.

Thirdly, the real difficulty concerns evaluation of reading comprehension. Since all of the presently established instruments of measure are aimed at a primarily white, middle-class American student, the measure of a minority student's actual ability or potential is difficult to ascertain. Combined with this problem is the fact that minority students frequently fear these culture-bound standardized tests because they are certain they will not do well on them.

There are two alternative procedures which may be followed. If the administration, in conference with the Academic Counselor and the Director of the Skills Component, conclude that the effect of the testing would be deleterious, then the standardized test may be abandoned. In its place, students would be placed in courses according to the other known indecies, viz., high school record and test scores. After a few weeks, the instructors, in consultation with the diagnostician and the Director of the Skills Component, would rearrange the students in more homogeneous course sections according to manifest ability.

The other alternative is to proceed to administer a diagnostic instrument to incoming first year students. The rationale behind this extraordinary action is the following: Sooner or later the minority students are going to come up against the dominant white group in this country. With an approximate ratio of 9 to 1, the minority student will eventually be compared to his white counterpart. The thinking is that the standardized test provides an indication of where the student stands in abilities compared to a white student of his chronological age. This information indicates how far the minority student from a disadvantaged educational background has to go when measured against a white student who has had all of the educational advantages of a rich socio-economic background and environment.

It should be added that the students to whom the standardized tests are administered will be informed that the administration of the college is aware of the fact that the instruments of measure are culture-bound; that the evaluators of the tests will take this fact into account; and that the students are already admitted to the college,

the tests being used diagnostically as only one of many ways to determine placement in courses. The instrument of measure should be administered by minority staff members only.

The last indication from which diagnosis for placement should come is the student himself. His preferences and attitude should be known by the Academic Counselor from the personal interview.

Diagnostic Testing

1. Test all incoming students for:

    reading comprehension

    reading speed (words per minute)

    vocabulary in context.

2. No student will be considered admitted without diagnostic tests.

3. Purpose:

    Testing is for the purpose of diagnosis and prescription in order to more accurately meet each individual's educational needs; for the professional staff (facilitators, counselors) as well as for the student himself to know educational:

    A) strengths

    B) weaknesses

    C) how the student stands up as determined on a particular test (as opposed to classwork) compared to predominately white, middle-class dominated society, which the student will be up against after leaving the institution.

    D) results of diagnostic testing personally presented and explained to each student by counselor or skills staff member:

1. in non-threatening situation

2. with emphasis on _diagnosis_ as:

    a. helpful

    b. useful   orientation

    c. positive

Functions of Testing

1. opportunity to give student advice about his specific educational needs if he requests it.

2. opportunity to provide:

   - materials (e.g., workbooks, exercises, for his individual needs)

   - information (books, brochures, print-outs)

3. opportunity to describe programs for skills development

4. opportunity to explicate programs and services in the college:

   - counseling: Academic and personal

   - tutorials

   - courses:

         content, course descriptions

         sequence

5. opportunity to emphasize the positive and lead toward self-improvement:

   - explicate student's positive, good points as determined by the diagnostic instrument

   - observe not-so-good points

6. opportunity to follow up with suggested methods of how exactly a student might improve.

Performance criteria. One of the primary evidences frequently remarked upon in the literature concerning the problems of the educationally disadvantaged is the general lack of basic communications skills or reading comprehension, expository writing, speaking, language usage, study skills, and all of the sub-skills necessary for mastery of the above. As has been pointed out, the primary reason for there being a lack of communications skills ability among minority groups is racism emanating from the school. The form it takes is usually the absence of teacher or administrative expectations which undermine the learning process. Basically, in the academic institution there are found two large racist groups of so-called "professionals": Those who manifest indifference, and those who practice unbridled hatred.

In either case the absence of expectations is crucial. Specifically, in this case, the reference is to instructional, educational or learning expectations. It would seem that the deficiency in the "education" of these student victims is found primarily in the fact that no basic communications skills expectations were made of them. The only expectations were those non-learning ones concerning behavior and obedience to "superiors." This is racism in its most insidious form. It deprives the victims of the very tools with which to learn. How can a person be expected to cope, to design his own life, and to control it to the extent he sees fit without the very basis upon which to build? The fact that our cities are decaying is obvious, but one of the facts which brings this perieously close to home is, for example, the reading levels of city children. And what groups

have been driven to the cities out of desperation for jobs? The
minority groups are, again, primarily the victims. If the next gen-
eration of minority group children do not have the prerequisite learn-
ing skills, there is not much hope.

In analyzing the situation, it is seen that one of the most essen-
tial elements in the facilitation of communications skills training
is educational expectations. If a minority student of normal intelli-
gence enrolls at an institution of higher learning, he most certainly
can be taught. If his situation is analyzed, it will be seen that the
lost ingredient of teacher expectation must figure very strongly in
the student's developmental program. A massive dosage of expectation
will, hopefully, remedy his temporary lack of skills ability and
facilitate advancement.

In a developmental program for students with marginal skills, it
is not enough merely to present lessons to the student. Besides the
presentations, the student must be _expected_ to be able to perform a
skill. After the particular skill has been explained and demonstrated,
the student is expected to practice until he masters the particular
skills. It is only when the student is able to do or perform the
skill that will he is said to have learned. Skills are by their
nature actions. No learning is said to have taken place unless the
students have demonstrably proved so by doing or utilizing the skill.

Again, the emphasis here is not on the teacher's teaching, but
on the learner's learning. The problem set for the facilitator is:
How shall a learning experience which is meaningful, relevant and effi-
cacious be provided for this particular student, knowing from which

background he comes? It would seem that the facilitator's need here is for performance criteria. After a diagnostic test or observation, the instructor will evaluate which learning skills the student already possesses. The instructor will decide which skill performance will be facilitated next in order to build on these strengths. He will ascertain which skills are absent and begin to facilitate their being learned as rapidly as the student's learning rate and motivation are able. Implicit here is facilitator expectation and the existence of performance criteria broken down into step-by-step procedures.

However difficult and complex the task described above, there seems to be no other method extant for meeting the educational needs of those minority college students with marginal skills. This mode or method would seem to be the best for attempting to meet all of the students' educational needs at every level. It would also seem that the facilitator expectation, in just the correct amount for the individual student, beginning where he is on the learning skills continuum, is the most essential previously missing ingredient. It would appear that the so-called teaching machines and reading pacers are only of service when the student is already very highly motivated. An individual who reacts professionally to the learner according to his educational needs at every level, will be more effective.

Another advantage to performances being doled out by the facilitator is that the objective of one performance at a time makes the education process clearer to the student. If the facilitator has diagnosed properly, the student need not accomplish performances at which he is already proficient. The student himself comes to regard

a step-by-step process as a means to the success and feeling of accomplishment he so earnestly needs. Implicit here is a structure or framework in which the student can tackle one item at a time. The learner knows exactly what is expected of him.

Often the learner from an educationally disadvantaged background lacks the discipline to study. He does not know how to study. He simply does not know where to begin. As a result he feels overwhelmed by it all. The student seems to both desire and need a clearly delin- eated path, a one-step-at-a-time program. He needs to accomplish, to succeed. The performance criteria allow him to succeed at one thing at a time. They give him amounts of work and expectations at which he can succeed. Gradually, with the facilitator's support, his discipline to study will increase. But, the program of performances must be individual and prescriptive.

Performance Objectives

Form: In order to write educational objectives the following form should be followed:

1. State the conditions

2. State the performance

3. State to what degree or extent

For example, when presented with fifteen samples of art, some op art and some pop art, and none previously studied in class, the student will be able to identify which are op art and which are pop art with no more than two errors according to the definitions and judgement of the facilitator.[4]

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[4]Buck, Dian. In consultation with, April, 1973.

After diagnosis begins and the facilitator has ascertained some of the educational needs of the students, the learning needs will be listed and followed by the learning activities or performances which will ensure each student the capability of performing each skill.

Facilitators could "bank" these lists of specific skills together with the activities which may be used for student performance. Obviously, the use of educational performance objectives is not restricted only to skills performance; the principle may also be used to meet cognitive educational goals.

The objectives should be classified or grouped to foster curriculum quality and balance. In general, there are, according to Mager,[5] three types of educational objectives:

1. cognitive or thinking objectives

2. affective or humanistic objectives

3. psychomotor or physical objectives

There are four aspects to the cognitive or thinking objectives. The first is knowledge, that is, specifically, simple recall or recognition. The second is comprehension, that is, perceiving and/or continuing concepts, patterns, or meaning. This second aspect of the cognitive objectives includes analysis and synthesis. The third aspect is that of application which is the selection and use of principles to solve problems. This includes evaluation. The last aspect of the cognitive objectives is invention which is when something is produced or altered.

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[5]Mager, Robert F. Preparing Instructional Objectives for Programmed Instruction. FEARON Publishers: Palo Alto, California, 1962.

The affective or humanistic educational objectives are most important as they have a great deal of influence on motivation for learning. There are three principle aspects for affective educational objectives. The first one is that of <u>receiving,</u> of exhibiting signs of awareness and attentiveness. The second aspect is <u>responding,</u> which means to exhibit either approach or avoidance behavior. The last and most important aspect is <u>valuing,</u> defending a value or attempting to influence others about that value. The educational objective of valuing including knowing and organizing an individual, personal value system, which of course must stand the test of consistent behavior within that value system.

The psychomotor objectives are divided into five parts. First, there is <u>perception,</u> that is, reaching awareness through the physical senses. The second is called a <u>set,</u> which means reaching a state of mental and emotional readiness for some action. The third is the <u>guided response,</u> the development of basic skills through trial, error, and imitation. The fourth is named <u>mechanism,</u> which includes the habituation of learned responses, usually with some confidence and a degree of skill. And, lastly, the highest form of psychomotor objective is called the <u>complex overt response,</u> meaning to perform a complex movement pattern with skill and efficiency.

Obviously, in many learning activities, these objectives overlap. It is particularly useful, however, for the facilitator of skills instruction to be aware of these distinctions in clearly delineating the specific objectives set in motion by the diagnosis of the learning needs of his clientele. If the learning objectives are clearly

delineated, then the facilitator will be more precise about what he is attempting to facilitate and which specific activities he will utilize in reaching these exact objectives. As a result, the objectives should be much more clearly delineated for the students and the chance of obfuscation in the curriculum is lessened.

It is also obvious that these objectives are very useful in every discipline in the college. Educational objectives may be used in any course. The classifications used above are cross-disciplinary.

The rationale behind having clearly defined educational objectives is for both facilitators and learners to identify more exactly and precisely what they are about. For example, vague verbs like understand, know, think, believe, appreciate, feel, and memorize should be replaced with verbs which are more exact, for example, some "knowledge" verbs:

abbreviate	list
copy	recall
count	repeat
define	spell
identify	tell
label	write

On a higher order, there are verbs which involve critical and creative thinking:

categorize	create	predict
change	criticize	simplify
compare	design	solve
compose	diagnose	theorize
compute	explain	translate
construct	paraphrase	use

Further, in all disciplines, but particularly in the skills area where one of the most important objectives is the development of cognitive thinking, the following types of thinking should be actively encouraged:

1. fluent thinking, that is, having learners think of a significant number of questions, ideas, solutions, or alternatives.

2. flexible thinking, which is having learners define a significant variety of questions, ideas, solutions, or alternatives.

3. original thinking, that is, having learners search for unique questions, ideas, solutions, or alternatives not commonly defined elsewhere.

4. elaborative thinking, which is having learners add to or expand upon previously stated questions, ideas, solutions, or alternatives.

In the active pursuit of the above, both individuals and groups should be encouraged to engage in these cognitive objectives.

What are the factors used in judging the validity of educational objectives? It would seem most desirable and necessary for the objective to be accomplished by the learner with a reasonable degree of effort. If the objective represents critical learning, it should be clearly related to defined curriculum or course goals, or the individual goals of the learner. In any case, the educational objective should be one that is readily measured or observed. And, lastly, learning is greatly facilitated by objectives which are process oriented, that is, serving as a vehicle for encouraging one or more

important learning processes.

Once again the facilitator is defined in the role of diagnostician. He diagnoses and assesses the educational needs of his students, matches them with educational objectives, and prescribes the activities which will ensure that students are able to perform the objectives. The result, again, being demonstrable, behavioral proof that the student has a skill.

Cross-Disciplinary Objectives

The learning skills acquired by the student are not only to be utilized specifically in the skills courses. The objective of the student is to acquire as many skills as possible in order to build and develop an entire repertoire which can then be utilized in other areas of study and of life. If particular skills are related in no other way, at least their acquisition gives the individual a feeling of accomplishment which will affect his general state of mind and his attitude of willingness to go on to other, perhaps more challenging, skills and knowledge.

How is this to be effected? It can only be accomplished by a unanimity of ideology and direction, that is, that faculty, staff, and administration are united in their conviction about the place and importance of learning skills as a primary objective of the college. If the college presents to the student an environment where use of skills is expected at all times, in all places, with everyone, then the student will gradually begin to use his skills. By utilizing as many of his newly acquired skills as often as possible, the student will maintain constant practice, and, hence, an active, polished

repertoire. In learning by constant doing he will also feel the very important psychological effect of succeeding, of knowing that he is, in fact, learning. It is of particular importance that the student be made to feel that the college is an institution of higher learning and that certain skill behaviors are expected of him at this level.

The greatest burden in establishing this educational and academic milieu rests primarily with the faculty. If they are professional educators, they will want to take the necessary time to stop, to interrupt, to be "bothered with" evaluating and assisting students in skills acquisition. It is time-consuming, but how else is the student to know what is correct if he is not told? If he is not taught in this institution, where then does he learn? If all facilitators expect exactness not only in the writing or English class but in every discipline, the student will profit all the more. In short, the old axiom holds: Student performance is equal to teacher expectation. Hopefully by learning to observe accurately and to measure in science or by learning to calculate in business courses, the student will become a more exact person in all his thinking and in his view of the world. In other words, it would seem that skills acquisition has an effect on student performance in other disciplines as well.

Students who perform are learning. There is no better way for students to learn to perform than by being surrounded by a highly trained group of professional people who expect them to perform. In fact, it is the duty and obligation of all responsible individuals within the college community to assist everyone else in maintaining an atmosphere of skills utilization befitting an institution of higher learning.

Table 2

Cross-disciplinary Performance-based Objectives

1. The student will carefully complete, according to directions, and within the specified time limits, all reading, speaking, and writing assignments in all subject areas.

2. The student will demonstrate increasing facility in oral and written expression.

3. The student will recognize the value of mechanical accuracy, critical judgement, appropriate word choice, and originality of expression as essential for college-level work.

4. The student will demonstrate an understanding of essential terminology in all subject areas.

5. The student will demonstrate an ability to deal with fact, rather than generalities, for objective purposes.

6. The student will demonstrate an ability to handle evidence which adequately supports his stated opinion and point of view.

7. The student will endeavor to function at a maximum level of effectiveness, not only individually, but as a responsible contributor to group efforts.

Direction toward individualized instruction. It has been observed that a high incidence of varying degrees of skills competency exists among students with marginal skills. Specifically, due to whatever factors or combination of factors, students with marginal skills usually have uneven skills ability. For example, their reading comprehension ability may, on an objective scale, exceed their writing capacity. If the skills competency is uneven, an obvious and discernable educational need exists. Yet, before a corrective curriculum design is instituted, the assessed needs of the individual must be delineated. All too often in attempts to facilitate skills instruction, educators seem not to have taken into consideration the noticeable incidence of varying degrees of skills competency among those whose skills are marginal.

The model must provide a viable method of coping and dealing effectively with the varying degrees of skills competency. If the curriculum is to be effective, the needs met in each area must be adjusted to meet the level of skills competency of the course section. To a great extent, homogeneous grouping responds well to this problem. However, experience has often shown that with very restricted homogeneous grouping, there are still varying degrees of competency among even 10 students. The situation can be complex. If, for example, there is a homogeneous grouping for reading comprehension, the variance of the students' speaking and writing skills will mean that some will do well in discussion about the reading, while others who write well will do better on quizzes. The situation is further complicated by the fact that each student has a distinct learning style, comes from

a different background, has had previously imprinted academic exper-
iences, and may have great variance in motivation. In short, what so
many curriculum designers for groups so often fail to note is that
however effective the model is for a group of students, each student
is a distinct individual with different learning levels.

It is not recommended that the class or group approach be aban-
doned outright in favor of a tutor in every home. Much can be facili-
tated in a group situation. However, two points are in order:
1) That the facilitator recognize, realize, and _act_ upon the knowledge
that each of his charges is a distinct individual with individual needs;
and, 2) that instruction be directed toward as individualized a program
as required by student need in a particular here and now situation.
The concept of individualized instruction is included as a part of
this design-model as a direction toward which the facilitator of learn-
ing leans. How much and to what extent the facilitator moves in the
direction of individualized instruction depends on the learner's
individual educational needs. As the student stands in assessed need
of direction and instruction, he will be provided for--no more, no less.
Gradually, the student should need less and less direction, reassurance,
and individual instruction, until such a time when he masters skills
and becomes his own teacher.

In short, there seems to be no other common denominator than the
fact that the group of students with marginal skills is diversified
and possesses varying amounts and degrees of communications skills
experience. Therefore, it would seem that no one system, method, or
curriculum model will meet the educational needs of all. Hence, a

curriculum for skills learning needs to contain various strategies,
methods, directions, and philosophies, in order to meet individual
needs, and individual differences.

It is at this juncture that the professional diagnostician and
the experienced facilitator-diagnostician enter with their expertise
and repertoire of methods, strategies, and motivations.

The individual approach is the oldest. It seems to be firmly
founded in history, being an educational philosophy as old as man.
There are very few people who can resist individual care, attention,
and concern. This method utilizes the ultimate in "teaching machines"--
the human being.

The individual approach has the distinct advantage of being
naturally prescriptive. In contemporary education, particularly for
the student whose previous education is disadvantaged, the advantage
of an individual approach is that he is not required to relearn that
which he already knows or to perform those skills at which he is
already proficient. He is treated as an adult in relation to another
adult, the facilitator. The two can not help but form a relationship.
Yet, in the model the relationship is not merely left to personalities;
it is a professional relationship and the point of departure is the
educational needs of the individual. It is then a professional business
relationship with clearly defined goals.

If the facilitator views his role as one of providing service and
support, via programming as described above; then, with patience,
success will be achieved. At times great patience will be required.
Often, particularly at the outset, students must have the apparently

simple aspects repeated over and over. This may be due to the fact that so often students from an educationally disadvantaged background will have missed many steps taught along the way. The facilitator is there to meet individual needs and facilitate ways to fill the gaps.

It is also the facilitator's role to ensure that each individual student feels challenged, that he feels that he is in college, doing college-level work; but, the facilitator should also take special care to note that what is required of the particular student not be so overwhelming that the student feels defeated by the amount or extent of the work. What other solution is there to the dilemma of meeting individual and varying degrees of skills competency?

After the original pre-testing of in-coming students, and the diagnosis, the facilitator is the one who observes and gives periodic prescriptions in order to maintain a sense of challenge.

If a tutor is prescribed by the facilitator, the tutor works with the student, under the supervision of the facilitator-diagnostician, in order to assist the student in accomplishing the prescribed performances.

The facilitator will soon "learn" his students. He will know from reactions when attention spans are growing short or a presentation is becoming monotonous. A programmed machine may only be asked certain questions, whereas a skilled facilitator will know precisely which question to reserve for which student. Having learned the students' weak and strong points, he will know at which level to begin, exactly how to ask, to what to relate the question, when to push forward, when to let up; in short, he will know exactly how to get a student from point A to point B.

The curriculum model which includes a strong directional bent towards individualized instruction implements this direction as a viable means of the model's being flexible. Again the model is not to be considered a panacea. It may be considered a guide. The facili- tator-diagnostician uses the model as a guide which, as individual needs dictate, is meant to be changed, rearranged, built upon, and bent. If various aspects of the model are prescribed for a particular student's learning needs and other aspects of the design are disregard- ed, the effectiveness of the student's learning should not only be enhanced but noticeably increased.

As has been pointed out, students do not learn at the same rate or at the same time. It is about time, particularly in higher educa- tion, that cognizance of what is known about learning and the learning process be taken into account and used. If the point of departure is the present competency of the student, and learning experiences are prescribed from there, then the student's progress and attainment of academic success are more likely to be achieved.

It would seem that the direction toward individualized instruc- tion would be particularly well suited to meeting the educational needs of minority college students with marginal skills competency. It would seem that the cultures of minority groups in the United States are more person-centered and person-oriented than the infamous de-personal- ized "society" of white, Western culture that is so frequently described in literature and the arts as de-humanized, antiseptic, vacuous and vacant--the Wasteland image. It would seem that among the various minority groups, people are persons, and they come first. In minority

cultures this is considered the highest value. This fact would seem
to enhance the efforts of sincere facilitators and administrators in
their attempt to meet individuals as individuals and to deal with
educational needs in terms of individuals. The direction toward in-
dividualized instruction could be added to other means included in
this model for maintaining and fostering this tradition of humanitar-
ianism: Small class size, rapport with facilitators, or a one-to-one
relationship with the counselor or tutor. These methods ensure that
the values of the culture of the minority groups are not lost in the
depersonalization of the white-dominated society in the United States.
The depersonalization of American society may be counteracted by the
college in its attempts to see individuals as such, to meet individual
needs, to identify learning patterns, and to know individual student
reactions.

Under such a program, where the individual's success at each skill
performance is built in, there should be more of a chance for academic
and skills achievement as students are encouraged, more motivated by
their success, and enthusiastic. Hopefully the response will be
contagious.

Summary

Thus, the curriculum model meets the educational needs of marginal
students at every level with a direction towards individualized
instruction. Or, even if there is a failure in the progress of one
particular student, it will be more clear why he failed, since the
basis of the model is knowledge of the individual student. If all of

the component parts of the model are implemented in unison, to the

degree required by individual needs, some progress should be in

evidence. What this amounts to is a student-centered approach as

opposed to the old subject content approach. If students' needs are

to be met in a responsible way, there seems no other course.

C H A P T E R   I V

IMPLEMENTATION AND ORGANIZATION OF THE DEVELOPMENTAL

SKILLS CURRICULUM MODEL

Introduction

According to the organizational chart regarding the position of
the Skills Component and its place within the college, it must first be
brought to mind that the importance of the facilitation of skills is
paramount. Because the Skills Component deals with providing the tools
of survival to those students from an educationally disadvantaged
background, it must maintain a central position of importance within
the college. In fact, if it is estimated that of the total projected
enrollment of 500 students approximately 300+ students will have need
of the Communications Skills Component to some degree, then it becomes
obvious that the role which the Component plays becomes one of the
major thrusts of the entire enterprise. It has already been seen from
an understanding of the nature of skills learning that without these
"tools" the student can not hope to survive academically. Add to this
the majority of students in the college who will be using the courses
and services of this vital component and the high priority of the
Communication Skills Component must not only be realized, but must be
acted upon. The very survival of the college depends upon the success
with which learning skills are facilitated for the student clientele.
The Communications Skills Component must have genuine priority. It is
in a way the "intensive care" unit and no expense or consideration
should be spared.

Implementation

Staffing. In order to service the needs of the approximately 300
students who will need the courses or services in the Communications
Skills area to varying degrees, eight (8) full-time instructors are
needed. (See chart: Following page.) It is imperative that there
be no more than 12 students in any section of the communications skills
courses. Any attempt at larger classes, except perhaps in presenta-
tions given in the study skills area, would seem doomed to failure.
There have been no successful attempts to facilitate skills acquisition,
particularly among students whose educational background is disad-
vantaged, with class groups larger than 10 or 12. This condition is
essential. It must be adhered to if any modicum of skills acquisition
is to be expected. Because the entire model design is based on the
student-centered approach, the number of students per section must be
no more than 12. The model is firmly based on the concept of close
contact between professional facilitator and learner. The professional
programming of positive reinforcement for each individual student is
impossible with more students. The model design utilizes the basic
psychological need of each student to have the element of the human
response of the facilitator. The student, especially a student from
an educationally disadvantaged background, needs to be evoked, directed
and motivated--all of which are elicited as positive, progressive re-
sponses to the human nature of the professional facilitator.

It will be seen that the brunt of the entire effort rests with
the facilitator-diagnostician. This professional relationship between
the facilitator and the learner is the primary basis of the design for

Table 3

Skills Component: Staffing Projection*

1 Director

1 Administrative Assistant

1 Secretary

1 Diagnostician

8 Instructors:

    N.B.

        - 4 class sections per instructor

        - 10-12 students per section (<u>only</u> - no more)

        - Of projected enrollment of 500 an estimated 300+ will need

          some skills courses. This projection provides for a total

          of 320 students in skills courses.

? Tutors (as needed).

* for student population of 500.

this educational model. If the facilitator has too many clients with whom to cope, the effectiveness of the over-all effort will be undermined.

If there are eight instructors and each has four class sections of 10 to 12 students each, each instructor will then be responsible for 40 to 48 students. Never, under any circumstances should one facilitator be responsible for more learners. It will be further discussed in the section on the duties of the facilitators why this is so.

Administration. At least one administrative assistant will be essential in scheduling course sections and handling all office business and administrative paper work necessary for the smooth running of the skills component. In no case should the burden of administrative duties fall on the Director.

The Director of the Communications Skills Program will be responsible for the total effectiveness of the efforts and results of the program. Hence, it is essential that the majority of his time not be spent on administrative paper work. The Director is the one who coordinates a symphony of efforts by his staff to achieve the best and most harmonious results. He must not be imprisoned in an office; but, rather, he should be out in the classrooms, consulting with and being supportive of his staff. His job is to be of any help in designing programs and services which meet student learning needs. He should also be a facilitator, but, in the British sense of the head-facilitator or the master teacher. Although he is in charge and ultimately responsible, he must work closely with his professional staff.

The Director will also be in charge of the tutors who are working

with the instructors in the program.

The Director is also the link with the rest of the college administration. He is responsible directly to the Dean, his immediate superior, and thence to the President of the College himself. (See chart next page.) Because the nature of skills learning involves all of the academic disciplines, the Director must meet regularly with the heads of the various academic disciplines in order to learn from them how the Skills Component may more exactly meet all skills needs. The Director must also consult with the various department heads as well as with the academic and personal counseling units, concerning methods and strategies to reinforce the efforts of the Skills Component by incorporating what the students are learning in skills courses in the other disciplines. For example, if most students are taking the initial study skills course, they will be acquiring the skill of note-taking. This skill could be very effectively and positively reinforced by its application in as many other disciplines as possible. The Director is responsible for communication up and down the line of command.

Support Staff:

The secretary must be full time. Not only will he be responsible for the usual secretarial work of the Director and the Administrative Assistant, but, most importantly, the secretary will also type and duplicate the class exercises for the facilitators of the Skills Component. This service is expected to take some of the burden from the facilitators as well as to encourage them to use as many duplicated materials as they see fit in their courses. The facilitators will be

Table 4

Skills Component: Organizational Chart

President

Administration

Arts   Humanities   Sciences   Dean   Personal & Academic   Bi-Lingual: Budget
                                      Counseling   Bi-Cultural

Director

Administrative Assistant → Diagnostician

facilitator facilitator facilitator facilitator facilitator facilitator facilitator facilitator

class   class   class
 | | |
lab   lab   lab

(tutors)
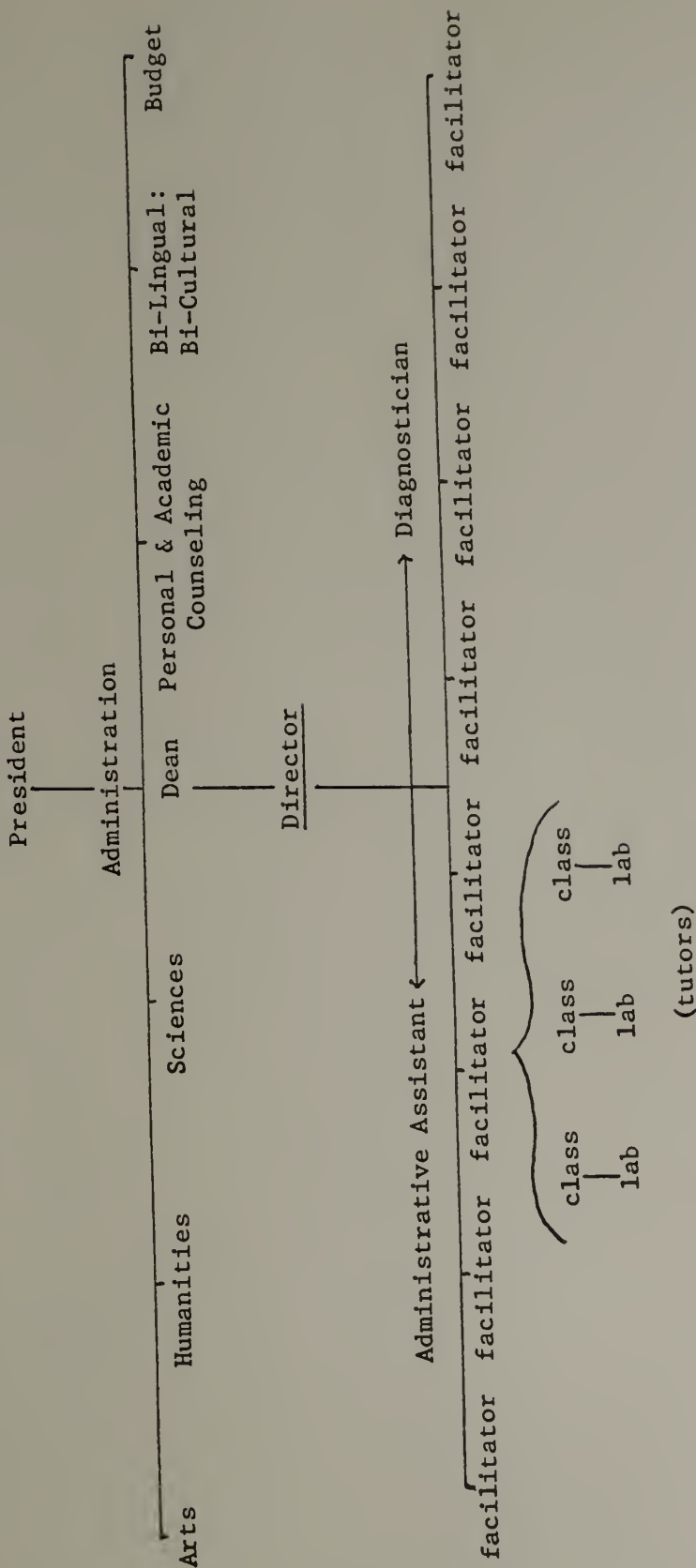
40 students

informed that the secretary will type, duplicate, or xerox material on a first-come, first-serve basis. Hence they must turn over papers and exercises to the secretary well in advance of their need in class.

Of course, facilitators may do their own typing and duplication if they wish. However, since facilitators are so traditionally over-burdened, it is felt that the additional burden of typing and duplicating should be taken from their shoulders so they will have more time for their most important role and will be more inclined to use more pertinent material in class exercises.

Administration of facilitator load. As mentioned, each facilitator will be responsible for four class sections of 10-12 students each. Most classes meet three times per week. Therefore each facilitator will be with a group for 20 hours per week: 12 hours of class presentation and 8 hours of lab.

No facilitator should carry more than 40-48 student clientele. Facilitators should post office hours. Office hours will be arranged so that there will be a facilitator in the Communications Skills Resources room (to be discussed later) from 8:30 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. five days per week.

If, after appointments with students and tutors, no students arrive, the facilitator may use the time to plan classes or evaluate student work. However, the professional on duty must remain available during his office hours.

Facilitators should not be given four sections of the same course unless they specifically request it. For heightened effectiveness,

facilitators should be allowed to facilitate in the courses and at the level they choose or prefer. In this way maximum output is more likely to be elicited. As much as possible first choices for teaching category, level, or area, should be followed. Each facilitator may have one "plum," that is a higher division course to facilitate. This is not only to please the facilitator, but also to subtly inform students that the facilitator is a bona-fide college teacher. The Skills Component must not be seen as a prep school, however much it acts as one. It must never appear to be apart from the mainstream of the college. In addition, instructors from the humanities or other disciplines may instruct a skills course if they are so inclined (they must not be forced), and if they are qualified.

Once a week there will be a regularly scheduled staff meeting consisting of the facilitators and the Director of the Communications Skills Component. This meeting will be for the purpose of coordinating efforts in more effectively meeting student needs, discussing mutual problems, ironing out organizational and scheduling details, and planning and implementing programs and program changes. In short, the work of the actual operation of the Communications Skills Component will be the work of the professional staff team with the Director.

Prior to the beginning of classes, there will be an in-service training program for the professional staff. The purpose will be to explain the developmental program design, to coordinate efforts, and to provide an opportunity for the professional staff to work comfortably together.

In line with this _modus operandi_ there will be scheduled on-going

meetings, including not only the weekly session concerning students, but also a fortnightly session of the facilitators with the counselors in order to gather feedback from both the personal and academic counseling components, and advice on how to work more effectively with students. Obviously, those facilitators who have students in common should get together for a more coordinated effort. This is not to imply that confidences made to counselor or facilitator be broken. Those facilitators and counselors working with the same student should work together for the benefit of the student.

Facilitators for the Communications Skills Program. Of all of the educational philosophies, of all the newest or even oldest ideas in education, and of all of the educational models designed, no idea is as important as the effective role of the professionally trained, learning facilitator. The success of this or almost any other educational model depends primarily on the facilitators. It is the facilitators who implement the model. The facilitators are the principle means of ensuring that the model is not merely just another educational instrument, but that it effects experiences from which learning takes place. More than any other element, the facilitators are the determining factor in how effective the developmental skills program will be.

Qualifications:

It is well established that facilitator attitude is related to learner achievement. Since the facilitator in the developmental program is the key person in the transfer of the curriculum to the learner, the attitude of the facilitator is most important. The students' previous lack of skills experience or academic success does not deter

or disappoint the truly professional facilitator. He will be challeng-
ed. The attitude of the facilitator will be one of service. He will
strive to analyze his students' learning styles and to program the
most effective learning experiences for them. It is obvious that
adverse facilitator reactions to the students' plight and programs will
effect results. Hopefully, in any program, facilitators will have pos-
itive attitudes and exhibit a list of positive behaviors in their work.

Faculty chosen for the Communications Skills Program should have
as their most distinguishing attribute the particular interest and
desire to work with high-risk students or those with marginal skills
competency. Experience of some degree of success with this particular
student clientele is an essential prerequisite. The facilitator is
needed who deliberately chooses the developmental or compensatory
learning situation. He should be completely aware from his experience
how difficult and challenging this task may be. For those few students
who soak up knowledge easily and who do very well on college entrance
examinations, a facilitator is not really essential. These students
learn on their own. It is the student who does not know how to facil-
itate learning for himself who needs the facilitator. This last is the
real challenge to a facilitator.

Attitude:

Implicit in a discussion of the attitude of the facilitator is
the matter of emphasis on the development of the student. For the
professional in a developmental program, the emphasis must be on
facilitating learning experiences and not on research.

The professional facilitator will be one who sees students as

persons first. This attitude toward students should be an essential condition in any instructor in the college, but, most assuredly, in a developmental skills program. There should be no condescending attitude on the part of the instructor. The facilitator here is the practitioner, but the medium in skills development is inculcated primarily via the person of the facilitator and the learner. In this relationship it is imperative that the facilitator be truly professional at all times. For example, he must listen when students speak. A true professional facilitator is a good listener, for he is learning from the students all the time. He is receiving feedback about how to reach students, to communicate with them, and to provide more accurate learning experiences for them. This interaction on the human level is necessary and should be used positively. Kept at a professional level, the interaction between student and facilitator will prove to be a learning experience for both, and both should be richer persons for it.

On the academic level, the professional's attitude will be that of finding the best way to provide necessary and relevant learning experiences, in the proper order, according to the amount the student may assimilate at one time, at the student's rate of learning, and in his learning style. The central concern must be that the learner soon shows signs of improvement and of success.

On the operational level, the professional seeks out and learns from feedback. At every step of the way the attitude is manifest that he is endeavoring to "learn" his students, in order to provide for successful learning. It is not possible to provide developmental learning skills experiences, training, and practice to students whose

learning style, rate, and motivational factors are not known. From the facilitator who has studied his student well the student soon learns that he can succeed. The student, feeling that someone cares about his success, then tends to open up and feel more free about asking questions.

Traditionally it would seem that many in education have endeavored to place the blame for lack of skills on the student. This is a most unprofessional attitude. It is doubly so when the victims of this outrageous attitude are minority persons. The student, as has been pointed out, is most assuredly not the problem. He is only the sum of his experiences. Who is it who provided the experiences of the urban ghetto in the second half of the Twentieth Century in the United States of America? In fact, who provided the experience for the minority groups in this country since the advent of the white man? To blame the victims is not only unprofessional; it is also unintelligent.

The students need to see that the facilitators are working for them. Students need teachers who have learning expectations for their students, that is, facilitators who believe in them. Students need facilitators who are professional enough not to blame students for their situation. Students may enter the college as academically poor workers; however, it must be remembered that, for the most part, they were taught to be poor workers, allowed to be inconsistent, permitted to turn in incomplete and haphazard assignments. The attitude of the facilitators in the developmental skills program in the college should be one of "the buck stops here;" that is, the attitude of the college professionals is: This is where you will learn.

The developmental program students stand in particular need of professional educators who are secure, sensitive, objective, socially mature, and emotionally healthy. At times, judging by some of the authoritarian teachers around, an observer may wonder if they chose teaching for the same reason so many chose law enforcement, that is, for the "wrong" reasons. The teacher who wants to be an absolute monarch in his own little world is not the psychically healthy individual so vital for a developmental program.

Accountability:

If learning does not occur, the responsibility may be on the student; however, experience and the evidence indicates that the responsibility is on the facilitators, the Program Director, the counselors and tutors. It would seem that, heretofore, the responsibility has rested entirely with the student. Again, it must be noted that one of the frequent factors regarding a student whose education has been disadvantaged is that, as a result, he is not yet ready to be entirely responsible for his own learning. It is the goal of the professional staff to facilitate the student's gradual acceptance of adult responsibility for his own learning experiences by providing learning tools.

In order to ensure the student's success, facilitator accountability is essential. The experienced facilitator who obtains results will not be intimidated by this. The best facilitators will want accountability; they will pressure to be judged on their teaching, to receive merit pay on this basis. From this qualification it would seem essential for the college to see prospective facilitators in

action before hiring. Any facilitator worthy of the name will not be intimidated by this; on the contrary, he will welcome it.

Training:

Obviously the facilitators needed for the developmental skills program must be trained in compensatory or developmental learning. Most college instructors today are not trained and are ill-equipped to handle students with marginal skills. They are unprepared for students with diversified skills competency. Facilitators in the developmental program must be specifically trained in compensatory education and its techniques.

It will also be required that the facilitator work as a team member. Not only will there be team decisions about programs and their development, but there will also exist tight team work involved in providing for learning experiences for students in closely related skills. For example, the same student learning usage skills under one facilitator and writing skills from another will be the obvious mutual concern of the two instructors as the two subjects, writing and usage, are inseparable. (They are taught as separate courses, merely an academic distinction, in order for students to have more practice time and training.)

Background:

Seemingly, the best type of facilitator to hire for developmental skills positions are those who are minority group members and who work well with minority group students, whose teacher training background is in elementary or secondary level skills instruction and remedial reading. It is necessary that instructors know the methodology and

techniques and the skills objectives and activities with which to
facilitate them.

The choice of a well-trained staff is a most essential element.
Yet, as mentioned previously, the person of the facilitator is also
important. Facilitators should not show any signs of being hostile,
racist, incompetent, weak, or entrenched in rock-bound tradition. On
the contrary, staff facilitators must be flexible, understanding, and
able to maintain a rapport with students. As diagnosticians, facili-
tators must prove capable of analyzing student needs and performance,
they must be cognizant of the prevailing student attitudes and the use
of slang.

The social, cultural, and racial background of the students dic-
tates the background of the facilitators. For example, if 80% of the
students are from the Black community and 20% from the Spanish-speaking
community, the ratio of facilitators should mirror this. It is of the
utmost importance for the minority student to have before him, in the
place of respected professional, the image of a person with whom he
can identify.

No matter who the facilitator is, he will inevitably be called
upon to prove himself to his students. He must be master not only of
his subject matter but master of the humanistic methods and techniques
used to understand students: In short, a master facilitator.

If the demands of the work require it, facilitator strength train-
ing sessions or humanistic education for the white teachers may be in
order. If this is implemented, it will be more efficacious if initiated
on a voluntary basis.

In short, the facilitator should be himself, that is, in Maslow's terms, a self-actualizing person. He must manifest confidence and security in himself. He must have empathy for others and joy in his work. Ask the prospective facilitator whom he admires, to whom he is attracted, which type of students he prefers, which means, methods and techniques he utilizes in teaching. The responses should indicate the attitude. Look for the best person for the position, and inspect all of his credentials thoroughly.

It should be made clear to the new facilitator that the needs of the student are the primary concern of the college, deserving of his utmost care and attention. Under the aegis of accountability, the facilitator is free to teach according to his own personality, taking calculated liberties necessary in assisting the student. He may use whatever means necessary within the confines of professional standards, to ensure successful learning experiences for the students.

Time Allocation:

As mentioned elsewhere, each instructor in the Developmental Communications Skills Program will teach four classes, which involves 12 hours in the classroom per week, with the exception of ESL. Most courses require a lab twice a week, which involves another 8 hours. Facilitators should have 2 hours a day for preparation, planning, evaluation, office hours, and consultation with colleagues. In short, most facilitators will be in the building 20 hours per week. In addition to this there is the weekly staff meeting and the fortnightly meeting with counselors.

4 hours in class per day

2 hours in lab per day

2 hours in office per day

---

12 hours, in class per week

8 hours in lab per week

10 hours in office per week

1 hour in staff meeting per week

---

31 hours per week in the building

The availability of the facilitators, particularly in the lab and for office hours, is of the utmost importance for the success of the program. It is at these times that the student is able to actually perform what he is learning in class. This contact is essential in order for the facilitators to answer questions, assist students, help them over unusually difficult areas, and listen and learn from students.

It should be reiterated that facilitators should not be assigned to teach only developmental courses, nor should they be assigned to teach all courses at the same level. In an arrangement with the English Department and other departments in the Humanities, facilitators may teach, for example, three skills courses and one English course, or, facilitators employed for the Humanities could teach in the Developmental Program. Again, unless a facilitator specifically requests it, he should not have all of his classes with the least experienced students in skills, as the demands on his time and attention are too great and time-consuming.

Evaluation:

All facilitators will be informed that their work will be evaluated by their students and by the administration, specifically the Director of the Skills Program. Classes may be visited at any time by the Director of the Program, the Dean or the President.

Merit pay is recommended for facilitators for student learning success. The basis will be the actual performance of the students, grades, student evaluations, and the recommendation of the other instructors and the Director.

Coordination of effort:

The facilitators will be expected to be well acquainted with the philosophy, direction, and the performance objectives of the developmental program. It is to be expected that the facilitators employed will unanimously agree on the principles set forth as the basis for the Developmental Program. In other words, they must agree to the use of performance objectives, student-centered learning, positive reinforcement, and the methods of diagnosis and prescription set forth here. Of course, in agreeing with the objectives, the individual is free to facilitate according to his own personality, as long as it does not conflict with the basic tenets of the curriculum. In fact, it should be expected that the facilitator would teach according to his own personality.

Procedures:

If a facilitator wishes to experiment in a departure from the curriculum, he should be so allowed on the advice of the Director.

Within the first month of the semester, each facilitator, using

his knowledge of his students, will write a list of performance objectives for the semester. It will be on these objectives that the facilitator will be evaluated via questionnaire by the Director and the students. These objectives should prove invaluable in achieving learning goals.

Facilitators are invited to make suggestions to the Director at any time. Hopefully, the facilitators and the Director meeting in concert will foster group direction and decision-making. After all, the facilitators are closest to the learning process--the more minds contributing the better. It also keeps everyone involved which congeals the group and makes for a more viable working relationship.

Summary. It is the primary function of the facilitator, then, to implement the curriculum, that is, to meet individual learning needs, utilize performance criteria, and employ prescriptive education as a method. In other words, he must provide the experiences which will be required of a student, based on a diagnosis of his needs at a particular point in his development, to arrive at and accomplish the objective. This approach should be agreed upon by the facilitators. It provides both learner and facilitator with what needs to be known, practiced, and accomplished.

The entire effort on the part of the facilitator requires a great deal. It requires that the facilitator take on the responsibility for providing academic success for a student. Many of the students have only experienced a series of academic failures. For the facilitator to accept this challenge his skills must be unique and he must be a very strong person.

Lastly, it is important that, at the request of the Skills Director or the facilitators, there be time set aside each semester for professional development and enrichment. Curriculum design time must also be accorded at least twice a semester.

Counselors. The relationship between the Communications Skills Component and the Counseling Component is a close and important one. Ideally, the services rendered by the Counseling Component, including academic, personal, and vocational counseling, will render the Skills Component more effective. In fact, the communications curriculum design cannot work without the counseling unit.

First, the academic counselors are necessary in that a highly trained professional is needed for the all-important initial interview with the prospective freshmen. In this interview, probably more so than from any other source, the hopes, aspirations, and ambitions of the individual student will come to light. Also, from this initial interview, an idea of the student's frame of mind, the type of socio-economic and educational background from which he is emerging, his attitude toward formal education, and, perhaps, indications of his learning style and his psychological preparedness for college will be manifest. This information is of vital importance in placing the student in certain categories and courses. The more information gained from the student, the more exactly the professional staff will be capable of maximizing motivation, and, in short, effecting a more professional placement program. The advice given by counselors in consultation with the staff of the Communications Skills Component will weigh heavily in designing and planning each student's course

behind he should notify a counselor at once. It will then be decided
in consultation who is in the best position to approach the student, the
facilitator or the counselor. The facilitator is in a position of
power because he maintains the power of the grade. This fact hangs
heavily over the student. The student may be reluctant to take a facil-
itator into his confidence, fearing that he may not appear at his best
before this person who holds the power of the grade. Hence, the im-
portance of the non-threatening role which the counselor can play. The
counselor will be able to elicit a response from the student about why
he is in academic difficulty, for example, if there are problems at
home or financial worries. It seems more effective for the progress
of the student to have a third party, namely the counselor, investigate
the situation, especially since he is a professional trained to ascertain
if there might be serious problems. Then, in consultation with the
facilitator, without betraying confidences, the professional counselor
involved may choose a course of action in the students' best interest.

A counselor, acting as the third party, may be called on to work
through any conflicts which arise between student and facilitator.
Facilitators should feel free to consult counselors concerning dif-
ficulties with individual students or groups. In this manner, serious
problems may be avoided. And, because the professional counselors are
experienced and quite unflappable, they are more equipped to handle
such interpersonal conflicts.

The academic and personal counselors should work closely with the
Communications Skills staff, particularly with regard to the common
problem of skills students' resentment at having to take skills courses.

At times, students will evidence embarrassment or even hostility at
having been placed in one or more basic learning skills courses. Stu-
dents will complain that it is too much like high school work. In these
instances, it is most important for the professional counselor to step
in and deal with their feelings and their causes. Each individual,
of course, must be handled differently and with great care. If each
can be reached in his own way, the original problem may be reconstruct-
ed into a learning experience for the student. If students exhibit
behaviors of strong hostility or resentment, for example, whether
toward programs, instructors, parents, or administration, particularly
in public, there is something the facilitator can do: Recommend a
counselor.

The counseling unit will also be seen as essential to the Skills
Program since the counselors are more likely to know students well
and the general feedback they receive from students will prove exceed-
ingly helpful to the facilitators. The counseling unit should be
encouraged to make suggestions and recommendations to the facilitators,
especially concerning student reaction to the programs and courses,
in order to increase the effectiveness of the Skills Component. No
criticism, legitimate or otherwise, should be ignored by the profession-
al staff of the Skills Component.

The counselors may also be of service to the student in that they
will know if a student who is a low achiever in skills is also in
academic difficulty in another discipline. The more information known
about a student, the more effective his educational needs can be met.

Often students have exaggerated concepts of their own abilities

indicated by ambitions which would seemingly exceed their abilities. However, facilitators and counselors should take great care before making any statements to students about their ambitions. Late bloomers exist; and, if a student is provided with the tools of learning and the proper degree of positive reinforcement, he may surprise his facilitators and counselors. In the instances of a strong ambition to lean toward a particular avocation, facilitators should see a learning experience. In cooperation with the vocational counselor they should have the student go out and report on the particular occupation he desires to join. For example, if he wants to be a lawyer, have him go to court and interview a lawyer; or, if the professional is ammenable, have the student follow the lawyer throughout his day. Skills can be effected via the written or oral report, the interview, and the questioning.

Organization of the Developmental Skills Curriculum

Student selection process. The process of selecting students for the Developmental Skills Program may be based on some or all of the following criteria for indicators:

1) low rank in high school class

2) low SAT or SCAT, or other standardized test scores

3) low achievement on pre-test or writing sample given by the college

4) recommendation to developmental program by the professional diagnostician

5) recommendation to developmental program after personal interview with the academic counselor

The academic counselor should inform each student of his academic situation-prognosis, including the results of the pre-test and diagnostic testing. It would seem that the professional counselor would be best equipped to deal with the student at this juncture. If the student appears in need of the Developmental Skills Program, or parts thereof, it is recommended that the counselor explain the program and direct that student to it. Some students who manifest signs of severe lack of skills acquisition should be informed that they will be admitted to the Developmental Skills Program on the condition that if they negotiate it successfully, they will be admitted to further college courses.

It will be made clear to students that, once they have mastered skills courses and are able to perform the skills learned, they may move out of the skills courses. No matter how many semesters it takes, the student may leave the developmental program only when he can perform adequately according to the standards of the Program.

Delivery process.

Lab periods:

As has been pointed out, the purpose of the lab session is to provide a time to be set aside for the student to actually attempt to perform, under professional supervision, the skills presented in the previous class or classes.

All students in a course are required to attend the lab. If a particular student accomplishes the performances set by the course without the professional assistance of the facilitator, as a reward

the student may be excused from attending lab sessions. It will be understood that, if his performance drops in quality or quantity, he must return to the lab sessions. As soon as students demonstrably prove their capability as well as enough maturity and responsibility to complete their work on their own, they are privileged to be excused from the lab. As a further reward, at the discretion of the facilitator, they may even be recruited as tutors during the lab period. As members of the class they may be in a particularly unique situation to assist their fellow students. Obviously this teaches responsibility as well as skills performances.

If some students are excused, this leaves even more time for the facilitator to spend in individual instruction with students who may need more of his attention. The facilitator is then in a better position to encourage and assist students. Again, the emphasis, particularly in the lab, is in having the students actually perform.

For increased effectiveness, labs should be held on the day following the classroom presentation. It may or may not be scheduled at the same time of day. This ensures that the students feel as though they are in college, with classes three times per week; however, the lab period on the other two days provides: 1) That they have a particular time set aside for actually practicing or performing what they are learning in class sessions; and, 2) that they have skills five days per week. It is essential that students utilize their skills every day.

Tutorial:

Tutors will most likely be recruited primarily from the pool of

graduate students in the Boston area. They will either donate their time and/or receive credit for tutoring from their institutions.

Tutors should be available during the period from 8:30 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. It seems best if the tutor and the student arrange a meeting time which is mutually agreeable. Space should be available for tutoring.

If a facilitator recommends a tutor for a student, a tutor is notified and a meeting with the facilitator is called. When the tutor has been apprised of the educational needs of the specific student in question, a first meeting is arranged with the tutor and the client.

Employed students:

Due to some students' financial situation they will find it necessary to be employed at the same time they are enrolled in the college. In such cases, students may take a reduced load.

In order to more accurately facilitate the needs of some students, their employment may be in the area of the career in which they hope to be working full time after college. This employment, then constitutes on-the-job training or an apprenticeship. This program has the advantage of enabling the student to use the skills learned at the college in his work, and vice versa thus rendering both more relevent. Students who choose to work and study at the same time tend to be more motivated. They see clearly that what they are learning at the college is helping them to advance in their chosen field.

Some learners with only marginal skills find the idea of being a full-time student very threatening. They say to themselves, "What if I give up my job to attend college only to fail again?" If they

have never done well academically, what is to make them think they can make it now at the college level? These students may need their jobs, not only to support themselves or their families, but to have some security in case the idea of higher education falls through.

Courses.

Credit:

There are three categories of skills courses:

1) non-credit course

2) 1 credit course

3) 3 credit course

The non-credit course is for those students who have the least experience in any one or more skills area. This would include those students whose skills ability ranks somewhere in the first four to six grades. Students will be told that their skills are extremely weak in this area and that they need a brushup course before they begin college work. Students who have need of a skill or skills, but whose present degree of competency is beyond sixth grade level, will be placed in one credit courses.

The three credit courses are for those students whose skills competency ranges with most high school students. They are also required courses and must be taken by all students.

Because students' skill competency is so varied, some students may have courses in all three categories.

Category 1: (non-credit)

reading comprehension

basic writing

E.S.L. (beginning)

basic English usage

Category 2: (1 credit courses)

reading comprehension

expository writing

E.S.L. (intermediate)

usage

Category 3: (3 credit - required courses)

Reading

Study Skills

Composition

E.S.L. (advanced)

Speech

Once students have demonstrably proved that they can accomplish a skill, they may transfer out to the next course in the next category. In this way, students will, if motivated, proceed at their own rate.

Sequencing of courses.

Developmental Program:

1st Semester	2nd Semester
ESL I	ESL II
Grammatical Usage I	Grammatical Usage II
Developmental Reading I	Developmental Reading II
Developmental Writing I	Developmental Writing II

Freshman Year:

1st Semester	2nd Semester
ESL III	ESL IV
Study Skills I	Study Skills II
Rhetoric I	Rhetoric II
Math	Math
Science	Science

Sophomore Year:

1st Semester	2nd Semester
English Composition I	English Composition II
Technique of Research	Research Writing
Logic	Rational Psychology
Intro. to Literature	Contemporary Literature
Speech	Creative Writing
Math	Math
Science	Science

Course Progression:

ESL I

ESL II

ESL III

ESL IV

Developmental Reading and Writing I - Grammatical Usage I

Developmental Reading and Writing II - Grammatical Usage II

Rhetoric I - Study Skills I

Rhetoric II - Study Skills II

English Composition I

English Composition II

Sequence of required courses:

FRESHMAN YEAR	Rhetoric I	Study Skills I
SOPHOMORE YEAR	Rhetoric II	Study Skills II
	English Composition I	
	English Composition II	

Sequence according to content:

	Developmental Program	The sentence
	Freshman Year	The paragraph
	Sophomore Year	The essay

Sequence according to level of achievement:

Reading Level - Writing Level

1-6 grade	Dev. Reading I	Dev. Writing I
6-10 grade	Dev. Reading II	Dev. Writing II
10-12 grade	Rhetoric I	
	Rhetoric II	
13 grade	English Composition I	
	English Composition II	

Table 5

SUGGESTED SAMPLE DISTRIBUTION OF COURSES

Sophomore Year	Creative Writing	Eng. Comp. II	Contemp. Lit.	Rational Psych.	Research Writing
	Speech	Eng. Comp. I	Intro. to Lit.	Logic	Techniques of Research
Freshman Year	Math	Science	Rhetoric II	ESL IV	Study Skills
	Math	Science	Rhetoric I	ESL III	Study Skills
Developmental Year		Dev. Reading II	Usage II	ESL II	Deve. Writing II
		Dev. Reading I	Usage I	ESL I	Dev. Writing I

<u>Course descriptions</u>. The course titles in the following suggested
list are descriptive of the content. They are for the purpose of
curriculum design and not necessarily titles for a catalogue.

	English as a Second Language I and II
Developmental Program	Reading I and II
	Writing I and II
	Usage I and II
	ESL III and IV
Freshman Year	Rhetoric I and II
	Study Skills I and II
	English Composition I and II
Sophomore Year	Techniques of Research
	Research Writing

<u>English</u> <u>as</u> <u>a</u> <u>Second</u> <u>Language</u>: <u>I</u>:

> Course concentrates on initial listening and speaking skills for
> learning English: Pronunciation and sentence construction
>> Educational Goal: Initial preparation for bi-lingual,
>>> bi-cultural experience
>> Clientele: Non-English-speaking students
> 5 classes per week
> 5 labs per week

English as a Second Language: II:

> Prerequisite: ESL I
>
> Course centers on conversation in English and building on basic listening and speaking skills.
>
>> Educational Goal: Bi-lingual student (speaks and understands English adequately)
>>
>> Clientele: Non-English speakers who possess some competency in verbal skills in English
>
> 5 classes per week
>
> 5 labs per week

Developmental Reading: I:

> Course concentration centers on the introduction of basic reading skills: Comprehension and vocabulary in context.
>
>> Educational Objective: To introduce elemental reading comprehension and vocabulary skills
>>
>> Clientele: Students whose measured reading level is below 6th grade
>
> 3 classes per week
>
> 2 labs per week

Developmental Reading: II:

> Course centers on basic reading comprehension skills.
>
>> Educational Objective: To prepare students for reading at freshman college level
>>
>> Clientele: Students whose measured reading level is 7th-10th grade

3 classes per week

2 labs per week

Developmental Writing: II:

Course concentrates on developing basic writing skills,

beginning with the sentence as the basic unit of writing.

Educational Objective: To develop already present writing

skills

Clientele: Students whose writing level is between 7th

and 10th grades

3 classes per week

2 labs

Grammatical Usage: I:

Course designed to introduce the fundamentals of grammatical

usage, spelling, punctuation, syntax, parts of speech, capi-

talization, etc.

Educational Objective: To implant firm, basic language arts

foundation

Clientele: Students who test beneath the 6th grade level

3 classes per week

2 labs

Grammatical Usage: II:

Course designed to develop continued correct usage of English:

Punctuation, spelling, capitalization, syntax, parts of speech,

etc.

Educational Objective: To ensure firm, solid foundation in
basic English usage

Clientele: Students who test between 7th and 10th grade
levels

3 classes

2 labs

English as a Second Language: III:

Course concentration centers on introducing English reading and
writing skills.

Educational Objective: To initial preparation for college-
level work in English

Clientele: Bi-lingual students whose verbal speaking and
listening skills are adequate for college-level
work

5 classes per week, plus lab

Rhetoric: I:

Course designed to improve communications skills: Development of
reading comprehension and vocabulary as well as writing skills,
with concentration on the paragraph as basic unit. Emphasis is
placed on flexibility in reading, understanding the main idea,
making judgements conclusions, seeing inferences, and under-
standing characters. In writing, the primary aim is toward a
thesis or proposition logically in a structured and ordered way.

Educational Objective: To prepare students for college-
level reading and writing

Clientele: Students whose reading and writing skills test above 10th grade level

3 classes per week

2 labs per week

Rhetoric: II:

Prerequisite: Rhetoric I, (or test out)

Course concentration in continuing development in reading comprehension and expository writing. Introduce textual analysis, and critical reading, continue development of the paragraph as basic unit of exposition.

Educational Objective: To read and write at college level

Clientele: Students whose reading and writing test above 10th grade level

3 classes per week

2 labs per week

Study Skills: I:

Introduction to those basic skills necessary for success in study at the collegiate level. Initially this course would include listening skills, note-taking (from lectures, texts, readings), retention of information, self-motivation, scheduling of study time, reviewing, etc.

Educational Objective: To ensure that basic study skills necessary for successful college-level work are an integral, operating part of each student's repertoire of skills

Clientele: All freshman students

3 classes per week

2 labs per week

Study Skills: II:

Continuation of basic skills begun in first semester: Retention
of material, concentration, memory, psychology of learning,
taking exams, answering the question which is asked, writing
exam essays, preparing speeches, reports, and participation in
discussions, etc.

Educational Objective: To complete repertoire of study
skills, ensuring that they are
demonstrably present and operable for
each student

Clientele: All freshmen

3 classes per week

2 labs

English Composition: I:

Course introduces the technique and art of essay form. From a
wide variety of readings students learn critical reading as well
as logical thinking. Added to comprehension skills are those of
interpretation: Literary analysis, recognition of literary
forms, etc.

Educational Objective: To analyze and write according to
logical, rational norms

Clientele: Those whose skills are at college level

3 classes per week

2 labs per week

English Composition: II:

Prerequisite: English Composition I

Course continues to develop critical reading, thinking and writing according to logical, rational norms.

Educational Objective: To ensure competence in critical, analytical reading and writing at collegiate level

Clientele: Students who have mastered the basics of textual analysis and writing in essay form

3 classes per week

2 labs per week

Techniques of Research:

Course concentrations center on the library and its uses as a resource center. Students learn research methods by actually completing various assignments of interest to them in the library.

Educational Objective: To thoroughly acquaint students with uses and methods of researching

Clientele: Elective; recommended to students who wish to continue work for bachelors degree

3 classes per week

2 labs per week

<u>Research Writing</u>:

Course concentration centers on a thorough knowledge of the special methods, techniques, objectives and procedure in writing research studies such as reports, research papers and, particularly, the term paper. Students learn by actually completing a term paper.

     Educational Objective: To ensure demonstrable competency in writing research studies

     Clientele: Elective; recommended to students who wish to continue work for the bachelors degree

3 classes per week

2 labs per week

Other Resources

<u>Space allocation</u>. Each class section should have its own classroom to be used three times per week for the normal three hour course. The lab room will be used two times per week in the usual three-hour course.

The exceptions to the above will be for the Bi-lingual-Bi-cultural Program of the Communications Skills Component which will foster English-as-a-Second-Language courses and labs which will meet five days per week. All lab sessions should always be in a different room for reasons which are explained under the section on labs and their purpose and functions.

The classrooms for communications skills instruction need not be

contiguous. In fact, it would seem that classrooms used for skills instruction should be spread throughout the building in order to emphasize that these are college-level courses. Also, there is less likely to be a social stigma so often accompanying a single area where students might feel awkward being "seen" going there.

The classrooms may double for testing sessions. It is preferable to test students in small groups.

Some rooms, perhaps lab rooms when not in use may be utilized for tutorials or meetings with instructors. Larger rooms will be needed as "Quiet Rooms" for serious study and class preparation. This is particularly important for students who find that their home or neighborhood is too noisy for serious study. Any vacant classroom, unscheduled for an hour or two, could be designated as a quiet room. Students would be honor bound to respect the wishes of those who wish to study in silence.

One small room near the secretary's office will be needed for the mimeograph or duplicating machine. It should be adjacent to the secretary's room, since the secretary will do most of the typing and duplicating.

The Director will need one office for himself, primarily a place for private consultation with staff and/or students. His Adminis- trative Assistant will also need a small office.

One additional room will be required for staff meetings (weekly), a place for the instructors to consult, and for a Skills Resource Library, which should include books, films, and other materials.

Staff members could also meet in this room to prepare presentations, tutorials, and to evaluate student work.

Equipment allocation. Two telephones are necessary: One for the secretary and one for the Director.

Besides the mimeograph and/or duplicating machine, 4 file cabinets will be needed: 1 each for the Director, the secretary, the Administrative Assistant, and the staff room.

Three desks and chairs will be needed: 1 each for the Director, the Administrative Assistant, and the secretary. Tables and chairs will be required for the staff resource room.

It is assumed that office supplies will be available from the college.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

Summary

Of the many concepts upon which this curriculum is based, none is more important than observing and dealing with the causes which effect learning. In this instance of a curriculum for those minority group students at the college level whose communications skills are consequently marginal, the causes usually revert back to the negative academic experiences tied to institutional racism. Any curriculum which seeks to provide learning experiences must deal openly and effectively with the cause of previous negative academic experiences.

Implicit here is the fact that in the curriculum design presented, the student is the point of departure. This is in contradistinction to curricula which deal solely with subject matter. This curriculum is student-centered. It seeks to study the student, his problems, and those factors which may effect his learning.

The major impetus behind this particular design model has been to establish as the point of departure the manifest learning needs of the individual student. In analyzing the problems faced by those minority college students who possess only marginal skills ability, it is seen that, in general, institutional racism has been translated into the form of lack of adequate instruction in the past. It is concluded that it is not the student who is himself disadvantaged, but his previous learning experiences. Therefore, if a curriculum seeks to be truly effective, it must deal intrinsically with the

student, his learning style and rate--all of his learning needs. These
assessed educational needs are derived from an analysis of the complete
repertoire of the individual student's previous learning experiences,
which includes problems and their causes. The curriculum must be an
antidote to the causes of their prior education, which was "educationally
disadvantaged."

Thus, a curriculum designed for the improvement of communications
skills--reading comprehension, expository writing, grammatical usage,
and study skills--must begin with a study of the students themselves.
Specific characteristics of this student clientele have been listed
with a view toward further understanding these students and their
problems. For this reason, common behaviors as well as analysis and
interpretation of these characteristics and behaviors are discussed.
Difficulties such as the frequency of academic failure, the lack of
an opportunity to produce knowledge, the absence of positive rein-
forcement, and the high anxiety rate among this student clientele are
emphasized. All of this material is presented with a view toward
understanding the plight of these students in order to more accurately
provide effective learning experiences for them. The model is based,
then, on the observed needs of the student clientele.

The curriculum design is made up of six component parts, all
working simultaneously to the degree and extent necessary to meet
each individual student's communications skills learning needs:

1) diagnosis of educational needs

2) prescription of antidote

3) performance-based criteria

4) a direction toward individualized instruction

5) specific learning strategies for implementation of the model

6) flexibility in implementation of the design.

No part is effectively operant without the other component parts. It is the facilitator-diagnostician who delineates the degree to which each student's individual program of learning utilizes the six component functioning parts of the curriculum.

Thorough diagnosis provides the facilitator with accurate information concerning the student's learning needs and his present level of skills ability. The facilitator proceeds from the student's present level of skills competency. Knowing the student's strengths and weaknesses in the various communications skills, the facilitator prescribes the extent to which each of the six components of the curriculum model will be employed to meet his individual needs.

Performance-based criteria are utilized in order for students to practice performing the skills they are learning. Because skills are by their nature something which is done, the student will not be said to have learned until he can perform.

Gradually, as the learner acquires skills by means of prescribed amounts together with positive reinforcement, he will need the structure and direction of the model less frequently. Encouraged by the facilitator, the student will gradually learn more on his own until such a time as the learner is self-motivated and able to provide for his own learning experiences.

The program must be flexible, i.e., it must be used only to the degree that it assists the individual student in the acquisition of

skills. In this sense, the program is highly structured by facili-
tator's demands from without; yet, it seeks to produce learners who
are increasingly self-motivated.

Discussion

It is to be emphasized that this is one model among many. It is
not offered as a panacea. It is one way of dealing with these problems.
The design is a compendium--attitudinal, theoretical, directional, and
operational--based on an understanding of the students in question.

The first premise is that no curriculum can be created without
an understanding of the students for whom it is intended. The more
accurately the persons are understood, the more efficacious will be
the learning experiences provided for them.

It is to be recalled that this text grew out of work with a
specific group, in one particular locale. This means that many of
the suggestions made here may not apply to other students in other
circumstances. It would seem highly unlikely that all of the suggested
items contained here would be applicable elsewhere. It is a principle
set forth early on that the curriculum must mirror the needs of the
particular individuals for whom it is intended. In short, it is the
principle that any curriculum, if it is to be efficacious, must be
individual and prescriptive, i.e., it must be distinctly tailored
for each student.

The curriculum obviously contains elements invented or borrowed
and utilized by the author. It is the combination, functioning in
unison according to need, which makes the curriculum unique.

This is not to imply that many other approaches and/or techniques or methods are not recognized. There are other methods. Again, the method of approach should be that which accurately meets learning needs. Also, the facilitator should use the approach with which he is most comfortable and which fits his personality. The purpose in this text has been to demonstrate one facilitator's approach to a very particular group of students. Other means of reaching similar ends are recognized.

For example, from the outset, this curriculum presents a directive approach. The student, after a thorough diagnosis, is given a pre-scribed program. Gradually, it is to be hoped, the student, with positive reinforcement backing his successes, will become motivated enough to work on his own. However, in the beginning, the program is quite directive. It must be recognized here at this juncture in the developmental program that there are other approaches which are less directive. In fact, for students whose academic past has been super-inundated by many directives and teacher expectations, another less directive approach should be employed. In the case of the student clientele for whom this curriculum was designed, it was seen that teacher expectation and the general quality of directed learning were all but absent. Hence, the curriculum design presented is directive to the extent and degree required by individual student needs.

Lastly, a reading of this text should obviate the great need for further studies in these and related areas. In particular, studies are needed to enable the white majority to understand the racial persecution and the results of that persecution on minority students.

Perhaps case studies may be in order. It would seem that the educational establishment needs to know a great deal more than it does at present--witness the lack of literature in our libraries and academic institutions that deals with minority college students who possess only marginal skills ability.

APPENDIX I

Introduction

The purpose of this Appendix is to demonstrate by means of detailed, practical example exactly how the principles outlined in the text meet the educational needs described in Chapter II. In other words, the Appendix seeks to show how the design model may be implemented.

For the purpose of providing the practical application of the curriculum model, the writing course has been chosen as the example. The writing course seems to lend itself more to this demonstration than the other courses as it may be administered by most trained facilitators. Reading courses and those in English as a Second Language were not chosen as they require the trained attention of specialists who are specifically schooled in these areas.

The writing course is presented in full in order to present the basic tenets of the curriculum design as they might be applied in the classroom on a day-to-day basis. There is a description of the writing lab and its function in the overall design, as well as various learning strategies for use in the writing course which employ the principles set forth earlier.

Following the discussion of the writing course, the lab, and the suggested strategies for use therein, the two strategies of the daily quiz and the use of proper form in writing are discussed at length. This is to provide additional examples of implementing the curriculum design on the practical level.

All of the practical examples explicated in this Appendix are elaborated upon in order to demonstrate precisely how the six component parts of the curriculum unite on the practical level to effect the objective of communications skills facilitation.

Appendix II contains the primary objectives for both the study skills and the logic courses, as well as a list of recommended texts for all of the communications skills courses.

The Writing Course

First assignment. Firstly, give in detail the instructions for the first writing assignment. Cover each element of the assignment step by step. For emphasis, list the essential points of the directions on the board. Read aloud the first directive and encourage students to take notes including any and all instructions. This, of course, facilitates listening skills. And, even at this early juncture in their skills education, it will point to the absolute necessity of taking accurate notes. In addition, the fact that work begins immediately on the first day makes it clear to students that they are in an institution of higher learning. If students must be reminded to take notes, the teacher may take a step towards the class, lean over to them, thus stepping out of the role of instructor, and mention sotto voce that it would behoove students to take notes.

Secondly, ascertain from students that they clearly understand exactly what is expected of them in regard to this first assignment. This is done by fielding their questions and responding attentively and seriously to any query, and, by asking questions of the students

about the assignment. This first interaction between facilitator and learner sets the tone of the course. The facilitator should direct his questions especially to students who have not asked questions, who are quiet and/or non-committal, in order to: 1) make certain they understand; and 2) to bring them into the group interaction. The implications here are two-fold: the facilitator has definite demands and expectations and has described exactly what these are; but, also, by pausing for however long it takes, he will be as supportive of and as helpful to students as possible.

Thirdly, give a detailed, sequential explanation of the precise form of the assignment. It is suggested that a mimeographed example assignment in the proper form be passed out after the form has been explained. (Cf. Section on proper form, its purpose and function, later in this Appendix.) (Again: primary emphasis is on listening skills, and note-taking skills that coincide with instruction given in the study skills course.)

It is very important to reassure students at every step of the way that there are very definite reasons for each and every directive and procedure. For example, students often balk at losing points for not following explicit directions with regard to the form of their assignments. Make very certain that students understand the importance of following directions to the letter. It is sine qua non of the bureaucracies of contemporary mega-institutions that job applicants and employees are required to follow directions explicitly on institutional forms as a matter of course. It must be clear to students that the facilitator is not merely being arbitrary about having names,

dates, titles, and references in the proper place and a particular order on assignments. It should be repeatedly emphasized that each and every requirement, directive, expectation, and demand of the facilitator will lead to the adequate preparation of the individual student in order to provide him with the particular skills prerequisite for survival.

Due-dates. It should be fully and clearly expressed to students that assignments are due on time, on the precise day and at the exact hour specified. Some facilitators prefer not to even waste valuable class time and simply require students to place their assignments on the corner of the facilitator's desk as they enter the room before class begins. Papers not handed in before class are considered late and marked down accordingly. The rationale for this procedure is based on the fact that many teachers in the students' past did not actually require that papers be done in a certain way or on time. As has been pointed out earlier, there is a high incidence of lack of teacher expectation among students with marginal skills. To correct this situation, as well as to reiterate the fact that the student is in college, the demands and expectations made of the student must be firmly adhered to. It should be constantly pointed out to the student the reasonableness of the training as preparation for occupations and life where it is required that work be completed correctly and on time.

Legitimate circumstances inevitably will occur which prevent the accomplishment of normal duties. It should be pointed out to students that facilitators are aware of this. Therefore, it is advised that students clearly understand that, in such circumstances, they must

inform the instructor _in_ _advance_ of when the assignment is due. In fact, it is the obligation of the student to inform the facilitator. This information should be added to the mimeographed sheet of requirements passed out at the first class session.

When time permits a discussion of the nature of writing, the facilitators should emphasize that it is an exacting skill and is only attained through practice. Hence, it is truly important to require that each and every assignment be completed in order to _pass_ the course. Each assignment should be worthy, that is, sufficient to warrant a grade. If it is not, it should be done over until it is grade-worthy. The grade for the course is then determined by the progression of marks on each paper. Students must understand that while other courses may be passed without completing each assignment, for example, if the student demonstrates that he has learned the material by doing very well on the final exam; on the contrary, writing is learned only by constant practice. It is imperative that students clearly understand that there is no short cut to learning writing.

It would seem that if students know exactly what is required of them, and if requirements are presented to them in a logical and reasonable way, confusion will certainly be minimized, and students will be given the direction and purposefulness so earnestly needed. The directives will manifest that the instructor knows what he is about and that the course means business. Judging from the educational needs common to most students with marginal skills, it would seem that it is this direction and these expectations which are so frequently absent in their past educational experiences. The

directives, hopefully, are then seen to meet the actual needs of the students. Underlying all of this, the attitude is manifest to the student that: This is where he gets down to business and learns to write as writing courses in higher education will undoubtedly be the last chance to acquire this necessary tool.

If all the objectives, requirements, and the purpose of the course are set out in advance, in addition to the advantages mentioned above, there is the definite minimizing of any confusion which may subsequently arise. In short, the method described is similar to the contract method where the terms and obligations of both parties, facilitator and learners, are set forth clearly. As has been observed, one of the primary characteristics of students with marginal skills is that they tend to "negotiate" the system. This means that they endeavor in any way possible to circumvent actually doing the work. Many of these students unwittingly manifest substantial talent and ability in getting out of work and excusing themselves. If the effort, talent, skill, ingenuity, and creativity utilized in escaping work were channelled in the direction of, in this case, writing, the student would indubitably succeed. The facilitator who attempts to provide a sequence of learning experiences for students in this category must be aware of the typical causes behind any evasive tactic behaviors.

If difficulties arise between the facilitator and the student concerning the reasons why he has not completed assignments or handed them in on time, the student should be directed to the personal counselor who will arbitrate in such matters.

It goes without saying that students will be reminded that all

discussions between themselves and the facilitator will take place in private, usually during the facilitator's office hours, or before or after class sessions.

Evaluation of writing assignments. It is recommended that several innovative procedures or strategies be used, particularly on the first writing assignment.

First of all, as a suggestion, do not grade the first writing assignment. That is, do not put a mark on the paper after comments have been written on it. The reasoning behind this is to give the students an opportunity to see exactly how papers will be marked and commented on by the facilitator. To best make use of this strategy, it is not recommended that the students be told in advance that, although comments and corrections will be made, there will be no grade for the first assignment. Students will be most apprehensive about their first efforts. And, in a sense, it is well that they should be. At the outset of the course they should be in such a frame of mind which states: "I want to do the best job possible." In order to elicit a proper effort, allow students to assume that they will receive a grade.

Now, the rationale behind this strategy should increase the facilitator's trust in its wisdom and effectiveness. Most students, and particularly those with marginal writing skills, will be particularly apprehensive about their first paper. When the facilitator returns the evaluated papers, he will explain that it seems unfair to grade the first papers since students have not seen how he evaluates papers. The astuteness of this stance is seen to be very obvious: The facilitator

seems to be an unbelievably fair person.

An added reason to the rationale of this procedure is the fact that once the student has stopped looking for the grade, to what does his attention immediately turn? The facilitator's comments, and, as most facilitators of writing know, these comments are most important for student progress. They are the primary means of implementing the individualized instruction and personal developmental program of which each student will be a beneficiary.

An additional strategy here is to make certain that the very first item the student sees on his paper is something positive about the paper. It is most important psychologically for the student to find a favorable remark heading the list since, in many cases, students have been victims of receiving only negative comments, which, as has been shown, completely demoralizes and defeats them. They ask themselves why they should try to write if they are only going to fail.

With some students beginning papers, it may actually be difficult to discover what positive comment can be made. It has happened. A facilitator has been known to have to write "You observe margins well" atop a paper!

However, this is precisely the reason for use of the term "evaluation" rather than "correcting" papers. The term "correcting" implies to the student that, however much he tries, there will inevitably be, something wrong with his work. The emphasis here is on "wrong," namely, the negative aspects of the effort. Psychologically, this negative emphasis would not give the student confidence! And, as has been demonstrated above concerning students whose previous educational

experiences were lacking in quality, confidence is what is most needed!

The next strategy, and probably one of the most important, involves the written comments made by the facilitator on the students' papers. The facilitator should write as much as possible on the students' papers. In fact, if, in the beginning, student papers are short, it would not be at all unusual for the facilitator's comments to be longer than the original work. Also, on the first papers, the majority of the instructor's comments should be positive. The term "criticism" denotes both negative and positive evaluation. This fact is all too frequently forgotten by facilitators and students alike.

If students are trained to expect complete criticism, that is, both good and bad points about their work, they will be wishing for comments rather than shy away from a paper covered with them.

It is, of course, easier to see one error rather than ninety-nine favorable aspects of a paper. A new car with only one dent--and, instantly, the dent stands out like a sore thumb. A modern dancer may make free movement look as effortless as a cloud gliding across the sky; but, one false move, a jolt, and the error is doubly noticeable when everything else is so perfrect. So, when writing is unified, coherent, and organized, it falls together in one piece. If it is well done, the individual component parts should be difficult to separate from the whole. Hence, discerning the good points in a paper is made doubly difficult.

If the first comments a student reads on his paper are favorable, and they are seen to be true and not just flattery, several mechanisms will be set in motion. First, the student will see that the facilitator

endeavours to be fair, that is, he sees both positive and negative
sides of a paper. Fairness is doubly important to students who have
not been treated and evaluated fairly in the past.

Secondly, the student will be provided with an important learning
experience, that is, that evaluation and criticism means seeing both
sides, pro and con. In the learner's evaluation of his own work or of
the work of others, he will see that the fruit of analysis is two-fold:
negative and positive.

Emphasis should be given here to the process of analysis, which is
so important in learning writing skills. Obviously, this critical per-
formance skill works hand-in-hand with the objectives of the develop-
mental reading program. What is learned in writing, organizational
skills, unity and coherence, are utilized for the improvement of read-
ing comprehension.

Thirdly, the whole mechanism of the developmental writing program
is set in motion. The comments written on the student's paper should
be geared primarily to aiding the student in writing the next paper.
These comments, rather than any generalized text, are to be the most
effective method of improving the student's writing skills. The
comments are his guide, his direction, and his encouragement. Grad-
ually, by utilizing the advice proffered in a step-by-step individ-
ualized program, the student will be given a developmental program
which will effectively meet his distinct, individual needs and will
facilitate his actual use of writing skills.

At this juncture the _modus operandi_ of the communications skills
curriculum is plugged in. First, the facilitator reads the assignment

presented by the student. Second, he diagnoses the paper, ascertain-
ing exactly which are its good and not-so-good aspects. Note that
this diagnosis is individual. Third, the facilitator prescribes
exactly what is required as the next step in this student's individual-
ized, developmental program of skills learning in writing.

In diagnosis it is important to note again that the point of
departure is the student's present level of skills ability. As has
been shown, all too frequently in higher education, course instructors
have begun at a point where they expect students to be. Diagnosis
should circumvent this disastrous philosophy. By its nature, diagnosis
begins precisely with the student's present level of skills attainment.

If this developmental sequence of learning experiences is pre-
scribed by an observant, knowledgeable, and adroit facilitator, it
will prove to be the most efficacious means of improving writing skills.
It is based firmly on the student's assessed needs, and it builds,
one step at a time, in an effort not to overwhelm the student. He
will not be or feel defeated if "digestable" blocks are prescribed.
This then programs success.

It is unrealistic to believe that, even with careful attempts at
homogeneous grouping, any two students will be at the same point on
a continuum of skills competency. Even if it were so, there is the
importance of each student proceeding at his own rate! And, once
positive factors of evaluation are used and programmed success is
integral to each individual's program, many students will be seen to
develop writing skills at a fantastic rate. Implied here is the
facilitator who cares, who knows his students, who has analyzed their

learning styles, who knows how to encourage each and every individual, and who is an adept diagnostician. The facilitator who truly cares about his students, however demanding and "tough" he is, is the most supportive of students. In the writing courses, this is seen particularly in the students being overwhelmed by the generous portion of commentary heaped on their written assignments by the facilitator. The student should react: "This teacher reads my work more carefully than I read Shakespeare." If the facilitator takes the students' work seriously, the students will hesitate before merely jotting down just anything in his papers. Herein is a clever union of the developmental plan with quality education. It evokes the student to do his best. Theoretically, the student should no longer fear to do his best. As has been shown, a great many students fear doing their best lest they be "shot down" or castigated.

So often an aloofness from academic effort is all to obvious in writing assignments. Students who were effectively "taught" failure in their previous educational experiences are more susceptible than others. They have been taught not to trust teachers. Implicitly, they have been taught to protect themselves by not actually trying. The student's all too reasonable attitude is that he should "psych" out the facilitator by learning what the facilitator wants and presenting enough just to "get by" and survive. Some students will hand in a few scratches on a small piece of paper ripped from a notebook--anything to appease the facilitator. The genuine tragedy is that these attitudes and behaviors are learned.

Part of each week should be spent with the individual student

discussing his work. These conferences should take place if there is time during class, when students are completing an in-class assignment; or, preferably, in the writing lab. Conferences should also be held during the facilitator's office hours.

It is imperative to see each student individually each week, even if only for a few moments. Some students will require more time than others, depending upon their motivation. Not only may additional, individualized instruction be given at this time; but also, the facilitator needs this vital feedback session to learn of each student's attitude, motivation, learning style, and of any difficulties the student may be encountering.

The necessity of practice in mastering a skill has been mentioned frequently. As most writers know, all writing is rewriting. After the first assignment has been evaluated and returned to the students, the facilitator explains that the next assignment is to rewrite the original, using the facilitator's positive comments and criticisms as guidelines. The student is to correct each and every error. If the student does not understand a particular error, for example, an error in punctuation, he should be directed to a book to research the particular rule involved. This book may be a text or a reference work in the library. In any case, the student's correction of errors should utilize other skills, hopefully those taught in the study-skills course. It is excellent practice to have the student research his own errors: if he looks up spellings or rules of punctuation often enough, he will soon remember them. The complete correction process also facilitates the student's writing with more care and attention.

Because of the facilitator's comments, the student soon learns about which characteristics of writing he should take most care. So many student errors are made, not so much through ignorance as carelessness. If the student is taught in this manner to proceed in his writing with great care, he will undoubtedly improve his writing immensely.

If the student has difficulty researching his own errors or in understanding why they are errors, he should be instructed to see the facilitator before or after class, during office hours, or in the writing lab session. In short, there is no point in having students rewrite unless the rewriting is a learning experience. This should be pointed out to the students as the rationale behind rewriting. In addition, it must be emphasized that the facilitator is not requiring the students to memorize myriad grammar or punctuation rules. On the contrary, the facilitator is requesting that each student learn from his own mistakes! The direction here is toward erradicating the individual's errors. Gradually, as the facilitator comments on a series of assignments, the student will become sensitized to his own strong and weak points. The facilitator should take special care to note if a particular student is making the same error repeatedly or if he is not developing his strong points. The facilitator should let students know that their papers will be marked down severely if they persist in making the same repetitious errors.

How is it possible for the facilitator to keep a record of each student's development? If the student is required to return the rewritten copy together with the original copy upon which the facilitator's comments and the grade appear, the facilitator can see if the

student has corrected his errors and, at the same time, has followed the suggestions and comments thus improving on the original. In reviewing the rewritten copy, the facilitator should be able to see at a glance if progress is being made.

A means of insuring that students do, in fact, rewrite carefully and according to directives is to instruct students that the original grade will not be entered into the record book until the paper is returned together with an acceptable rewritten copy in which errors are corrected and directives for improvement have been followed. In this way the students will see that the assignment consists of both the original and the rewritten efforts. Implicit here is the importance given in writing training to taking as much care in writing as humanly possible. Also, an important adjunct to this is that the student has the satisfaction of completing an assignment which is as perfect as possible. This feeling of accomplishment should be emphasized constantly.

Some facilitators grade the rewritten effort; however, this has a definite disadvantage. Experience has shown that in this case students will not labor as long or as thoroughly over the original, but will simply allow the facilitator to do the work of finding all of the errors and mistakes. It would seem that to emphasize the student's effort is to provide for the facilitation of skills practice which is more efficacious. The facilitator's role is to provide an experience in which the student is required to do the work. It is not only recommended that the rewritten copy be considered a necessary and integral part of the process, but that the feeling of accomplishment

should suffice. The student knows he must write the paper over according to the facilitator's advice and remarks. From this learning experience in which he is actively engaged, the student knows he will receive the grade of the original for his total effort. Students should be reminded that, if they learn from the experiences of rewriting, it will necessarily carry over to their next assignment. As they gather a skills repertoire, actually utilize their skills in writing and rewriting, they will be able to use these same skills in their next attempt. Obviously, grades will improve accordingly.

When the facilitator receives the graded original as well as the accompanying rewritten copy, he will place it in a file. Each student should have a file in which all of his assignments are kept. Some facilitators have had the students keep their own assignments in folders; however, all too often, even with the best intentions, students will inevitably lose their work or something will happen to it. It is therefore recommended that the facilitator keep the file. Keeping the file may also prove useful to the facilitator in other ways. First, it is very helpful to be able to spread the papers out on the desk when the student comes to the facilitator's office for one of the periodic conferences. The facilitator will be in an excellent position to reinforce students by actually showing them evidence of their progress. For example, the student may be shown the first paper he wrote as compared to the fifth or sixth assignment and therein the specific evidence which points to progress. Before the conference the student may be nervous and apprehensive. If a positive note is the point of departure, the student's anxiety, or at least his

fear of the unknown, will be reduced. The student will see that the facilitator has carefully kept and analyzed his papers. Hence, the student should be evoked by this to take even greater care and pains with his work when he sees how seriously the facilitator takes his work. Second, the file acts as an on-going record. In each file, on the inside cover or on a separate sheet, the facilitator may keep notations of the specific skills each student is working toward improving. For example, a glance at the list will inform the facilitator that a particular student is having difficulty with sentence structure or that the student tends to put too many ideas into one sentence. In this way the facilitator is able to come down emphatically on students who make the same errors repeatedly. There seems to be no better record of progress than actually having the student's work. If the student contests a grade or his final mark for the course, the facilitator is covered as he has all of the work in the file which may be examined by the student.

Third, the file of work has proved to be excellent reinforcement when it is returned to the student after the course is over. The students are informed that, after they receive their grades, usually at the outset of the next semester, they may collect all of their work during the facilitator's office hours. At this session, hopefully, the facilitator will return a large pile of work and congratulate the student on work well done. Usually the students are amazed by the volume of their work and by the notable difference between their first attempt and the essay done for the final examination. This evidence should be impressed upon the student. Students often need to see

clearly that they have, in fact, learned something and that the arduous
and time-consuming work of the course has improved their writing. The
facilitator may even give the student a copy of the list of skills
kept in the folder to indicate how much ground was covered.

In evaluating papers, particularly at the beginning of the semester,
the facilitator may find that a particular student's work contains so
many errors that the facilitator is at a loss as to where to have the
student begin. It is then recommended that the facilitator have a con-
ference with the student. In most cases, the student is quite aware
that his writing is terribly deficient. There should not be an
attempt to laugh it off or to be phony about it. It is best to be
as much a realist as the student is likely to be. The facilitator
should sit the student down and ask him about his writing, how he has
done in the past and what he thinks and feels about writing. The facil-
itator should listen. He should take cues from what the student says.
The best approach is to be direct and honest, to inform the student
that there are many errors in his work and there is much work to be
done; however, if he cares, if he wants to work and learn, it is
possible to remedy the situation. The instructor should, through diag-
nosis, choose one major item on which to work, for example, maintain-
ing one idea per sentence. It is well to begin with some item of
substance and not confusing punctuation rules or anything which could
be considered arbitrary or which smacks of work done at the primary or
secondary levels. He should explain to the student that, on the
second assignment, the facilitator will evaluate the paper on this
one criteria. In other words, no other mistakes will be corrected.

In this way, the student, under the facilitator's direction, will pro-
ceed to eliminate one error at a time from his writing. This procedure
is particularly important to students who seem overwhelmed by their
numerous errors. Instruct the student not to worry about the other
mistakes, that they will be taken care of and dealt with in due course.
Remind the student that if skills are thoroughly mastered one at a
time, they will have time to be inculcated into the student's per-
formance and become, by use and practice, part of his skills reper-
toire. It is to be remembered that at the same time students are
receiving positive direction and guidance with regard to their writing.
Having each student attack one or only several skills at a time, plus
the fact that the student has needed direction and feels that he can
accomplish a few goals at a time, rather than everything at once,
would seem more conducive to success.

Performance criteria in writing. Although at first glance it may
seem more orderly and efficient to have a checklist of performances
with regard to writing, it does not seem to be the best way to utilize
the obvious benefits of a performance based curriculum. Since writing
is a skill actually involving many smaller skills, its very nature
presupposes performance criteria. Whereas in some disciplines, it
may be well to begin at one point and proceed through the list of
delineated performances, as in the way a study skills course might be
designed, writing at the college level does not seem to be best facili-
tated this way. Because the students are in college, and, more to the
point, if their writing skills are marginal, it is assumed they have
already had some degree of training either negative or positive in

approach. The straight list of objective performances could well be used with students who are beginning from scratch, who have had no previous writing experience whatsoever. The predicament with students whose writing skills are marginal is the fact they have varying degrees of writing experience and ability. The needs of the student with only marginal skills have been explained in Chapter II. From this educational needs assessment is is clearly seen that to teach any student that which he has already mastered at primary or secondary level would be disastrous. He would most probably be insulted, and, certainly, he would not feel that he was accomplishing college level work.

On the other hand, in a classroom situation where there are ten to a dozen persons all with their own unique degrees of writing skills, what can be done to have them feel they are in college, yet work to regain experience lost at the primary or secondary level? A list of performances which begins at the beginning would be just what some students need and yet would insult others, possibly doing irreparable psychological harm. For this reason, the list of performances should not be used as a base for the writing curriculum.

Yet, what is to be done about the students whose writing needs begin with those which are, under normal circumstances, provided for at the elementary level? And can these elementary learning experiences be provided for some and not for others in the same class? Lastly, how can the student at the same time be made to feel that he is in college, doing college level work--so important psychologically? It would seem that these three problems can be dealt with, if not solved, by utilizing as a base the student's own writing. This is what a

developmental course in writing is; this is precisely how it develops.

If the student-centered concept is employed in the writing course, in using as the starting point and the basis of the course the student's own writing, all of the problems mentioned above can effectively be dealt with. If the instructor begins by evaluating the student's paper, diagnosing its positive and negative attributes, and then prescribing only those performances which would be most helpful to the student, the student is more apt to be successful. He will not be insulted by a public presentation before an entire class and the atmosphere of "college work" is maintained. Nor does he have to listen to any presentations about material with which he is already familiar. Added to this, the student-centered method allows the facilitator to deal quite effectively with many varying degrees of writing skills in the same class.

This program is student-centered in that it begins with the student and his work at his level, in his "here and now" situation. The psychological benefit of this is to make the course highly relevant to the student by meeting his particular needs. It will involve the student more if he feels that his writing is being analyzed and the suggested performances prescribed by the facilitator are improving his writing. What this comes down to, of course, is individualized instruction. This entire writing curriculum, based on diagnosis and prescription, seeks a set of performances needed for this particular individual at this particular point in his skills experience. In short, this curriculum is directed toward individualized instruction.

If there are directives which could be made to the group, the

facilitator may provide a class presentation on specific performances.

How then does the facilitator utilize class periods? In these class sessions he does two things. First, he presents directives on how to organize and how to write unified and coherent paragraphs. In short, the directives for class presentation should be the "college level" performances. Specifically, the presentations should be on the directives given in the recommended text, by Dr. Kenneth Bruffree of Brooklyn College, A Short Course in Writing. Second, the facilitator presents mimeographed copies of student work for discussion. When duplicating student work it is important not to pick apart a poorly written paper. The psychological damage of this negative action on the student-author would be irreparable. In discussion, more emphasis should be on the positive aspects of the paper and less emphasis on the negative. Particularly with the students whose attention span is short, it would be wise to bombard them with positive examples of what is exemplary, of what should be done, of which performance criteria should be used. The student paper chosen should not always be the paper of the best qualified student but should be from among the best. Having a paper reproduced for the entire class should be presented as a privilege. The student should construe it an honor that he has to some degree accomplished and succeeded. The paper should clearly ill-ustrate the attributes of writing which the facilitator is striving to inculcate at the time. The paper should be typed without errors, that is, with all of the student's errors corrected. Also, the student-author's permission should be sought before duplication for a class. Frequently students write about personal subject matter which they

may not want others to read.

Once the student paper is duplicated, it should be explicated by the instructor and the class together. This group effort of analyzing the paper should always begin with an attempt to list all of the positive points which have gone into making it an admirable effort. These items should be listed on the board as they are mentioned by the group. Negative criticisms should not be written on the board in order to de-emphasize their importance. Here again, great care should be taken of the personal feelings of the author.

The facilitator will see that students show a marked interest in the efforts of their peers. It would seem that more interest is generated by using material provided by the class rather than that taken from some texts. Student papers seem to have more immediacy because students wrote them, frequently on assigned topics and with similar directives. The attributes the facilitator is promulgating are brought home more graphically if student work is utilized. And, too, the facilitator will find that students will be freshly motivated to write as well as they can in order to have their work chosen as an example for the rest of the class.

Grading. If grades must be given, there do seem to be some noteable means by which they might be employed to further motivate students. In short, grades can be used positively.

In the writing course, grades may be used to further reinforce students in a positive way by not averaging the grades on the papers received over the period of the semester. This provides an excellent opportunity for students to realize that skills are learned, improved,

and built-up. The example of the bicycle is appropriate. The person learning to ride the bicycle often falls off in the beginning. However, at the end of his training, he is quite capable. In the same manner, writing skills are learned, built upon, and used. The individual's skill and his repertoire of abilities increases. Why, then, if the person is capable of doing college-level writing at the end of the semester's course, should he be penalized for the errors made at the awkward outset?

Students are informed that they are expected to improve. In other words, the second assignment should be better than the first. If there is any learning gleaned from the first assignment, these skill-performances should be utilized and made to work for the betterment of the second assignment. In this manner, the third assignment should improve upon the first two. If the facilitator informs the students that he wants to see noticeable improvement and will grade accordingly, the students will be motivated to try more with each paper. (This is not to be announced until after the first assignment as some students may deliberately lower their own standards.)

It is explained to the students that they are asked only to improve. If they improve consistently, their grades may appear something like this: D, D, D+, D+, D+, C, C-, C, C+, C+, C+, B-, C+, B-, B, B, B+, B+. If the grades were averaged, the student would probably receive a grade of "C." However, if the final grade for the course is determined by how many performances the student masters at the end, the student's grade would be a "B" or a "B+." This built-in motivator assists greatly at traditional times during the semester when student

effort begins to lag. If the facilitator uses grades to motivate, the student should gather momentum as he constantly improves. If this grading strategy is used together with the diagnosed and prescribed success of accomplishing and succeeding at the student's own rate, the results should be favorable.

If this mode of grading is used it also defuses another volatile problem, namely, that of competition. If each student is working diligently to improve upon his own work to specifically ensure that his present effort surpasses his last, he is only in competition with himself. It is, therefore, implied that the student's work is not judged on any basis but his own improvement, that his work is not compared to that of others in the class. If, as has been asserted above, it is common for college students with marginal skills to be at various levels of competency, among a dozen students in a class there may be many objective levels of writing skills ability. Class competition would only serve to intimidate and defeat those who are the least experienced. Often in education in the United States, competition has been used by teachers, coaches, and parents in order to motivate students, to challenge them to their utmost capacity. It would seem that in the case of adult students who have only marginal skills and who are usually quite embarrassed and very sensitive about it, any comparison with others that creates a sense of competition would only serve to further intimidate them. As has been observed, what the student with marginal skills usually needs more often than not is to know success and accomplishment firsthand. Experience has proved that comparison to others' work, particularly at the outset, is

noticeably defeating for many students with marginal skills.

The writing facilitator's attitude toward the student's ability is more important than all of the methods, techniques, machines, and strategies. In this model design, the foundation of the entire effort is on the instructors who facilitate and implement it. Particularly important is the facilitator's attitude toward students whose writing ability is next to nil. It is suggested that the facilitator merely regard this student's lack of ability in writing as an absence of experience. For example, the student may have great experience with automobiles while the facilitator knows nothing about them. It is just that the student has not had experience in writing. Often when students from minority groups have risen from the prison of poverty to which their people have been condemned in the United States, it is not only a tribute that they are not insane or defeated by the horrible impact of their environment, but it is a wonder. The stamina and courage, the desire to survive and succeed are the elements which the facilitator may bank on in providing meaningful and viable learning experiences in facilitating writing skills.

Writing lab. Because most students with marginal writing skills lack experience, what is needed most, as seen in the discussion of the nature of skills, is practice. In short, the only remedy for a lack of experience is experience. It is the primary function of the facilitator to remedy this situation by diagnosing each individual student and prescribing relevant experiences in proper dosages and in a logical series, that will enhance his writing skills.

It is the primary function of the writing lab to be a mechanism

for providing writing skills experience. In the class sessions, held three times per week as in most college courses, the primary purpose is presentation, explication, and discussion of writing. There may occasionally be in-class writing in preparation for an examination situation or for writing under a time limit.

Once an assignment is explained in the class, for example, Monday's class, the students will then work on that same assignment in the lab period on Tuesday. The students must do nothing else but write in this lab. The writing lab is for the specific purpose of providing practice at writing which the student with marginal skills has not usually had to date. In the lab the student actually endeavors to implement what he has learned in the previous classes. As has been repeatedly pointed out, the student has not "learned" a skill until he can use it. Classroom presentations, discussions, explanations are merely that: they are not skills learning. It is in the writing lab that the student actually begins to perform. Hence, without the lab, there is not much skills learning taking place.

The lab provides an excellent opportunity for the facilitator to work with each student individually. This is of primary importance. In one hour an instructor may spend five minutes with twelve students or ten minutes with six students. Some students will need the facilitator more than others. He may spend only two minutes with one student and need to spend twenty minutes with another. However, there is no more efficacious way in which to meet the educational needs of students with marginal writing skills than the personal, individual attention of the facilitator in the writing lab. No machine has yet been invented

to replace the facilitator in this role. What the facilitator does is to constantly diagnose and prescribe. He evaluates the student's work and encourages or even berates him when he seems to need it. His whole direction is toward learning and acting on the perceived educational needs of the students. It is in the writing lab that the direction of the model toward efficacious individualized instruction becomes a reality. By means of constant contact with the students and their writing needs, the facilitator learns more precisely how to approach students and how to improve class presentations.

The lab twice a week thus ensures that the student is employing the writing skills five out of seven days per week. With one weekend assignment, the student should then have six days of writing practice per week. By the nature of skills and the primary position of practice in learning to write, the student should be receiving the experience in performance which he lacks and which will ensure him of usable skills.

Usually there is one major writing assignment per week in the writing course, usually in class on Friday. If the assignment is presented in class on Monday, the work is brought by the student to lab on Tuesday where he works on it and the facilitator offers assistance. From this lab session, the facilitator should be able to glean some general needs common to many which he can explain in Wednesday's class. On Thursday, the students again bring their work, now nearing completion, to the lab. Again, the facilitator assists the student, answers his questions, responding to the student's felt needs first. It is assumed that the student is working on this assignment on his

imposed on the student. It may be too much writing-learning experience for him to imbibe at one time. However, if a tutor is engaged, both the tutor and the facilitator will discuss specific performance objectives on which the student needs work.

Strategies. The only way to group students homogeneously for the writing course is to have the in-coming students write a pre-test paragraph or two.

First, it would seem that if students are grouped homogeneously according to their skills experience, their writing needs will be more effectively met as the facilitator's presentations will be more meaningful and relevant to the entire group. In other words, a presentation will not be over the heads of some and boring and tiresome for those who already understand the material.

It will be most difficult to group the students with the least amount of writing skills ability by judging from a pre-test. However, it will be immediately obvious who those students are who do have some degree of writing skills and training experience. They will stand out immediately and may be directed to intermediate or more experienced classes. They may even test out of the developmental course altogether.

In the cases of those who seem to have the least amount of experience, it will be more difficult to render a prognosis as there is simply less to go on. Complicating the matter is the fact that it is not unusual for students with marginal skills to feel inadequate since they are inexperienced in skills and, therefore, they are often very much terrified of any testing situation. Hence, the pre-test session should be as non-threatening as possible. It may be more successful to place

students in sections of the course at random and have them write on a topic in the first class. Then, the Skills Director, together with the diagnostician and the staff of facilitators could place them in homogeneous groups scheduled at the same day and time at which the original class had been scheduled. Care must be taken not to undermine the difficult work of scheduling classes.

If a student begins to demonstrate signs of marked progress and improvement, he may be moved up to another, more experienced group during the semester as a reward and as a means of more effectively and adequately meeting his educational needs. Hopefully, this new group should be one with the same facilitator who knows this particular student's history, work, and writing needs. (Hence facilitators should have sections of the course which vary in meeting skills experience.) In short, students should be allowed to proceed at their own rate. Particularly, those who excel should not be held back or have their progress impeded in any way.

In the course of the semester, particularly if the proposition method according to Dr. Brufree is used, the students will be in need of a respite from the exactitudes of organizing expository prose. At this time, creative writing may be introduced. It will usually be found that however limited their experience with expository writing, many students with only marginal skills in writing exposition have creative writing ability. This should not be squelched in favor of expository writing. On the contrary, creativity in writing should be encouraged. This may be accomplished in several ways. Occasionally the facilitator may declare a holiday from the rigors of the straight

proposition form and assign a creative workpiece. Or, as Dr. Brufree himself suggests, there may be several creative "warm up" assignments to ease students into the writing vein. Or, if a student really enjoys creative writing, he may be encouraged to write all he pleases as extra credit. The work will be evaluated by the facilitator and returned with comments, however, not graded, as the grades for the course are for the majority of the class assignments which are concerned with expository prose only.

The section in this chapter on the class quiz should be noted. It is of particular benefit in the writing course. The quiz asks that students write one or two sentences correctly in a given space of time. In other words, the student must think of the answer, plan it, write it out correctly in a complete sentence, correctly punctuate using proper syntax. It is excellent practice for the test or exam situation.

An adjunct to this strategy is the one-sentence "essay." Students are given several pithy statements, usually one-sentence famous quotations. The students are then assigned to write a sentence of their own in which they try to pack as much meaning and profundity as possible. In this way, teaching the intricacies of the sentence at the collegiate level is sufficiently disguised so as not to seem like primary or secondary level work.

A strategy to be used in evaluating papers, particularly if the student is bothered by his inabilities at writing, is for the facilitator to minimize it by referring to it in different terms. For example, if the student is hypersensitive about his chronic misspellings, some of these could be labeled "w.w." for wrong word when the teacher

evaluates his paper.

Another strategy is to have the students choose their own topics to write about. Besides the usual current events, readings, the great themes of life, love, and death, the students themselves are usually a gold mine of choices. It is suggested that a regular assignment would be to request students to list 5 to 10 topics on which they would like to write. If students find it difficult to find any issues within themselves or their own sphere of interests, suggest that they write on subjects about which they feel most strongly, favorably or unfavorably.

Concepts and performances of the writing courses. Note: As has been pointed out the following concepts and performances in a developmental program are learned as the student has need of them, based on his present competency level.

Organization

introduction

conclusions

body of essay

unity

emphasis

coherence

Content: (performance)

   expository prose

   the sentence

   the paragraph

   the essay

   creative writing

   exam

   summary

   outline

   usage

   purpose in writing

   vocabulary

   form

   analysis

   tone

   transition

   point of view

   objective

   subjective

   impersonal

   emotional

   formal

   informal

   persuasion

   rhetoric

   evidence

   description

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Order:

chronological

Nestoriam

propositional

alphabetically

numerical

spatial

logical

psychological

hierarchic

comparison-contrast

classification

Terms:

illustration

example

exemplification

comparison

contrast

metaphor

similie

irony

biography

autobiography

definition

denotation

connotation

Form. The following are the instructions for the form in which all written work is to be completed. Any papers not observing the proper form will be returned to the student and will not be evaluated until they are presented correctly according to the directions below.*

1. Final copies of assignments will be written in ink or typed. All tests and quizzes will be in ink. (Rough drafts of assignments may be in pencil.)

2. Penmanship must be legible, as clear and readable as possible

3. Essays, compositions, and other assignments are to be completed on 8 1/2 by 11 inch loose-leaf or typing paper. (No paper ripped from a notebook may be used.)

4. The following applies to all written assignments, tests, and quizzes.

    a. name in the upper right-hand corner

    b. course name and section number under name

    c. date on which the paper was written under the above

5. Title is centered in the first line.

6. Never write on the bottom line.

7. Margins:

    1 inch on the left

    1/2 inch on the right

    1/2 inch on the bottom of the page

* When the proper form is not used on quizzes, the grade for that particular quiz will be zero.

8.   Neatness counts: Your work represents you.

cf.   Example of how a paper should appear on following page.

   Notes on the form of assignments.   Once again, when presenting
and explicating the requirements for the form in which assignments are
to be completed, it should be reiterated to students that these rules
are not set by the arbitrary whims of instructors.   Students must be
consistently reminded that there is a reason behind each and every
rule.

   As far as the form in which written work is done, it is not so
important what the form is as long as the student consistently uses
some form.   However, students at the collegiate level should be aware
of the usual conventions of society when using written form.   It is
part of their education and training.   Neatness and orderliness are
basically for clarity so that the reader may clearly comprehend.

   Secondly, any paper presented represents the writer and his atti-
tude.   They represent not only his attitude toward his work; but, more
importantly, his attitude toward himself.   Just as no one would go to
a job interview or an important meeting without being suitably dressed,
the appearance of one's paper is representative of the writer.   This
is, of course, a societal value.   No one is saying that one must dress
for job interviews.   However, it is part of the student's training
to know and to be able to utilize what is considered form in society.
If later, for his own reasons, he chooses not to use the proper form,
that is his choice.   In other words, the student does not act from
ignorance.   This should be pointed out and made explicit!

   It may be added that the regulations for the form are stringent

Table 6

Example of Form

	Yalmer Swenson English 102 January 32, 1989	
	The Green Hat.	
	When in the curse of human events, all men are created equal; but they soon get over it.	
1"		1/2"

1/2"

and consistently enforced for another reason. It is one thing to have a presentation of what proper written form is; it is quite another to utilize it consistently. It is part of the training that students of higher education be required to practice using socially acceptable forms of writing.

It is excellent practice for students to use the correct form on quizzes and tests. The students will understandably be nervous. With constant practice they will find, however, that utilizing proper form will become second nature to them. Thus they will gain confidence and pride in their ability to work correctly even under the most arduous conditions and circumstances.

Students most often forget the proper form on quizzes--the name, course, and date in the upper right-hand corner. They are understandably in a hurry, particularly if the quiz is timed. One solution to this problem which generally works is to give the student a zero on any quiz not in the proper form. Although this may seem harsh, there are very few students who make the mistake of not observing the correct form more than once. Again, students should be reminded that from this stringent method they will learn to use proper form as a matter of course under pressure. They will learn to be "cool" under any circumstances.

The students will undoubtedly complain most bitterly, particularly if they have the correct answer on the quiz and they receive a zero for not following directions or the proper form. However, remind them that the quiz is worth only five (5) points.

The method of taking off a few points when students do not use

the correct form or follow directions or instructions has been tried in
the past; however, students in general still become sloppy and negli-
gent about using the form. Giving a zero is strict. Most every stu-
dent will receive at least one zero. But, this method works. Students
begin to feel pride in accomplishment. And, any college student of
whatever ability should be capable of following directions and form.

If the students understand the reasoning behind the rules; if they
understand the importance of the rules in their future lives; if they
see this action of the facilitators as, say, the demands of the coach
at practice; then, they will see that the facilitator cares <u>and</u> that
they are learning and accomplishing.

Under this arduous system, most students soon learn the value of
planning ahead. It may be suggested to them that, if they tend to be
forgetful, they might put their names and the course and section number
on some papers so that when the timed quiz begins, they will only have
to put the date on their paper. Students will then be ready to concen-
trate on the question.

<div align="center">The Class Quiz</div>

The class quiz may serve several very important educational needs,
particularly in a performance-based course, such as the skills courses.

Many facilitators who have employed the short quiz each class
period have stated that it is a most effective learning device.

In the first place, if the student knows that there will always
be a quiz, he will be inclined to do his assignment. And, human nature
being what it is, the student will be more inclined to complete assign-
ments if he knows he can gain points in the class quiz; or, conversely,

he knows he will lose valuable points if he has not read the assign-
ment. The quiz is particularly helpful in facilitating learning if
the success of class presentation and activity depends on the students'
having read an assignment. This is true in any subject matter where
the assignment is a prerequisite for the student's learning, for example,
a chemistry lab, a history presentation, or a lecture in philosophy.

Secondly, if the student knows from experience that a quiz will
be given, he will not have to waste time trying to "psych out" or
second-guess the facilitator. The student's concern then is trans-
ferred to the more relevant issue or agenda: What will the instructor
ask? What will the question or questions be? What should be read and
studied most carefully.

Implicit here is the fact that the quiz is based on the previous
class assignment. If the student knows this, then he will read with
greater care and attention and, will look for possible quiz questions.
Hence, the quiz device is superb for improving study habits. The
student begins not only to imbibe facts to be regurgitated; but, he
begins to think and question as he reads and studies. The student even
begins to question before he reads, a practice which greatly improves
comprehension. The quiz also facilitates group study. Students will
be heard before class asking one another what they think the quiz
questions will be. Students will also be seen to have their noses in
books or notes in preparation for the quiz. This has the decided
benefit for the facilitator of placing the emphasis squarely on the
subject matter in question. The concern of the student is then the
subject under discussion and not how to "negotiate the system" by

"psyching out" the facilitator.

The quiz also has the benefit of providing the learners with an opportunity to utilize many skills. First, if during the quiz the questions are never repeated, then the students must practice their listening skills. It may be difficult, at times, for the facilitator not to repeat. Nevertheless, in training for real life situations, an individual cannot rely on having things repeated until he finally hears them or until he decides he is ready to listen. This must be explained to students. It is amazing how well they listen if they know with certainty the question will not be repeated. However, the facilitator must be strictly consistent and never repeat a question. No other method quite improves listening skills so well. It might be added that instructions, directions, and assignments should be given only once also in order to improve listening skills. In all fairness, students must be informed of this procedure in advance and be advised of the reasoning behind this strategy. It may be added in explanation to students that it is not fair or considerate of one student who may not have been paying attention to delay others who may have already heard what was said and taken note accordingly. It must be constantly reiterated to students that the facilitator knows precisely what he is doing, that the core basis for a performance-based curriculum is that the students actually use what they have learned. It may be added by way of reassurance, that, by the time they leave the class, they will possess these abilities.

The quiz also trains students in examsmanship by giving them frequent practice in rapid thinking. It should be pointed out to students

that after they hear the question or questions, they should stop and think before they write. On an examination, they must stop and think first and then write cogently and concisely without error. If points are also deducted for errors in grammar, punctuation, spelling, and usage this reinforces the behaviors the instructional staff is endeavoring to establish in each of these areas. In short, the student soon learns that it is not merely enough to provide the correct answer; but, also, that it is most assuredly part of his training that he be capable of communicating in writing exactly what he intends. Communication must, by its nature, be exact. Hopefully, too, this habit of stopping and thinking will carry over to discussions. Individuals will then be less inclined to say anything merely for the sake of saying something.

If the standards of the quiz are the same for essays, the students will have more practice in thinking out exactly what they are going to write on the quiz and how they are going to write it.

The student should understand that by having his errors corrected on the quiz he will learn from his own mistakes. He is not asked to learn from someone else's errors here, only his own. If he sees that he is losing points because he consistently makes the same errors, he will be less likely to make these same errors. And, as most facilitators who have evaluated several thousands of papers know, students tend to make the same errors consistently. The overall effect of this is that the student becomes a much more careful writer. Usually, one point off for each error is normal; however, if the answer is correct and yet there are five or more errors on a five point quiz, the student should perhaps be given two points for the correct answer.

If students consistently lose points because of the same mistakes, they may be reminded that they are free to make an appointment with the facilitator who will help them. After a discussion with the student about his work in general, _and_ how he feels about it, the facilitator should then diagnose the most efficacious learning method for this student. Hopefully, non-directive counseling techniques may be employed. That is, the instructor should avoid giving the student the answers or the explanation. Student-centered learning involves asking the student how he intends to learn. He may decide to proceed to the library and ascertain the answer for himself, particularly if he is capable and mature enough to do it. Or, depending on the problem, the student may come to the conclusion, with non-directive help from the facilitator, that he stands in need of a tutor. In short, the facilitator in the one-to-one relationship with a student, should avoid doing the work for the student at all costs.

The facilitator's role, then, is to diagnose and prescribe experiences which will facilitate learning for the student. This fact should be uppermost in the facilitator's mind when deciding which learning experiences will be utilized with a particular student with his own specific needs. The quiz, by its consistent demands, can be the impetus to facilitating learning.

If the class sessions begin with a quiz there is the added benefit of motivating students not to be absent without cause. Those students who have not called in _before_ class time requesting permission to be excused as well as those who are late for class and who have missed the quiz will rate a zero grade for the day's quiz. It is especially effective if the facilitator marches through the door saying, "Number

one...." If he does all of this, and does it consistently, the students
will not be unnecessarily absent or appear late.

Absenteeism and tardiness are quite prevalent among students with
marginal skills. It is clear from their educational needs assessment
why this is so. Partly, as has been demonstrated, the students avoid
quizzes and tests because they have been conditioned to failure in their
previous academic environment. Hence, the facilitator must take great
care to see that, particularly in the beginning, students view the
quiz as positive reinforcement. In other words, the quiz should be
contrived so as to be a success for the majority of the students. The
answer to the quiz questions, at the outset, should be quite obvious
to anyone who so much as came close to the assignment. Perhaps for the
first time in their lives, students will begin to "rack up" points--
instead of being defeated by questions which are too difficult.

How does the facilitator know which kind of questions to ask then,
particularly in the beginning before he has had a chance to know his
students? A general question about a reading assignment such as, "What
was the author's main idea?" is sufficient. This may also be an
opportunity to demonstrate to a class how many different answers to such
a question may be correct.

The student responses on quizzes also provide the facilitator with
very important feedback. The facilitator can gage just how much the
students are comprehending. The quizzes provide a class-by-class re-
port on their comprehension and skills progress.

By beginning each class with a quiz, the facilitator automatically
sets the tone for the class and the course. The idea is that, because
of the quiz, there must be quiet in order to listen to the question or

questions. This immediately produces a get-to-work atmosphere, which, hopefully, will engender a get-to-work attitude. The quiz sets every-one to work.

It should also be emphasized that because of the nature of skills attainment, progress is made on a day-to-day basis. It involves the unending practice previously mentioned. Because skills must be utilized daily, the quiz offers an excellent opportunity for actual performance. Grades of quizzes, then, in the skills area are far more important than, say, a two-hour exam at the end of a course. Students should be notified that their final grade for the course will depend, more than on anything else, on their day-to-day progress in actually acquiring skills competency.

The instructor may also use the quiz question or questions as a place to begin the presentation. By using the previous assignment as the basis of the quiz, he has an interested audience as it has been found that students are most interested in proffering their own re-sponses written on the quiz to see if their answers are correct. Here the instructor can see an opportunity to provide encouragement and reinforcement. Even if student interest is centered on the grade points, it does immediately involve the class in a discussion of the material.

Reinforcement and encouragement are also provided on the quiz paper. Again, as in the recommendations for evaluating student papers in the writing course, the facilitator's comments may be much longer than the student's written answer. This will indicate to the student that his facilitator reads what he writes very carefully. This will

then serve the purpose of making the student much more carful about what he writes down. He will be less inclined to write down "any old thing" just to appease the facilitator's hunger for words on a page. Hopefully, the expectations of the facilitator will have elevated the student's concerns to the content and mechanical accuracy of what he puts down on paper. Anyone who has endeavored to work with students who do not have many skills will recognize the need for instilling in them the value of taking great <u>care</u> when writing. The quiz and the instructor's encouraging comments provide an excellent opportunity for learning performance.

Because quizzes are only five points in value, they usually consist of five short questions, or one thought question. Thought questions should always be answered in complete sentences. This provides an excellent opportunity to practice complete writing skills, mechanical skills usage, and punctuation. Usually for ecological purposes--the saving of paper--these quizzes are on one-half of a sheet of paper. Students often prepare a number of papers in advance, <u>neatly</u> torn or cut in half, with their name and the course and section number already on the paper. These papers are easily carried in a book so that they are not soiled or rumpled and are ready for use.

If quizzes are brief, they have the advantage of being evaluated quickly. Students need not write three thousand words for their learning needs to be manifest. And a great deal may be learned from a few short sentences. The facilitator may also give a grade and additional comments in a matter of minutes and he is through in half the time it takes to read and evaluate longer efforts.

Another great timesaving aspect of the class quiz is that, once the students are quite used to it, the entire operation may be completed in four minutes! This includes listening to the question, thinking, then writing, and time to have students pass the papers to the front of the room. At the outset, it may take twenty minutes in order to complete the quiz. It does take time for students to acquaint themselves with the routine. Gradually, as it is utilized each class, less and less time will be taken up by the quiz.

Most importantly, if the quiz is used consistently, the obvious added benefit to the students is that they will be able to depend on it. The value of this cannot be underestimated. Too often the student who possesses only marginal skills is at a loss as to how to help himself, or what to do about his skills inadequacy. He needs to feel that he is working, that he is getting somewhere, that he is succeeding. The student invariably needs a regimen, a system which is operative and in which he can believe. If a bond or relationship should spring up between facilitator and learner, all the better; however, in the beginning, the student seems to have a great need to know that he _is_ learning, that he is in fact in an institution of higher learning. If the foundation is the business of learning skills; and, if in the process, the student learns that he can succeed, then genuine progress will be made. The consistent use of the class quiz will greatly fulfill his desire and need for an order and stability upon which he can depend. And, too, if the student has only marginal skills ability and has also had previous negative academic experiences, then he is usually apprehensive about the classroom situation. He knows he is inexperienced and,

consequently, he does not like formal education. His fears and anxiety can be greatly reduced if he knows precisely what is going to happen in class. Implicitly, he will know exactly what is to be expected of him. The class quiz could not be better devised and implemented to lessen precisely these fears of the unknown which all too many students harbor.

It is suggested that the facilitator explain all the directions and explanations about the daily quiz, including the reasons for every-thing, after the first assignment. (The students will use their listen-ing and note-taking skills here.) Then, he will instruct the students to be prepared for a quiz immediately at the beginning of the next class. He will then return the first quiz papers with comments (both positive and, if need be, negative), but not graded. He will explain that the first quiz was a "dry run," that it would be unfair to mark the papers until the students have had a chance to see how he marks papers. This will show the students the fair-mindedness of the facili-tator, as well as provide them with a learning experience and a fresh start.

A P P E N D I X   I I

READING AND STUDY SKILLS: CONTENT DIVISIONS:

1. Reading:

>   comprehension

>   efficiency

>   flexibility

>   retention of material

>   text books

2. Listening Skills:

>   retaining information

>   preparation for note-taking

3. Note-taking:

>   from lectures

>   from textbooks

>   from library readings

4. concentration

5. memory

6. psychology of learning

7. self-motivation to study

8. exams and examsmanship

9. reviewing

10. writing exam essays

11. vocabulary

12. scheduling of study time

13. speeches, oral reports, and class discussions

QUESTIONNAIRE: STUDY SKILLS

List of possible trouble areas in studying.

Purpose: Refresh students' minds with following specific list.

Directions: After students have answered the general questions, present items chosen from the following list. Ask students to either

    1) place items in order of priority from most needed to least necessary for them,

        or

    2) number them in order of priority, e.g., No. 1 for skills most needed.

1. reading speed

2. reading difficult subjects

3. comprehension

4. retention of what is read

5. reading for different purposes

6. reading textbooks

7. listening skills (retaining what is heard)

8. note-taking

9. notes from lectures

10. notes from texts

11. notes from library sources

12. concentration

13. memory

14. how to make myself learn

15. self-motivation to study

16. exams and examsmanship

17. reviewing

18. writing exam essay questions

19. vocabulary

20. scheduling study time

21. group discussions

22. studying various subjects:

   e.g., mathematics

    philosophy

    natural history, etc.

Logic

It is most obvious from an understanding of the nature of study skills that they are all interrelated. Not only are they related to each other, intertwined in operation once they become a part of the learning repertoire; but, they are intimately related to the thinking process, the way in which the learner thinks, organizes his ideas, and, in short, orders his mind. If "writing maketh the exact man" and the writer carefully selects and orders his materials in certain sequences according to his purpose, then the communications skills are, obviously, integrally related with thinking skills. Writing, in its demand for exactitude, demands clarity and precision in thinking. Good study habits demand an enquiring mind and organized mind, a mind which makes distinctions, categorizes, and seeks the main points.

Skills learning, beginning with careful, organized thinking, is seen to be part and parcel of the writing process and of reading and

studying critically. If organization in writing and the process of discernment in reading have been taught from the outset, the logic course may then build on these acquired skills and become the culmination of the rational thinking process. Hence, it is the last course in the sequence of skills learning and puts the necessary finishing touches on the ordered thinking process. At the same time, the logic course is the introduction to the world of philosophy. Therefore, early learning experiences in critical reading and writing skills are a preparation, however remote, for this course in logic.

The logic course is essential for those students who desire to continue in higher education. Yet, it must be pointed out that the world is often not logical. Logical thinking coupled with an understanding of psychology and sociology is a better title for the course. Often a "reason" may well be psychological in nature. But when the occasion for rational, logical thinking presents itself, the student will not be fooled. No one will be able to swindle or cheat him, particularly if he is familiar with the fallacies presented in this course.

One of the best methods for facilitating the learning of logic is by the use of examples. Most logic tests abound with these examples which of course, makes a particular fallacy seem obvious when taking the test in the classroom. On the contrary, when the student is presented with a fallacious argument in a life situation can he distinguish exactly which fallacy is being used? Can he identify precisely where the argument falls short or goes wrong? This should be the emphasis of the logic course, as this method most approximates real

life. Otherwise, a logic course becomes a mere exercise in mental gymnastics.

In addition to the examples in a text, the students should find or create their own examples from their own lives. Once they have learned several concepts, they could be required to read the editorial page of the newspaper for each class and be able to identify any fallacies or logical syllogisms used. The facilitator should endeavor to present oral examples as well as mimeographed sheets, one situation per sheet, to facilitate as often as possible the identification of any fallacies.

Obviously, these efforts described above may greatly enhance critical reading activity. It slows the reader down and really requires him to think and examine the ideas before him. This has everything to do with the objectives of the reading skills courses as prerequisites for the logic course.

The same is true for writing. If plenty of critical, analytical reading is required, as well as carefully organized writing and the utilization of logical thought progressions, the entire repertoire of skills objectives gradually becomes a useful, operable part of the learners' abilities. Therefore, it is imperative that the place of logic be seen and that the course involve as much critical reading and logical writing as possible!

The facilitator may present controversial issues, for example, and have students present any argument in essay form, so long as it is logically rational. Emphasis is on acquisition and maintenance of skills by utilization. Again, it should be assumed by the facilitator of the logic course that the learners are capable of putting to use all of the skills objectives listed.

Logic

Terms: Fallacies:

thesis   non sequi tur   ad baculum

antithesis   cause and effect   ad hominem

synthesis   ad ignorantium

syllogism   ad misere cordiam

premise   ad populum

categorical syllogism   ad rere cundium

emotive language   begging the question

predication   black and white

concrete terms   ignorantio eleuchi

abstract terms

logic

hypothesis

fallacy

analogy

ethics

philosophy

inductive reasoning

deductive reasoning

rationalization

pragmatism

reductio ad absurdam

a posteriori

a priori

Recommended Texts

English as a Second Language:

    Doty and Ross. Language and Life in the U.S.A.: American English for Foreign Students. Harper Brothers: New York, 1968.

Grammatical Usage:

    Blumenthal, Joseph C. English 2600. Harcourt Brace Janovich: New York, 1960.

    Blumenthal, Joseph C. English 3200. Harcourt Brace Janovich: New York, 1962.

    Cronin, Mortin J. Vocabulary 1000. Harcourt Brace and World: New York, 1969.

    Hook, J.N. Spelling 1500: A Program. Harcourt Brace and World: New York, 1969.

Developmental Reading:

    Spargo, Edward, ed. Selections From the Black: College Reading Skills. Jamestown Publishers: Providence, 1970. (Books in the Series: The Olive Book/The Brown Book/The Purple Book.)

Developmental Writing:

    Brufree, Kenneth A. A Short Course in Writing. Winthrop Publishers, Inc.: Cambridge, Mass., 1972.

Study Skills:

    Pauk, Walter. How To Study in College. Houghton Mifflin: Boston, 1962.

Rhetoric:

    Greensberg, F.B. and Heffley, Anne. Tradition and Dissent: A Rhetoric Reader, (Second Edition) Bobbs-Merrill: New York, 1971.

Faculty Reading:

    Rogers, Carl. Freedom to Learn. Charles E. Merrill Co.: Columbus, Ohio, 1969.

Robinson and Thomas. <u>Improving Reading in Every Class</u>: A Source Book for Teachers. Allyn and Bacon, Inc., Boston.

Possibilities worth noting:

<u>Multi-Ethnic Literature</u> - Afro-American, American Indian, Asian-American, Mexican American authors. Houghton Mifflin Co.: Boston.

Miller, Charles W. <u>A Gathering of Ghetto Writers</u>: Irish, Italian, Jewish, Black and Puerto-Rican. New York University Press: New York, 1972.

Ludwig, Edward and Santibanes, James. <u>The Chicanos</u>: Mexican-American Voices. Penguin Books, Inc.: Baltimore, Md.

Simmen, Edward. <u>The Chicano</u>: From Cariacature to Self-Portrait. Mentor Books (New American Library): New York.

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Chapman, A. (ed.) _Black Voices_. New American Library: New York, 1968.

Clark, K.B. _Dark Ghetto: Dilemmas of Social Power_. Harper and Row: New York, 1965.

Cleaver, E. _Soul on Ice_. Dell Publishing Co.: New York, 1968.

Cohen, S.A. "Studies in Visual Perception and Reading in Disadvantaged Children." _Journal of Learning Disabilities_, 1969, No. 2, pp. 498-503.

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    <u>Better Readers for Our Times</u>.   Gray, W. and Larrick, N.   Inter-
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    <u>Journal of Developmental Reading</u>.   Autumn, 1959, pp. 11-26.

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    Approach."   Bureau of Study Counsel: Harvard University, 1969.

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