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THE DEVELOPMENT OF A PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT MODEL FOR TEACHING
COMPOSITION AT THE EIGHTH-GRADE INTERVENTION LEVEL

A Dissertation Presented

By

MARILYN HUNT LEWIS

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

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

September 1981

EDUCATION



Marilyn Hunt Lewis 1981

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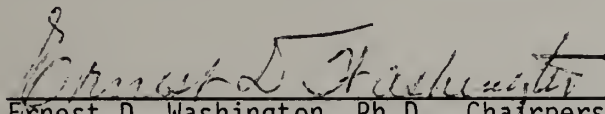
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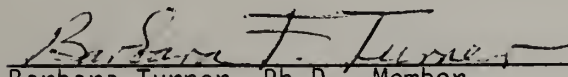
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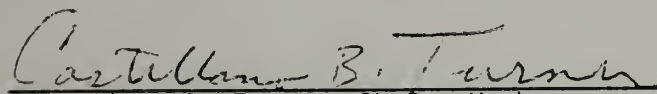
By


MARILYN HUNT LEWIS

Approved as to style and content by:


Ernest D. Washington, Ph.D., Chairperson of Committee


Barbara Turner, Ph.D., Member


Castellano B. Turner, Ph.D., Member


Mario Fantini, Dean
School of Education

To my Mother, my Father
and those before them,
and to my Husband
and our Children
Matinah, Maisha, Khalilah,
Hassan.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am extremely grateful to Dr. Ernest Washington who directed this work with tremendous patience and careful guidance and who offered continuous reassurance. I am thankful for the kind and untiring assistance given me by Dr. Barbara Turner and Dr. Castellano Turner. I am also thankful to Ms. Linda Coffey for her assistance in typing the manuscript.

I am most grateful to my husband, children, and family members whose faith, patience, and love made this endeavor worthwhile.

Above all, I thank Allah for you all.

ABSTRACT

The Development of a Program Improvement Model for Teaching
Composition at the Eighth-Grade Intervention Level

September 1981

Marilyn Lewis, B.A., Spelman College

M.A.T. Smith College, Ed.D., University of Massachusetts

Directed by: Ernest D. Washington, Ph.D.

National Assessment of Educational Progress Studies conducted between 1969 and 1974 reported a decline in writing skills among American students. Researchers agree that the decline reflects "the state of the art" of teaching writing and the limited knowledge available on the nature of the composing process.

The public's demand for accountability in teaching basic skills has created a need for curriculum development in the area of writing instruction which reflects current theoretical perspectives and offers alternatives to traditional approaches for which effectiveness has not been proven. New theories on the composing process and the effectiveness of instructional strategies are beginning to impact schools primarily through the efforts of college sponsored writing institutes for teachers. Many school districts do not have access to such institutes and therefore need alternative resources for upgrading teacher competencies and improving instructional programs.

This research field tested a model for program improvement in composition in a local school district. The model includes staff

development, observation and technical assistance and assessment of program impact on student performance. Program impact on teachers was analyzed from survey and observational data. A pretest posttest control group design was used to test program impact on students. Writing samples, holistically scored, and a standardized test of writing were the instruments used.

The study showed that experimental teachers were able to incorporate strategies which in turn correlated to significant student gains on the Writer's Skills subtest of the Basic Skills Assessment.

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C H A P T E R I
TEACHING WRITING: HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES

Introduction

The pedagogy of American education constantly struggles to keep pace with the society it serves and often comes face to face with catch-22 situations in which theory, practice, environment and a multitude of seemingly uncontrollable variables produce a quagmire of stagnation and deterioration despite all that is done in the name of change and progress. The pedagogy of writing, traditionally called rhetoric, is in such a quagmire. While the quagmire has been no secret among researchers in the field, it did not gain the attention of teachers and the public until Merrill Sheils wrote about it in Newsweek's December 8, 1975 issue and reported the decline in writing skills revealed in a series of national assessment studies of writing which began in 1969.

Sheils' assertion that a combination of too much television and too much emphasis on "creativity" in the English classroom caused the problem has been the subject of rebuttal for many writing experts. Such experts point to a host of other significant factors which need to be considered for a clear perspective on the problem. The facts are that teachers historically have not been trained to teach writing; little is known about how children learn to write; and until recently, little was known about systematic assessment of writing skills.

Meanwhile, our once literary society, largely uses written communication to explain business and technology, report events, persuade citizens on political issues and manipulate consumers. If the role of the public school is to prepare students for survival and productivity in society and the society depends heavily on specialized and manipulative use of language, then the study of language is crucial. American public schools are beginning to realize a new and different importance for the teaching of writing and they are also struggling with the fact that they don't know enough to get the job done.

The issue of how best to teach writing precipitated, in the last decade, a body of research on the nature of the composing process. This research side-lined the back-to-basics/minimal competency movement of the seventies. While reading and mathematics were the declared priorities of the movement, the area of writing was largely given lip service. Most teachers know little about the fervor with which writing investigators and experts have been struggling to make sense of the research prior to 1971, a body of research far less impressive than that which exists in the areas of reading and mathematics.

The research in writing prior to 1971 is limited in use because it involves studies of written products and projects conflicting implications for instruction. Janet Emig's study, *The Composing Process of Twelfth Graders*, (1971) ushered in a different kind of writing research and has begun to affect the development of new theories on composing. A relatively small group of investigators is

having a tremendous effect on teacher-training, text book development and curriculum revision. The avenues to increasing achievement levels in writing are not well named. Underlying issues are clearer but there are still too few notions about methodology and even fewer about instructional improvement. Methodology and program improvement are critical because assessment and accountability have already become firmly rooted institutions. The public is no longer willing to fund failure.

There is generally little program improvement activity in the area of language arts outside the shuffling in and out of one reading program after another. The identification of something in schools that might clearly be called writing programs is an embarrassing task. Even more embarrassing perhaps, is the lack of preservice college training for perspective language arts teachers in the area of writing. There are however, a growing number of college sponsored staff development programs for language arts teachers and these coupled with a tremendous surge of professional literature are beginning to impact schools. However, recent research on the composing process which has implications for instruction has not reached the average language arts teacher.

Many schools, in response to "back to basics" pressure, have reverted to a reactionary emphasis on traditional grammar study which the majority of experts agree is of little value in teaching writing. The state of the art in the area of research is enlightened; in the area of instruction it is static.

The current controversy over writing theory must be viewed in the context of the historical development of the subject. The "art", fathered by some of history's greatest philosophers, has in the past been the subject of philosophical controversy.

The Evolution of Rhetoric

Philip Dauterman (1972) traces the historical origins of the current issues surrounding the teaching of writing to the ancient Greek theories of rhetoric which were espoused during a time when persuasive oratory was the chief means by which political power was gained and retained as well as the means through which litigation took its course in 5th century B.C. courts. This setting produced the first professional speech teachers.

"... many ambitious aristocrats eagerly sought the services of speech teachers who, well aware of the law of supply and demand, were able to place large fees upon their services." (Dauterman, 1972, p. 11)

These rhetors were divided into two general schools of thought regarding the limitations of their subject. Some believed the study of rhetoric could build virtue; others were more pragmatic.

Plato was a key figure in the evolution of rhetoric. He theorized that "forms and ideas provide absolute standards of evaluation" and in so doing began the first major controversy on the subject (Dauterman, 1972, p. 13). His theory sparked a string of reactions and arguments about the function of rhetoric. Isocrates led one

group of theorists who stressed ceremonial oratory. Later Aristotle entered the feud arguing that the rhetoric of Plato and Isocrates fell short of providing a system of logic and that rhetoric is "the art of examining ideas logically" (Dauterman, 1972, p. 15). Cicero expanded the purposes of rhetoric and the areas of its study. He emphasized purpose, organization and diction.

Around 95 A.D. Quintilian, in twelve volumes called Institutes of Oratory, devised a system of instruction which incorporated a school of rhetoric. The teaching procedures he used are still in use today. "First, the pupil would memorize basic definitions, classifications, and rules. Next the teacher and the student would analyze one of a series of carefully selected models. Finally, the pupil would apply the concepts thus learned and would imitate the model in a practical declamation or composition."

(Dauterman, 1972, p. 21).

During the Middle Ages Quintilian rhetoric was altered. Logic, politics and ethics, which were very much a part of Quintilian rhetoric, were shifted to theological study. The study of rhetoric by anyone other than perspective theologians was attacked. In response, rhetoricians "began to limit their statements to the figures and forms of words, a method which met with little effective opposition." (Dauterman, 1972, p. 25). They produced textbooks which treated verbal forms rather than subject matter, thus beginning the tradition of the grammar text.

From the Middle Ages to the 19th century rhetoric was the volley ball of scholars. Ciceronian ornamentation was revived and Latin grammar emerged. The new rhetoricians fell into three groups, the figurists, the traditionalists, and the Ramists and according to Dauterman (1972) their combined efforts produced a course of study largely composed of grammar and diction, stylistic ornamentation and forensic skill. Logic also had a place in the curriculum. Later, Peter Ramus fostered an approach which dealt with two processes for composition, invention and arrangement. Rhetoric, as a course, treated only style and delivery and this course followed one in logic. The study of style became a rhetoric problem in the 18th century. The question of whether good rhetoric was ornate, plain or sublime was raised and answered with a majority vote for the sublime. The next issue was whether the sublime should be elicited through the use of ornamentation or simplicity.

By the 19th century rhetoric was limited to delivery. Logic moved into the areas of science and philosophy. The importance of rhetoric began its decline as the scientific method gained credence and the Romantic writers rebelled against traditional standards of style. According to Dauterman, ". . . many scholars were led to condemn all traditional techniques of style and distrusted all organized rhetorical study" (Dauterman, 1972, p. 33).

19th Century Composition Instruction in America

A shift from emphasis on oratory to written composition occurred in American schools in the 1890's. The English curriculum, which had been transported, was a problem because college enrollments were

increasing and professors had to begin relying on lectures and written examinations. In 1892 the Committee of Ten recommended that the U.S. Commissioner of Education require instruction in composition for specific numbers of hours in secondary schools. The first freshman composition course was established at Harvard in 1874 (Daeterman, 1972).

The appearance of Barnett Wendell's English Composition, Eight

Lectures Given at the Lowell Institute charted an approach the study of composition that became the norm for public schools. Wendell's

progression of study from words, to sentences, to paragraphs, to

composition can be found in the average grammar text series used in American schools today. Warriner's English Grammar has replaced

Wendell's text in popularity but his format, content, and approach

have seen very little change.

The rhetoric of the Greeks and Romans never reached elementary

and secondary American classrooms. Beyond translating and memorizing

rules for Latin grammar, little rhetoric was taught. The English

grammar of the 19th century was profuse with rules which dealt with

usage, syntax, and narrowly prescribed methods of invention. It is

ironic that the 19th century produced writers, who showed little

evidence of the need for or acceptance of the so-called methods of

invention grounded in the curriculum by Wendell's text. The rhetoric curriculum of the 19th century was designed to prepare students, all students, for college rhetoric. The needs of the non-college bound were either not considered or not thought to be different.

The history of rhetoric prior to the 20th century establishes a background for the "state of the art." The evolution and deletion of the subject occurred over many centuries and in reaction to times, people and events. The revival of rhetoric is a like reaction. The philosophical and methodological issues are different from those of the early Greeks and Romans since the question of how best to train politicians, lawyers, and theologians is not of prime importance in today's controversy. Rather, the question is: how can mass education produce literate citizens who can communicate in a technical society where written language has purposes which range from intricate explanation citizens must follow to mass information citizens must process and evaluate?

20th Century Composition Instruction in America

The 20th century inherited a curriculum that is static and fragmented. The traditional division of the subject into memory, delivery, arrangement, invention, and style, degenerated into introduction, body and conclusion for the development of narration, description, argumentation, and exposition. In the 1890's the American student in ninth and tenth grades spent two hours a week on composition. Rarely do contemporary ninth and tenth graders spend

this much time on writing. The typical American school curriculum treats composition as Friday's step child. In addition, year after year students go through a redundant but endlessly expanding a set of language rules, conventions, and terms, the knowledge of which is scarcely related to composing. That students learn to compose at all seems only vaguely related to the nature of instruction. Few teachers seem to agree on when writing the paragraph should be mastered. It seems as much a subject in third grade as it is in ninth. Form is given priority over the content of the ideas throughout the grades. A student might write a book report in twelfth grade that is of the same quality as one written in the sixth grade. Both may be judged with essentially the same criteria and the major difference in teacher expectation will be length. The written products students are expected to master vary tremendously. Many students are taught the basic form of a research paper who have not learned basic letter writing form.

Classrooms generally reflect variations of the traditional approach in which writing instruction proceeds from word to sentence to paragraph to theme without strict adherence to the prescribed order. Parts of speech, run-on sentences, sentence fragments and types of sentences are treated at every level as are usage and mechanics. Isolated skills and products arbitrarily treated comprise the writing programs of most schools. Frequently, an elective in journalism, creative writing or exposition darts in and out of the high school program with a quantitative product orientation. The individual teacher's theoretical orientation provides the focus for the course

and all too often that focus amounts to an adaptation of the teacher's own freshman composition course.

Contemporary Composition Instruction: Trends and Issues

In recent years, with the advent of performance objectives, schools have produced listings of objectives for writing instruction which for the most part reflect textbook presentations of isolated skills and products. One school system I am familiar with, spent a year developing language arts objectives and took pride in its composition strand. Somehow their text series was adopted without reference to the newly written objectives. With some alarm the teachers discovered they had a conflict. Structural linguistics was presented in the text series and they had written objectives around a traditional presentation of syntax. I was called in to translate the new grammar and correlate it to the traditional grammar.

Textbook companies have wasted no time in capitalizing on the confusion over writing instruction with a profusion of books that treat everything from structural linguistics to persuasive techniques at arbitrary grade levels. They have also cleverly advertised the value of tradition and sold old grammar texts with new covers.

There has been little change in the curricula of American schools relating to writing since the 1890's. At best the attention given to writing has decreased as class sizes increased and the issue of improving reading has become the major educational priority.

The so-called decline in writing skills is debatable. The times have brought the public to an assumption that all students need to master writing. Assessment programs tell the public that the schools are failing. How long the failure has existed may also be a subject for debate in view of the fact that teacher preparation programs have historically not prepared teachers to teach writing and colleges have been reserved for the brightest students who develop writing skills independent of instruction.

Until the back to basics movement a well-kept secret was the lack of preparation English teachers are given to teach anything other than literature. No doubt students who enjoy and master grammar are, and always have been, inclined to major in English. Many are perhaps also would be professional writers who compromised their professional goals. The English teacher is both victim and happy recipient of an honored place on the school faculty. It is assumed that she or he is guardian of "The King's English." The English teacher's judgement is not questioned and is expected to be harsh.

In reality the English teacher's methods are often ineffective and the subject matter is largely trivia. Too much time is spent characterizing dangling participles and too little time spent on the content of students' written ideas. Likewise, too much fruitless work goes into grading compositions and not enough work goes into teaching students the importance of developing their own editing skills. The high school English teacher operates on a set of assumptions based on a very real stereotype encountered by most people at least once during

their four years of high school. Immitating the stereotype means a concerted effort must be made to cover the prescribed grammar and literature while developing an appreciation of both on the part of the student. High interest contemporary material may be added to but not substituted for the traditional course of study.

The English curriculum reflects certain assumptions. Assumption one says that a descriptive understanding of the language is a prerequisite to its use. Assumption two says practice exercise drills, weekly spelling tests and weekly themes on assigned topics will produce good writers. Assumption three is that the teacher is the best judge of writing. The string of assumptions continues on the faulty logic with which it began.

The cause effect relationship behind the static state of the English curriculum begins with the failure of preservice training. Without training textbook dependency is natural. Textbooks are published to reflect major schools of thought. When schools of thought are static the textbook publishers make few changes. Hence the major texts for composition are variations of 19th century texts.

Emig (1971) cites John Walker's, A Teachers Assistant in English Composition (1803) as the fore runner of American texts which were "designed to help younger students of both sexes in the middle and lower classes achieve a basic written literacy" (Emig, 1971, p. 15). This text may have been the beginning of the demise of the study of style and a resulting focus on "correct" usage and syntax (Corbett, 1965 in Emig, 1971). Emig notes that the absence of concern for

"what may influence the writer" in these texts is a reflection of the fact that they preceded the development of psychology. It is probable that, when the study of the forms of discourse was shifted to the rhetoric curriculum for the upper classes little thought went into the purpose of rhetoric for the middle and lower classes. Another probable cause is lack of attention given to the subject on the part of the public and the research community. The challenge to traditional grammar texts is not new though interest in it has been revived by studies done during recent years. Composition instruction has just recently been investigated from psychological perspectives and as a result a myriad of new questions have emerged.

The old question of the utility of grammar instruction continues to be a major issue in English education. The transfer value of grammar study to composition skills development has been investigated many times. Dauterman (1972) cites Meckel's (1963) analysis of the issue as "complex" because of the sets of variables involved. He identifies the following variables:

"(1) the transfer value to composition of the particular achievement--that is, ability to parse, define grammatical terms, or to recognize sentence faults; (2) the transfer value of knowledge of a particular type of grammar--traditional, structural, or transformational; (3) the specific skills to be developed through the transfer--that is, skills which may entail organization, usage, capitalization,

sentence structure or the like (Dauterman, 1972, p. 147).

Dauterman (1972) cites studies by Hoyt (1906) and Aslcer (1923) as two of the earliest studies which found no transfer value in grammar study. Subsequent studies have confirmed these early findings. Braddock, Lloyd-Jones, and Schoer (1963) have given a comprehensive review of the research on the transfer value of grammar and conclude transfer is very low and possibly harmful. Meckel (1963) argues that research in the area is inconclusive and based on faulty assumptions. Despite the evidence against grammar study American public school English curricula are still centered around it. There seem to be only two major reasons for this inconsistency. The first reason is the persistence of tradition.

The second reason for the inconsistency between research and pedagogy is the lack of teacher preparation programs which build on research findings. The lack of teacher preparation programs may in part be due to controversy over what alternative approaches to instruction can conclusively be termed "successful", especially with young children. Graves (1980) reports that "Only 156 studies on writing in the elementary grades...have been done in the United States in the last twenty-five years (Graves, 1980, p. 914). The quantity and quality of writing research done between 1955-1972 is an indication of a static state of art. According to Graves, "The funds for writing research came to less than one-tenth of one percent of all research funds for education", and for every \$3,000 spent on reading

instruction only \$1.00 was spent on composition instruction. Graves reports that the research from 1955 to 1972 primarily took the form of doctoral dissertations. He says sixty-eight percent of the research dealt with teaching methods studied in designs which "attempted to remove certain variables from their context to explain two crafts, teaching and writing, by dismissing environments through statistical means" (Graves, 1980, p. 914). Graves also notes that more than half of the research on writing in the last twenty-five years has been done in the last seven years. He suggests that it is perhaps fortunate that earlier research received so little teacher attention. He says:

We look at the recent history of research in writing that we might not repeat past mistakes. We review this history to take stock, learn, and forge on. We have been slow to take heed of the warnings of significant researchers. Since the early twenties, one researcher after another has warned of the danger of fragmentary approaches to research in children's writing...Meckel (1963), Park (1963) called for research that focused more on learners than teachers. They called for studies on the writing process that involved longitudinal research. Such research was difficult, too time consuming for doctoral students, and certainly defiant of conventional statistical interventions (Graves, 1980, p. 917).

Beginning in the late sixties, the nature of research changed and a surge of publications on writing proliferated. State

Departments of Education began writing assessment programs and a few colleges began to set up programs for teacher training. Many teachers simply made an effort to teach writing differently. The recent history of writing research and instruction may be viewed as fall out from the "back to basics" explosion. At a time when the theorists, researchers and teachers were concluding they knew very little about how children learn to write, the public was making fervent demands for accountability.

Effects of the Back to Basics Movement on Composition Instruction

"The "Back to Basics" movement has created a state of confusion regarding writing instruction among...teachers, the test makers, the politicians, the theorists, the linguists, the rhetoricians, the textbooks editors, (and) the taxpaying public..."Joan Baum (1976) observes, as each group publicly offers its answer to the problem of declining writing achievement. There are essentially two positions reverberating; one position is reactionary and the other progressive. The reactionaries are proponents of the Back to Basics movement who, according to Baum, "advocate lockstep instruction in prose mechanics" and reject the innovative strategies popularized during the sixties. The progressives who advocate innovative instructional strategies (eg. open-classrooms) have an entirely different view of "basics." Their view is embodied in the "new rhetoric" of process before product. They are convinced that skill mastery is contingent on the extent to which instruction and atmosphere are humanistic (Baum, 1976).

They vigorously seek new approaches to teaching writing with a positive response to the research which challenges the transfer value of grammar. However there is an absence of criteria being used to select alternative methodology which reflects a wide range of inconclusive findings in the research of the 60's and early 70's. Individual teacher preference, based largely on experimentation and application of humanistic theory, appears to be the major characteristic of the choice of approaches which augment the traditional approach. There is a good deal of evidence that even the "progressives" maintain a hold on tradition, at least in the area of evaluating writing. The push for humanistic education spun off the notion that students must be freed to write. Teachers were criticized for the amount of time they allotted for students to "discover themselves" through writing. Frequency, said some, was the answer. And by all means write something nice on each paper at grading time.

The adaptation of humanistic theory in the English class begins with the apriori assumption that students need media and manipulative stimuli to spark their innate "inventive" ability.

A personal experience may be useful in rendering this adaptation. A seventh grade creative writing class I taught in 1970 in an extremely progressive New England school district was comprised of poor writers. In an attempt to apply humanistic theory, I requested that each student bring a shoe box to class with an assortment of best-loved possessions about which we would "freely write." Janie quickly informed me that her horse was the only thing she cared about.

Having watched her draw pictures of it at every class meeting I was not surprised. I concluded progress would be made if Janie moved from drawing pictures to writing a sentence about her horse. A host of stuffed animal and prize rock paragraphs emerged as the days went by, the quality of which did not improve. When the students exhausted their box stimuli we secured cheap cameras, took a picture-taking field trip and wrote about our pictures. The pictures held my students' interest; writing about them did not. We progressed to the Whittier approach and placed ourselves in nature's midst to "invent" poetry. The poetry was more interesting than the paragraphs had been and I gave nature credit. In retrospect several other factors seem to have come into play. Perhaps the fact that I wrote poetry along with the students and shared it with them had a positive effect. The task of writing poetry itself may have been more meaningful than paragraphing and the students' sense of "self evaluation" of their own writing in the poetic mode may have been keener. In my glee with their success I didn't bother at the time to synthesize the stimulus-response process I had carried my students through.

The irony of the stimulus-response approach to writing is that it is in part an adaptation of Skinnerian learning theory which is theoretically not humanistic at all. Providing stimuli for writing may in fact spark a written response but nothing in the stimuli controls the quality of the response. The quality of the response is entirely dependent on what the student has synthesized about writing.

Probably the most controversial trends in writing instruction which began in the sixties were the use of frequency and the advent of transformational or structural linguistics. The origin of the call for increased frequency of writing activities came upon the English teacher from the community. Relevant research was of little interest to teachers; they had a pragmatic argument against assigning frequent writing. Increased class loads and extra curricular duties left them with mounds of papers to correct. Most teachers still hold to the premise that every paper written must be corrected. Based on such a premise the English teacher was and is justified in rejecting the prospect of long hours spent at home on school work without compensation. Only recently have English teachers begun to accept research findings which show that correcting students' papers does not facilitate improved writing but they are also slow to adopt alternative grading methods.

Whether the compromise teachers made in reducing the quantity of writing assignments has affected the overall quality of writing is debatable. It seems feasible that mere practice has merit and that exposure to form (eg. reports, letters) is necessary if such forms are useful in college or the world of work. The English teachers' rebuttal has not only dealt with their workloads, it has placed partial blame on other content teachers. They argue that their instruction is negated through lack of reinforcement outside the English class. Social studies and science teachers are criticized for not upholding standards, particularly correctness in spelling,

mechanics and sentence structure. The issue has died down in one school district after another as administrators and school boards shy away from reducing English teachers' loads and requiring other content teachers to be more conscious of reading skills than English teachers' standards.

Another controversy which surfaced during the sixties continues amidst the professionals regarding what grammar should be taught. High school teachers reacted negatively to the adoption of linguistic approaches to grammar which appeared in elementary school texts. As elementary and middle school teachers struggled to learn this new "scientific" grammar and debated about its merits, high school English teachers rejected it without examination or question. They could not build on this new grammar in their high school courses and many probably sought to undo its "damaging" effects on the students' "required" knowledge of English grammar.

Structural grammar was shortlived in many schools. Linguists continue to call for a structural approach to the study of language and textbook companies waver among the approaches in their presentation of grammar. A linguistics program, The Roberts English Series appeared in progressive districts in the late sixties and disappeared during the mid-seventies. However, the essence of the linguistic approach caught on and appears in newer series. The statement that English sentences are a variation of a few patterns is the assumption on which the new grammar is based. The theory of the new grammar was well treated in Paul Roberts' English Sentences, which was

published in 1962 as a definitive text synthesizing grammars. The book, now out of print, was largely unnoticed even though it is a logical and pragmatic treatment of the subject and begins with the notion that all native English speakers understand English grammar and its rules. Roberts offers the following rationale for studying grammar.

"We have said that all of us who speak English know English grammar...What we are after now, of course, is not the knowledge that permits us to distinguish grammatical sentences from ungrammatical ones, but rather a conscious understanding of the system and the way it operates. Such an understanding has certain practical uses in the study of writing and other forms of communications...to be sure, learning to describe the grammatical system is not the same thing as learning to write. You will surely get the most out of the study if you undertake it objectively, with a simple wish to understand what it is like, accepting any practical application as a kind of bonus (Roberts, 1972, pp. 3-4)"

Even Roberts has trouble justifying the study of grammar as an avenue to improved writing and his English Series lacks the clarity of this earlier work.

The proponents of the back to basics movement still cling to the notion that grammar study is essential and teachers still teach what textbook companies tell them to teach. While widespread classroom

change may not be evident, there have been, within the last ten years, increasing numbers of programs at the college level operating to reorient teachers to the field of writing. Funded largely by grants from the National Endowment of the Humanities, College English departments have begun to assume the role of change agents offering summer institutes for small numbers of teachers. These programs have tremendous potential for widespread curriculum change but they also have limitations in terms of the numbers of teachers they reach and the speculative future of their funding. In addition, their appeal is to high school teachers more than middle and elementary school teachers.

The college based staff development programs are primarily satellites of the Bay Area Writing Project, a program which began at The University of California at Berkely in 1974 in response to "the sinking condition of writing instruction in the nine Bay Area counties," (Neill, 1977, p. 44). BAWP developed a series of give and take sessions for English teachers on the premise that the problem with writing is instruction and successful teachers have the answers. Colleges all over the country now have 80 satellites which offer teacher institutes using successful teachers as consultants. These colleges form a network called The National Writing Project.

An example of a University based teacher training program funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities which has been successful is the Institute for the Teaching of Writing at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst. After collaborative planning

between high school and University English faculty, the Institute began its training with forty-two teachers during the summer of 1978 (Moran and Skerrett, 1981).

The Institute was successful in changing the behavior of the forty-two writing teachers...independent raters compared the teachers' writing, and attitudes before and after the summer session...In most cases the teachers had shifted to their students the responsibility for discovering and correcting errors; they had begun to use their students' lives and interests as sources for writing topics...and they had doubled the amount of class time they devoted to their students' expository writing (Moran and Skerrett, 1981, p. 389).

The trend of teacher institutes developed collaboratively between colleges and public schools is tremendously significant and promising. There are however too few such programs and the voluntary nature of them has drawbacks. The Georgia State University/Southeast Center for the Teaching of Writing, a BAWP satellite, trained 90 teachers representing 70 schools in three summers and reports successful rippling effects (Boiarsky, 1980). The use of trained teachers as turnkey trainers is however left to chance. Teacher behavior is no doubt altered by these training programs but total school program development is also left to chance.

Many states have adopted minimum competency testing programs which include writing assessment. Unfortunately the curriculum in

the area of writing is years behind assessment and students are being expected to reach standards before necessary teacher training and curriculum adjustment have had a chance to occur.

Alternative approaches to curriculum development are needed; approaches which center around individual school district characteristics and needs, have long range goals and objectives, and accommodate the realities of the constraints teachers are faced with in the classroom. New theories have emerged from recent research which provide a base for alternative methods of teaching writing. However, the research as a whole has a multitude of technical problems which are important in understanding the current states of the arts of writing research and writing instruction. These problems will be discussed in Chapter two.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The current body of research on composition offers evidence that previously held theories on teaching writing are invalid and national assessment data shows a decline in writing achievement among school children. Models for building curricula around theories and practices which have research-based validity are an urgent need in the field of composition instruction. This study documents the development and field test of a model for a composition program improvement process.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to field test a composition program improvement model in a local district. The components of the model include teacher training, observation and technical assistance for teacher implementation of training, and program evaluation.

The study sought answers to the following research questions.

1. Does teacher training positively affect student achievement in writing within the given time frame for instruction and at the given instructional intervention level?
2. What aspects of teacher training do teachers incorporate most readily?
3. What external independent curriculum variables affect teacher implementation and student achievement?
4. Are selected measures of student achievement appropriate for evaluating program impact?

Justification and Need

Researchers agree that the "state of the art" of teaching writing is "seminal" and that much of the research in the area is of little value to teachers. Basic problems hindering the development of the "state of the art" include faulty research methodology and the complexity of the subject. The public's demand for accountability in teaching basic skills has created a need for curriculum development in the area of writing instruction which reflects current theoretical perspectives and offers alternatives to traditional approaches for which effectiveness has not been proven.

As school districts attempt to identify, develop and assess writing programs they confront a wide range of constraints including limited numbers of professionals with expertise in the area, limited numbers of external staff development programs, and few composition program improvement models to adopt. The dissemination of information on the trial and error efforts of school districts in composition program development is much needed. Writing research is costly, tedious and time consuming and too few researchers are involved in it. The documentation of studies and programs in local school districts will contribute greatly to an improved "state of the art."

This research documents a study in composition program improvement which adds to the limited literature on the process of writing program implementation and evaluation. It examines crucial process questions and identifies constraints that administrators, teachers, and the public should be aware of.

C H A P T E R I I

DISCUSSION OF SIGNIFICANT RESEARCH THEORY, PROBLEMS, AND FINDINGS

Significance of Research During the 1970's

Writing research during the decade of the seventies is considered significant because it: (1) produced new theories and definitions (2) assessed earlier research in light of new theories and definitions and (3) field tested new experimental designs and research problems.

Dawkins (1978), in a report to the National Institute of Education, reviews the status of composition theory, research and instructional practices. He identifies three problem areas: (1) faulty research methodology, (2) the complexity of the subject, and (3) faulty assumptions about the composing process. Dawkins cites Braddock, Lloyd Jones, and Shoer's (1963) comparison of today's research in composition to the period of alchemy in chemical research. Blount (1973) concludes that the research as a whole is inadequate in both design and theory and that it has had little effect on classroom practices. According to Calfee (1976) researchers need:

(1) better information about instructional substance and practice in actual classrooms, (2) more adequate methods of assessing composition skills, (3) more efficient and robust techniques for experimental evaluation of curriculum programs and teacher-training programs, and (4) more systematic and theoretically based research on the

mental processes and cognitive skills that are acquired while "learning to write well" (calfee, 1976, p. 62).

The Problem of Definition

The subject is complex because there is no precise definition of writing (Dawkins, 1978). Little is known about the mental processes required to produce a coherent composition. Graves (1978) defines writing as "the highly complex synthesis of many levels of thinking." Dawkins (1978) states that "the psycholinguistic research of the 60's and 70's began to develop a picture of the competence that was required to produce grammatical English, but the subject was still limited to stretches of one or two sentences" (p. 6). The research produced no substantive findings about competencies needed to write coherent compositions. Dawkins (1978) identifies several variables which he considered important factors in the production of a composition. He states that:

...such variables as level of development (age), level of intelligence, language background, reading ability, as well as his or her notions about the nature of a composition and how to go about producing one should be considered. For the student writer's motivation, psychological variables and all of his or her notions about the importance and function of the communication need to be considered. For the situational, variables, the nature of the task, the function, the

purpose, the setting, feedback, and gimmicks must be included (Dawkins, 1978, p. 6).

Dawkins attributes the short comings of the research as a whole to this long list of complicated variables.

Another major problem in definition is that theorists and teachers have different criteria for what they consider "good composition." Teachers generally place priority on spelling and mechanics. In contrast, theorists and researchers give priority to cognition as evidenced by the content of the writing as a whole. Theorists and researchers recognize that the thinking and creating aspects of composing are critical. These aspects are difficult to evaluate because they entail subjective judgement (Emig and Parker, 1976). Beyond this conflict in definition there is the perspective of the textbook publishers that the composing process is merely based on a few procedures which they present to the student gradually and/or redundantly in each text series.

Teachers have used grammar and composition textbooks based on faulty assumptions for as long as there have been textbooks and accepted them as the appropriate tool with which to teach their courses. If the books failed to help produce good writing then the blame was placed on the student. The teacher functioned as the sole judge of writing achievement as evidenced by the number of red marks and comments he or she placed on the student's paper. Current research (Cooper, 1975; Emig and Parker, 1976; Graves, 1978; Emig, 1971; and Tway, 1974) indicates that the "judge" role assumed by teachers negatively affects student growth in composition.

Another assumption held by teachers is that formal instruction in grammar is a pre-requisite to good writing. However, there is no research to substantiate this assumption. To the contrary, the research, according to Haynes (1978), "has consistently indicated that traditional grammar instruction has little effect on writing and speaking" (Haynes, 1978, p. 82). She reports that:

While many in the field of English strongly agree that grammar is of little use in improving writing, there are still a great many teachers who hold to the grammar book, believing that there will be some transfer to better sentences if only students learn their nouns and verbs (Haynes, 1978, p. 83).

Strom (1960) summarizes over fifty studies which deal with the issue of traditional grammar study and its effect on writing improvement. She concludes that there is overwhelming evidence that grammar drills and diagramming sentences have little effect on accurate writing expression.

Effective Teaching Strategies

Effective teaching strategies appear limited in the research. Direct instruction, sentence combining, and increasing the frequency of writing tasks have been studied. Sentence combining has shown some positive effect on the development of syntactic maturity and fluency (Mellon, 1969; O'Hare, 1973; and Combs, 1976). Studies of the effect of increased frequency of writing tasks show contradictory findings (Lokke and Wykoff, 1948, Dressel, et al 1952; McColly and Remstad,

1962; Haynes, 1979; and Christiansen, 1965). Dawkins (1978) states that these studies at best reveal that the variables of age, reading ability and habits, evaluation feedback and reinforcement interfere with getting positive results from the use of frequent writing tasks as an instructional strategy. Direct instruction in the form of pre-writing activities (structured planning and stimulus-response experiences), talk-write process conferences, and the use of writing models have been investigated recently. Haynes, (1978) reviews several studies (Widvey, 1971; Dow, 1973; Radcliff, 1972; and Rippy, 1971) which reported positive results with pre-writing, peer-sharing, talk-write drafting approaches and imitation of writing models. Odell's pre-writing study with a college freshman population (1974) is the most comprehensive study of direct instruction which has shown positive results. In general, the research seems to suggest that approaches which structure and facilitate the writing process are effective in the development of organization and syntactic fluency. Motivation and reinforcement also seem to play a role.

Research to date has produced no substantive findings on the role of maturation in the acquisition of writing skills. Dawkins (1978) cites Hunt's study (1965) which measured the syntactic maturity of students in grades 4, 8, and 12. Hunt found that as students progress through the grades they write longer, more varied sentences. Later studies (Emig, 1971; Mischel, 1974; Stallard, 1974; Graves, 1975; and Dawkins, 1978) observed and compared the behaviors of different ages of student writers engaged in writing tasks.

Generally, they found that irregardless of age the student writers went through three board stages which Graves (1975) labels pre-writing, composing, and postwriting. These findings suggest that instructional focus on the three stages most students seem to naturally go through could affect the rate of writing skill development.

Realistic grade level expectancies cannot be established until more is known about the variable of maturation. Perhaps there is a natural skill progression. Sequential exposition skills correlated to Bloom's taxonomy of cognition were developed in a curriculum project of the Morristown, New Jersey School District in 1966. The students were cycled in an individualized manner through three stages. In stage one the student studied and mastered syntax, to stage two the student mastered single paragraphs built around five sequential purpose and thought processes, and in stage three the student mastered paragraph blocs around sequential purposes and higher order thinking skills (Bowne, 1977). It is interesting to note that purpose is excluded in stage one. Using a purpose approach on three levels or stages (sentence, paragraph and multi-paragraph) to organize writing instruction may be a more logical approach. Focus on purpose at the single sentence level, as opposed to syntax, might indirectly have a positive effect on syntactic development and it would also produce a natural progression through forms of exposition taught from the purpose perspective at the paragraph and paragraph bloc levels. In other words, teach with a focus on sentence purpose, allowing purpose to dictate syntax rather than teach syntax in isolation. Teaching

writing from this perspective would be quite different from the typical textbook approach which focuses on structure in isolation and/or purpose in isolation. The issue of maturation and writing may resolve itself if thinking skills are found to be the most significant variable. For example, creative writing which involves the high order thinking skill synthesis seems to come naturally to many student writers at different developmental stages and they can produce it without seeming to master less sophisticated writing purposes.

The nature of the relationship between maturation and writing skills is an area for more investigation. Hunt (1975) and Emig (1971) have addressed the need for and limitations of such research. Hunt (1975) has established that above average students develop syntactic maturity irrespective of grade levels but that adults show greater levels of syntactic maturity. Emig (1971) has established that twelfth grades, use composing processes based on "an implied or explicit set of stylistic principles..." for school assignments which are different from processes they use in self-initiated writing (Emig, 1971, p. 93).

One of the most useful outcomes of the research on composition is that it has produced sophisticated methods of evaluating writing (Cooper and Odell, 1977). The most widely accepted innovation, holistic scoring, has been adopted by the Educational Testing Service and is used to score College Entrance Examination Board writing samples. Holistic scoring, which gives a score on a scale such as one to four to a paper read by two or more readers, has proven to be as

accurate as primary trait analysis (detailed analysis of selected criteria such as spelling and sentence variety) and more accurate than multiple choice questions which measure knowledge of conventions of the language but do not measure the ability to apply such knowledge (Dinan, 1978). Valid writing assessment techniques make it possible to evaluate curriculum programs as well as build them around the entry achievement levels of students rather than around textbook series and arbitrary electives.

It is clear that curriculum development will need to focus on replacing ineffective teaching practices with practices that can be substantiated by research. Comprehensive curriculum development models are desperately needed. The research provides a framework for theory, practice, and assessment. This study addressed the need for a curriculum development model which uses such a framework.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH PROCEDURES

This chapter describes the development of the composition program improvement model, the implementation process, research population and the instruments used to field test the impact of the model. The model is illustrated in Figure I.

Research Population

The research population was comprised of teachers and students in a rural southern school district bordering a medium sized progressive city. Seven of the district's eleven middle schools were involved in the study. Fifteen teachers assigned to eighth grade students in language arts were the subjects, as were their students. The teachers were all experienced, with a range of seven to twenty-eight years in the field. Most taught two content areas in more than one grade.

None of the teachers had received prior training in current theories and strategies for teaching writing, nor were any familiar with recent research on writing instruction. Virtually no curriculum emphasis on writing existed in the district's middle or elementary schools but tremendous emphasis was placed on reading. All teacher subjects were trained to manage the reading program. Some devoted time to writing instruction and others did not, but all taught grammar.

Student subjects were eighth graders in the classes of teacher subjects. These classes grouped students across grade levels according to reading program placement. Student subjects represented a cross section of the reading groups represented among eighth graders in the school sites.

Instruments

Student data was gathered on two instruments, a writing sample and the Basic Skills Assessment Multiple Choice Subtest, A Writer's Skills. The writing sample contained two exercises. Two versions of the writing sample were used. In the pretest writing sample, exercise one required students to synthesize information from a written telephone conversation and write specific information for another audience. The nature of this task was consistent in the posttest writing sample (see Appendix A). Exercise two of the pretest writing sample required students to select from a listing of several types of experiences and give a narrative, descriptive account of their selected experiences. For example, a student could select the topic "an experience which involved pain" and write a biographical sketch from any number of situations he or she might recall. Exercise two of the posttest writing sample required students to employ slightly more difficult levels of cognition. The task presented a listing of personal qualities and asked students to select one which they felt they possessed or which someone they admired possessed and tell why they thought the quality was important. Essentially the task involved

description of an abstract concept in a biographical piece (see Appendix A).

The Basic Skills Assessment subtest A Writer's Skills measures knowledge of minimum skills in spelling, usage, mechanics, editing, logic and evaluation. The 75 item test is normed for eighth grade, ninth grade, and twelfth grade and is designed as a diagnostic tool for the identification of students in need of remediation. The developers, Educational Testing Service and a national consortium of schools, suggest that the test be used in conjunction with a writing sample since standardized tests cannot give a complete picture of a student's composing abilities. The BSA subtest was administered in October and May. The test is further described in Appendix A.

The following teacher data gathering instruments were used.

1. A needs assessment survey designed to gather information on teacher background in composition instruction was administered prior to treatment (see Appendix A).
2. Workshop evaluation forms which were generally used to document the effectiveness of staff development programs in the district were used to provide the researcher with immediate feedback on training sessions but were considered primarily supporting evidence of the impact of training on teachers (see Appendix A).
3. Observation checklists were developed and used to gather information on teacher subjects. A checklist called Teacher Monitoring Form was used to determine which in-service

strategies experimental teachers incorporated in their classes. This form lists the major strategies developed and selected for the model (see Appendix A). A control group teacher observation checklist was developed to gather information on whether instruction in writing occurred in control group teacher classes and to provide a description of strategies and approaches being used if such instruction occurred.

4. A questionnaire was developed for experimental and control teachers to gather information on the effect of treatment on experimental teachers by analyzing similarities and differences in responses to questions about composition instructional practices and pedagogical perspectives. This instrument was employed at the end of the research period. Teacher data gathering instruments developed by the researcher were reviewed by three curriculum specialists and two teachers. In addition, the teacher monitoring form was field-tested by the researcher with 35 high school English teachers during 1979-80.

Development of the Improvement Model Components and Process

The development of the composition program improvement model involved the following:

1. identification and development of a theoretical framework, goals, strategies and materials;
2. identification and development of instruments for measuring

- program impact on students; and
3. development of instruments for measuring program impact on teachers.

The second and third items listed above have been discussed. Each component of item one will be described.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for the model is a result of a synthesis of research on the subject and professional experience in curriculum development and teaching English. It includes goals for instruction and describes the nature of instruction.

The goals of instruction in writing are fluency, clarity and correctness. Fluency is the most important. The free flow of ideas is stifled when all instruction is aimed at correctness. Clarity naturally follows fluency in importance. Once ideas are produced they must be refined. Correctness is important lastly. Observing conventions of written language insures that the audience can properly decode the written message. Many teachers and theorists equate these three goals. From an instructional point of view, this researcher perceives a sequential prioritization, especially at the adolescent intervention level. The number of writing operations a child is asked to pay attention to at one time should be less than those an experienced or adult writer is asked to pay attention to. Hunt (1975) showed that young children and adolescents are less conscious of correctness than older children and adults but that the ability to produce ideas is as great and often greater in younger children than older children.

The traditional approach to mastering language conventions, formal grammar study, is not related to application in writing and the literature offers little clear evidence on which alternatives net results. It seems logical that conventions are internalized through reading and through practice with them in one's own writing. Correctness then should be approached after drafting and it should be the responsibility of the writer with direction from the teacher.

The written products required of students should be dictated by their varied cognitive levels. Identifying cognitive levels of students is a trial and error process. Depending on the students' experience with a subject and interest in it, levels of cognition may vary for writing achievement. A child may think analytically about a hobby such as repairing small engines, but may have difficulty analyzing a character from a short story. Therefore students need opportunities to write which call for various levels of cognition. At the same time instruction should be aimed at building cognitive levels. An example of building cognition on the sentence level follows.

Birds fly. (simple sentence presented by teacher)

Cardinals, robins and jaybirds fly. (response to teacher's question: What kind of birds?)

Cardinals, robins and jaybirds fly south in the winter. (response to teacher's question: Where do they fly?)

To find food and a comfortable climate, cardinals, robins and jaybirds fly south in the winter. (response to teacher's question: Why do the birds fly south?)

In order to build cognition, as well as observe varied functioning levels of cognition, writing tasks should offer options for students in much the same manner as reading comprehension tests incorporate levels of cognition. Reading teachers are concerned that students comprehend on the literal, inferential and applied levels. Writing teachers should insure opportunities for students to express their ideas on these levels also. Instruction at the pre-writing stage should be designed to insure success with the cognitive levels required in the writing tasks to be assigned following instruction. The teacher must be clear on the nature of the writing task in order to provide appropriate instruction. For example, a book report is a standard English assignment which presents difficulty for many students. A book report generally includes a summary (literal comprehension), identification and discussion of theme (inferential comprehension) and an evaluation of the work based on selected criteria (synthesis, analysis, and evaluation). The writing task spans the levels of cognition from least difficult to most difficult. It is the teacher's responsibility to teach the required levels or provide a framework for the student to reach them.

The literature suggests that some strategies are more effective than others. No one strategy seems to be a cure-all and no clear combination of strategies appears to be exceptional. The training teachers received for this study began with the premise that teachers should be exposed to a variety of strategies and that they should be free to select, according to individual teaching style as well as trial and error with students, those strategies with which they find success.

The basic process of pre-writing, writing, and rewriting is suggested as the major framework for instruction with fluency, clarity and correctness as goals. Alternative grading methods are encouraged and the use of the student's own writing is suggested as the text around which instruction should occur in mechanics, usage and syntax. The objective of inservice is to give teachers enough background to explore teaching writing.

Development and Selection of Treatment Strategies

A pool of strategies was selected which focused on the writing process. One group of strategies was selected because of their merit for developing sentence and paragraph fluency and control. A second group of strategies formed a core of pre-writing strategies which facilitate invention and organization. A third group of strategies presented alternatives to traditional grading. In addition, a continuum of types of writing skills and tasks was provided.

Strategies for instruction were developed by the researcher and selected from the literature. The major strategies will be summarized.

1. Following a skills continuum. A series of writing skills ranging from listing and alphabetizing to evaluative exposition was developed (see Appendix B). The skills continuum provides a core for instructional objectives, a sequence for instruction and a reference for analyzing writing tasks to determine prerequisite levels of cognition.

2. Slotting and expansion. These techniques were selected from the nationally validated Title IV(C) Project Individualized Language Arts. They involve the enrichment of sentences through the addition and substitution of words or groups of words in response to questions such as How? Why? When? What happened first? (see Appendix B).
3. Framed paragraphing. This technique is a modification of cloze reading exercises. Parts of sentences are provided but idea word spaces are left blank.
4. Brainstorming. As a total group pre-writing activity, brainstorming is used to generate ideas for writing which are recorded on the chalkboard. Specific brainstorm questions are presented by the teacher. The questions may be designed to structure organization of a paragraph or build vocabulary for description.
5. Charting. Similar to brainstorming, charting is a pre-writing activity which focuses on the generation of specific information such as alternative words and phrases for description. For example, a pre-writing activity leading to a descriptive paragraph may involve charting lists of words appropriate to describe an object under the headings touch, taste, smell, hear, see. The completed chart provides the student with a mini-thesaurus for the specific writing task. Charting and brainstorming are also used as alternatives to traditional outlining (see task card D5 in Appendix B).

6. Media or manipulative stimuli. This strategy involves using non-print stimuli as part of the pre-writing. For example, students might be shown a series of TV commercials on video tape, asked to observe for pre-established criteria and then formulate evaluative statements.
7. Process conferences. Graves (1975) uses the term to describe mini talk-write sessions in which teacher and student respond to and question ideas and word choices as they are being composed. The teacher is viewed as a helping audience whose advice may be accepted or rejected. This kind of interaction can also take place between students as peer-sharing and buddy proofing.
8. Alternative grading methods. Varying the evaluation of writing through the use of scoring grids, revision checklists and student input into the development of criteria for evaluation increases the instructional value of grading and evaluating and decreases the subjectivity of letter grades. Figure 2 illustrates a scoring grid and revision checklist which appear on the writing paper given the student. Figure 3 illustrates a checklist for ongoing diagnosis of students' writing.
9. Grammar in context. The idea behind grammar in context is that any sentence pattern can be stimulated through questions and can be done so without a knowledge of the definition of sentence type or formula for the sentence pattern. An example

of this is the illustration of building cognition on the sentence level previously discussed, where the kernel sentence "Birds fly" is enlarged to a complex sentence: "To find food and a comfortable climate, cardinals, robins and jaybirds fly south in the winter." As students observe patterns in their own writing they can be exposed to the linguistic description of them, but linguistic description is not a major goal of instruction.

The Nature of Treatment: Description of
Workshops and Technical Assistance

Treatment consisted of workshops, technical assistance and materials. Workshops dealt with three major areas. Beyond theory and review of the literature, diagnosis, prescription, and evaluation of writing were presented in hands-on activities. The focus of the workshops was to get teachers to view writing as a process which does not require traditional grading methods and secondly, to accept the notion that teacher directed pre-writing, group writing and structured-stimulus writing were methods which would facilitate the process. It was also important that they experience suggested strategies in the student role. Thirdly, the limited transfer value of grammar was the subject of problem-solving discussions.

The three primary components of the workshops--diagnosis, prescription and evaluation--will be summarized.

Diagnosis. Teachers were asked to write a paragraph. Next they were asked to select partners and read the paragraphs to each other and

and make critical suggestions for revision. Then they were given process feedback statements such as: "You are being superficial and complimentary and not helping your writer partners." At the end of the exercise teachers discussed why they had problems sharing and assuming the role of critic. The objective of the exercise was to get them to identify evaluation criteria and experience fault with subjective judgment. An illustration of group diagnosis was presented where common patterns found in student writing were identified and used in instruction.

Prescription. Strategies such as charting, expansion, use of non-print stimuli and process conferencing were demonstrated and practiced. Teachers wrote, shared their writing orally and discussed what effects the strategies had on their response to the composing task. For example, teachers were asked to expand the sentence: Teachers teach. All sentences were recorded on the chalk board and combined into a paragraph through total group composing. Next teachers wrote a second paragraph focusing on their individual beliefs about teaching and checked each other for fluency and clarity. Each teacher read another teacher's belief statement and paraphrased it orally to the writer to determine if the desired meaning emerged from the paragraph.

Evaluation. Teachers were presented with the following prerequisites of evaluation:

1. Evaluation is an integral part of the writing process.
2. The ultimate goal is to help students become good evaluators

of their own writing.

3. The process is worth as much or more than the product and therefore deserves credit.
4. The method of evaluation should relate to the purpose of the writing task.
5. Everything written need not be evaluated.

Methods of evaluation constituted a workshop session and a manual of suggested methods was presented. All methods called for a holistic perspective in which response is made to the total impact of a student's writing first and foremost.

Technical assistance. Inservice was followed by technical assistance in the classrooms. It is unlikely that inservice alone provides all teachers with the knowledge and skills needed to implement an instructional program. Feedback and reinforcement are also important for most teachers. Too often an inservice consultant is viewed as a person with gimmicks which either don't work or require too much planning time. Teachers often use inservice strategies for a short time after inservice but then revert to their old ways of doing things. Internalization does not occur without follow-up. Teachers were visited monthly and asked what kinds of problems they were having. Sometimes demonstration lessons were given or team teaching was used. Most often strategy suggestions were made.

Materials

Materials were developed and selected to give the teacher starting points but not to completely structure instruction. These materials were intended to insure success for the teacher by insuring success for the student.

A creative writing starter booklet was developed for students (see Appendix B). The booklet was open-ended so that students could work independently with a choice of short writing tasks. Several activities lent themselves to teacher direction. The booklet as a whole was designed to stimulate student interest in writing by giving students a variety of ways to use written language to talk about things meaningful to them and to use their imaginations.

A task card kit was developed to give teachers short individual or group tasks corresponding to various levels of cognition (see Appendix B). The teacher could always be clear on the cognitive nature of the task and avoid bypassing levels of cognition.

A book of writing activities called A Year of Writing Activities by I. David Welch and Susan Elliot was selected for its consistency with "process" focus as an additional resource.

Diagnostic, evaluation composition checklists were developed and provided to facilitate the use of alternative grading methods (see Figures 2 and 3). These forms were designed to inform the students of strengths as well as weaknesses and to aid the teacher in individualizing learning activities and using grading as part of the instruc-

tional process. The checklists established criteria for assessment of individual tasks or groups of tasks.

Overview of Implementation of the Model

A pretest, posttest control group design was used to determine the effectiveness of the model. Additional data on the effectiveness of treatment on teachers was collected through observations and surveys. The implementation of the program improvement process centered around the use of the researcher as trainer and resource to the teachers.

Experimental teachers received two days of training and a series of technical assistance visits and meetings. They also received materials selected and developed by the researcher. The training involved practice with approaches to teaching writing as well as theory and overviews of research. Problem solving discussions were frequent.

Students in the experimental and control groups were pretested and posttested on two instruments, a two part writing sample and a multiple choice standardized test of writing skills. A team of teachers including one control group teacher and one high school English teacher was trained to score the writing samples using the holistic scoring method (see description in Appendix B). Pretest writing samples and standardized test scores were returned to the teachers. Experimental teachers were encouraged to share the test data with students and were given assistance in interpreting group

data from both instruments. No direction was given to control group teachers.

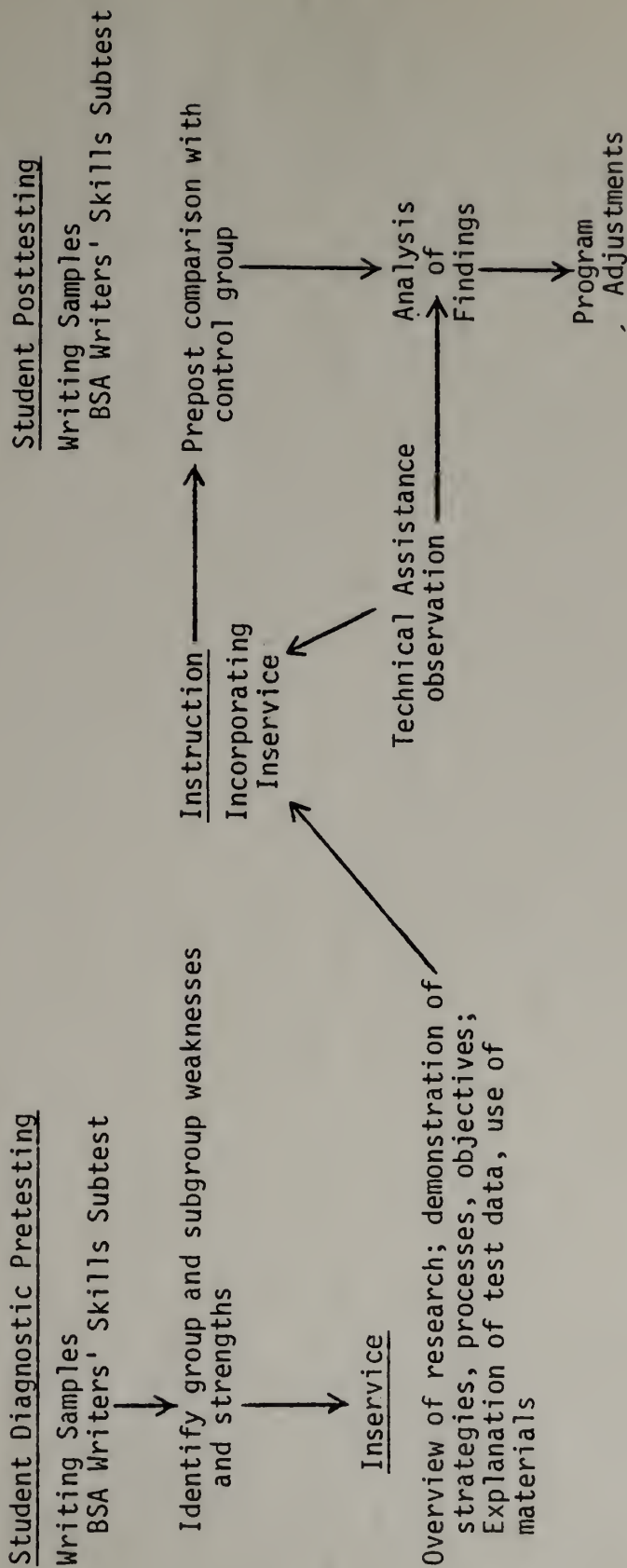
Teachers were observed for two reasons. Control group teachers were observed to determine how they taught writing if they taught it. Experimental group teachers were observed to determine whether they were able to incorporate and go beyond inservice strategies and materials. Their problems were identified and, where possible, solutions were sought.

Two observation instruments were used. One listing inservice strategies for experimental group teachers and another questionnaire form for control teachers (see Appendix A) which noted whether there was evidence of writing instruction.

The implementation of the model occurred between September, 1980 and May, 1981. Students were pretested in October and posttested in May.

Composition Program Improvement Model

Figure 1



CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

The results of this study are presented in two parts. First, the direct effects of treatment on teacher attitudes and behaviors are discussed. Second, the effect of teacher treatment on students as measured by test data is presented.

Effects of Treatment on Experimental Teachers

Data on teacher treatment effects were gathered on survey instruments and through observations. The major part of treatment consisted of inservice sessions. A survey evaluation of these training sessions was used to gather data on teacher perception of the quality of training and the potential for its applicability to their classroom settings. Teachers were asked to indicate their levels of agreement with statements about the training sessions. Experimental teachers had a positive response to training as evidenced by their levels of agreement with survey statements (see Appendix A).

Experimental teachers were informally visited frequently and formally observed four times. An observation checklist was used to record training strategies which were observed (see Appendix A). A sample control teacher observation checklist is contained in Appendix A. Observational data will be summarized for each experimental teacher.

Teacher 01 observed student enthusiasm after presenting sentence manipulation techniques and was convinced on their value. 01 primarily used strategies to create and maintain student motivation. 01 was a positive audience and this caused students to respond to writing tasks with a great deal of eagerness. The primary observation made in 01's classes was that students were enjoying writing, requesting writing assignments for homework, and also choosing it as an independent activity for free time. 01 rarely gave students critical feedback but encouraged buddy feedback. 01 consistently used structured pre-writing activities and process conferences. Students in 01's class were in three grade levels. Only those in grade eight were subjects in this study. The majority of 01's students were in other grade levels and were reading - above grade level. The lack of critical feedback 01 gave seems to have been related to the presence of younger children in the class whose performance exceeded 01's expectations. 01 was also responsible for teaching other subjects with large multi-level groups but was still one of the most adapting experimental teachers. 01 was eager to share examples of student writing during visits and observations and discussed individual student problems and progress readily. 01 needed no technical assistance but seemed to benefit from positive reinforcement. 01 was conscious of administrative apathy for the work being initiated but coped with it well.

Teacher 02 had a small group of advanced students who had in previous years not been challenged. They were a demanding group. 02 experimented with strategies but did so with little consistency.

This contributed to a lack of internalization on the part of the students. Most writing tasks did not sustain interest for these students and O2 often reverted to the use of a grammar text, primarily to reduce management and behavior problems. O2's strengths were process conferencing and emphasis on revision. The high frustration level of the students, caused by feelings that the curriculum as a whole did not meet their needs, created constraints for O2. O2 dealt with the content of students' written ideas more vigorously than other experimental teachers and was receptive to technical assistance, primarily team teaching, on many occasions.

Teacher O3 carefully planned the introduction of writing strategies and exposed students to them with regularity. O3 focused on specific group and individual writing skill deficits to a greater degree than other experimental teachers. O3 also had the clearest notion of balance between grammar and writing and was able to approach lessons in writing with specific purposes. O3 experimented more readily than other teachers with record keeping for writing. O3 was more inclined to review professional literature to solve instructional problems than to accept technical assistance. O2 felt that the training was the most professionally stimulating experience she had been a part of in years. O3's students were primarily on grade level in the reading program.

Teacher O4 did not begin to implement strategies for some time after initial training occurred. O4 incorporated strategies very slowly, experimenting at first with paragraph frames to reinforce reading comprehension. O4 was reticent to accept research findings on

the formal study of grammar feeling that students would be expected to enter high school with a firm grasp of it. 04 was frustrated by having two reading groups of different levels in one class and that frustration in part affected the rate at which 04 experimented with writing instruction. 04 allowed students in the higher reading level more opportunities to work independently in the writing booklet. Toward the end of the experimental period 04 dismissed the reading program and taught writing in a concentrated manner. Interestingly, 04's students' made greater gains than other experimental student groups. The concentrated instruction prior to posttesting seems to have been effective. 04 responded to observation and technical assistance with reservations but probably would not have made much movement without this one to one contact over a period of months.

Teacher 05 had students in more than one grade. 05 became adept at group diagnosis and paid attention to individual student strengths as opposed to weaknesses. 04 tried to match writing tasks to student interests and placed positive pressure on the total group to improve specific common weaknesses. 05 often presented pre-writing strategies followed by 'just for fun' practice writing periods. 05 made extensive feedback comments to students on their papers as opposed to individual process conferencing. 05 was not consistent in the amount of time devoted to writing instruction but was clear and thorough whenever a lesson was presented.

Teacher 06 began to implement strategies with a measure of anxiety because teaching writing was an entirely new experience.

06 had previously not taught language arts. 06 perceived that students were making minimal gains in writing and not retaining skills taught. 06 struggled to adjust levels of expectation and to present manageable amounts of work in writing for the students, some of which were below grade level in reading. 06 experimented with strategies readily and sought additional commercial resources for teaching aids. Process conferencing worked well for 06 and as 06 continued to use this strategy 06 became more able to focus on realistic objectives for lessons.

Teacher 07 had bright students and wanted to challenge them through writing. 07 emphasized organization and placed more emphasis on that aspect than on revision. 07 demonstrated strategies but did more in the way of creating an atmosphere where students could initiate, share, and enjoy writing. 07 was quite resourceful in suggesting options for writing tasks and seldom assumed the 'judge' role in responding to their work. Peer evaluation and sharing worked well for 07.

Control Group Teacher Observation Data Findings

Control group teachers were observed by two curriculum specialists and were interviewed informally by the researcher. An observation/interview form was used to record information on the approaches to writing instruction used by control teachers (see Appendix A). The observation checklist used for experimental teachers was inappropriate for control teachers since it listed treatment

strategies which control group teachers had not been exposed to. Observation forms for control teachers are included in the appendix.

Observation/interview data suggests that control group teachers, with the exception of two, offered few opportunities for students to write and placed primary emphasis on formal grammar instruction and the reading program. Some non-specific creative writing did occur especially if suggested in the reading program. Two control teachers, 09 and 10 were very resourceful in their approaches to teaching writing. 09 was regarded as an exceptional teacher in all respects. 09 read professional literature, used current commercial teaching aids and developed creative tasks for writing with an additional focus on practical writing skills. 10 used supplemental composition texts and devoted regular amounts of time to writing. Both 09 and 10 placed tremendous emphasis on traditional grammar and proofreading.

Observation data indicates that control group teachers had no consistent approach to teaching writing. Two teachers seemed to have had clearer conceptual frameworks for instruction than others but these teachers were not as comprehensive in their use of specific strategies as were experimental teachers.

Survey Data Findings

Additional data on experimental and control teachers' patterns for teaching writing and pedagogical perspectives was gathered at the end of the experimental period. A survey instrument was used to determine if there were differences in the teachers' perceptions of

their own teaching patterns and beliefs about teaching writing (see Tables 7 and 8 in Appendix A). In summary, survey responses suggested the following differences in perceptions which correlate to treatment for experimental teachers and lack of treatment for control teachers.

1. Experimental teacher responses to pedagogical questions (numbers 1, 2, 3, 7 and 12) varied less than control group responses indicating they developed a more precise pedagogical perspective.
2. Experimental teachers were clearer on the nature of the writing process and the relationship between grammar instruction and the development of fluency (numbers 5, 6, 7 and 10).

Results of Analysis of Student Assessment Data

Student performance on writing sample exercises and the Basic Skills Assessment A Writer's Skills Subtest was analyzed to determine the existence of a correlation between teacher treatment and student achievement. Secondly, the data were analyzed to determine the appropriateness of assessment instruments for the program evaluation component of the program improvement model.

Primary analysis of student assessment data involved t-tests using a two-tail probability pooled variance estimate to determine the significance of mean sources from pre to posttest on assessment variables, the significance of the difference between mean scores on assessment variables for experimental and control groups, and the

variables which indicate the extent and nature of treatment correlation with student achievement.

Data were analyzed on 3 measures, 2 writing samples and the writer's skills subtest of the Basic Skills Assessment. The following variables were analyzed:

1. Total group means - t-tests were applied for the total experimental and total control groups.
2. Teacher variable - t-tests were applied for each experimental and control teacher's student group.
3. Reading Level - t-tests were applied for subgroups in each of four reading levels. Levels indicated placement in the reading program.
4. Selected pretest scores on the Basic Skills Assessment - t-tests were applied for students in experimental and control groups who scored above and below selected scores on the Basic Skills Assessment pretest.
5. Pretest writing sample scores - t-tests were applied for students in experimental and control groups whose writing sample pretest scores were equal.

T-test Results. T-test results are reported in Tables 1-5.

1. Total group t-tests. 123 experimental cases were compared to 186 control cases using pre and posttest scores on exercise one of the writing sample, exercise two of the writing sample and raw scores on the writing skills subtest of the Basic Skills Assessment, and reading program placement level. There

was no significant difference in mean reading program placement levels. There was no significant difference in performance on exercise one of the pretest writing sample or exercise two of the pretest writing sample. Performance on the BSA pretest was significantly different ($t=2.55$, $p<.011$ level). There was no significant difference in performance on either exercise one or two of the writing sample posttest. Performance on the BSA posttest was significantly different ($t=4.17$, $p<.000$ level) (see Table 5).

2. Experimental teachers. T-test data was analyzed for each experimental and control teacher's student group. Of the seven experimental teachers four had cases of significant gain on the Basic Skills Assessment subtest. The other three groups approached significance $p<.051$, $p<.065$, and $p<.063$. The number of cases was 10 or less for each of these three groups.

Control teachers. Of the eight control teachers' student groups two had cases of significant gain on the BSA. One additional teacher's group approached significant ($p<.056$).

3. Reading levels. T-tests were applied for student groups, experimental and control, within each of four reading program placements levels. The levels were 15, the equivalent of two years below grade level; 16, the equivalent of one year below grade level; 17, the equivalent of on-grade level and 18 the equivalent of one or more years above grade level (see Table 3).

was no significant difference in mean reading program placement levels. There was no significant difference in performance on exercise one of the pretest writing sample or exercise two of the pretest writing sample. Performance on the BSA pretest was significantly different ($t=2.55$, $p<.011$ level). There was no significant difference in performance on either exercise one or two of the writing sample posttest. Performance on the BSA posttest was significantly different ($t=4.17$, $p<.000$ level) (see Table 5).

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Control teachers. Of the eight control teachers' student groups two had cases of significant gain on the BSA. One additional teacher's group approached significance ($p<.056$).

3. Reading levels. T-tests were applied for student groups, experimental and control, within each of four reading program placement levels. The levels were 15, the equivalent of two years below grade level; 16, the equivalent of one year below grade level; 17, the equivalent of on-grade level and 18 the equivalent of one or more years above grade level (see Table 3).

Level 15. Mean raw score difference from pre to postscore on the Basic Skills Assessment subtest was significantly different ($t=2.23$, $p<.048$). The mean score gain for experimental students was significantly greater than the mean score gain for control students.

Level 16. There was no significant difference in mean differences from pre to posttest for experimental and control students in Level 16.

Level 17. Mean raw score differences were significant on the Basic Skills Assessment ($t=3.07$, $p<.003$). The mean raw score gain for experimental students in Level 17 was significantly greater than the mean raw score gain for control students.

Level 18. Mean differences from pre to posttest were not significantly different on any of the three instruments for students in Level 18.

Selected Scores on the Basic Skills Assessment. Data on experimental and control students with selected pretest scores on the Basic Skills Assessment were analyzed by applying t-tests.

The mean difference from pre to posttest on the BSA for students with pretest scores of 50 or greater was significant ($t=4.45$, $p<.000$) with experimental students having a mean gain significantly greater than control students.

Experimental student gains were significantly greater than control students gains ($t=2.20$, $p<.032$) for students with BSA pretest scores of 40 or less (see Table 4).

Selected Pretest Writing Sample Scores. T-tests were performed on experimental and control student subgroups using writing sample scores for case selection. Students in the experimental group with pretest writing sample scores of 7 on exercise one made significantly more BSA gains ($t=2.53, p<.015$) than control students with the same pretest score. Experimental students with exercise II pretest scores of 4 made significantly more BSA gains ($t=2.14, p<.038$) than control students with the same score (see Table 4).

Multiple Regression. A multiple regression procedure was applied to the data to analyze the relationships between variables (see Table 5). Correlation coefficients were highest for the Basic Skills Assessment variable.

The data as a whole indicate that treatment consistently correlated with significant gains for experimental students on the Basic Skills Assessment. While gains on writing sample variables occurred for experimental teachers' student groups, they were not consistently statistically significant.

Table 1
 Basic Skills Assessment
 A Writer's Skills Subtest
 Experimental Group
 T-Test

| Variable | N | Mean | Difference | T-Value | 2-Tail Prob. |
|-----------------|----|--------------------|------------|---------|--------------|
| Exp. Teacher 01 | 9 | 61.8889 67.222 | -5.333 | -2.29 | 0.051 |
| Exp. Teacher 02 | 10 | 62.4000 65.0000 | -2.600 | -2.10 | 0.065 |
| Exp. Teacher 03 | 24 | 54.7500 60.7500 | -6.000 | -5.50 | 0.000* |
| Exp. Teacher 04 | 15 | 49.3333 54.8000 | -5.4667 | -3.54 | 0.003* |
| Exp. Teacher 05 | 7 | 54.1429 59.0000 | -4.8571 | -2.28 | 0.063 |
| Exp. Teacher 06 | 36 | 38.1667 42.0833 | -3.9167 | -2.32 | 0.026* |
| Exp. Teacher 07 | 20 | 60.8500 64.7500 | -3.9000 | -3.88 | 0.001* |

* $p < .05$

Table 2
 Basic Skills Assessment
 A Writer's Skills Subtest
 Control Group
 T-Test

| Variable | N | Mean | Difference | T-Value | 2-Tail Prob. |
|----------------|----|--------------------|------------|---------|-----------------|
| CNT Teacher 08 | 7 | 38.5714 44.1429 | -5.5714 | -3.22 | 0.018* |
| CNT Teacher 09 | 13 | 60.3077 59.0769 | 1.2308 | 0.50 | 0.624 |
| CNT Teacher 10 | 22 | 49.0000 48.3636 | 0.6364 | 0.38 | 0.711 |
| CNT Teacher 11 | 19 | 46.4211 50.3684 | -3.9474 | -2.98 | 0.010* |
| CNT Teacher 12 | 18 | 48.1667 48.2222 | -0.0556 | -0.03 | 0.974 |
| CNT Teacher 13 | 21 | 38.5238 40.8571 | -2.3333 | -0.99 | 0.335 |
| CNT Teacher 14 | 17 | 57.9412 60.4118 | -2.4706 | -2.06 | 0.056 |
| CNT Teacher 15 | 51 | 46.4314 46.9412 | -.5098 | -0.34 | 0.734 |

* $p < .05$

Table 3
 Reading Level Subgroups
 Basic Skills Assessment
 Writer's Skills Subtest
 T-Test

| Variable | N | Diff. Mean | T-Value | 2-Tail Prob. |
|----------|--------------------|-------------------|---------|-----------------|
| Level 15 | Exp. 8 Con. 49 | 2.442 1.224 | 2.23 | 0.048* |
| Level 16 | Exp. 13 Con. 51 | 0.9231 1.3725 | -0.19 | 0.860 |
| Level 17 | Exp. 68 Con. 31 | 5.0441 1.0968 | 3.07 | 0.003* |
| Level 18 | Exp. 25 Con. 13 | 4.3600 -0.3077 | 1.5 | 0.142 |

* $p < .05$

Table 4
 Selected Subgroups
 Basic Skills Assessment
 T-Test

| Variable | N | Diff. Mean | T-Value | 2-Tail Prob. |
|--|--------------------|------------------|---------|-----------------|
| Ex II Pretest Score = 4 | Exp. 22 Con. 41 | 4.8182 1.2929 | 2.14 | 0.038* |
| Ex I Pretest Score = 7 | Exp. 21 Con. 26 | 5.3810 0.4615 | 2.53 | 0.015* |
| BSA Pretest Score of 50 or above | Exp. 74 Con. 80 | 3.9865 0.2000 | 4.45 | 0.000 |
| BSA Pretest Score of 40 or less | Exp. 28 Con. 45 | 8.2500 3.3778 | 2.20 | 0.032* |

* = .05

C H A P T E R V
SUMMARY, DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purposes of this chapter are to provide a concise summary of the study, discuss findings and the implications of findings for further research.

Summary

The purpose of the study was to field test a model for program improvement in composition in a local school district at the eighth grade intervention level. The major components of the model were inservice, teacher observation and technical assistance, and program evaluation. The research population was comprised of middle school teachers and their eighth grade language arts students.

Teacher treatment involved training in the use of strategies consistent with current theory and research in composition. The effects of teacher treatment on teacher behavior and attitude were determined through survey and observational data. The effects of teacher treatment on student performance was tested by applying t-tests.

The study addressed the following research questions:

1. Does the training positively affect student growth in writing within the given time frame and at given instructional intervention level?

2. What aspects of teacher training do teachers incorporate most readily?
3. What external independent curriculum variables affect teacher implementation and student achievement?
4. Are selected measures of student achievement appropriate for evaluating program impact?

Answers to the research questions were inferred from analysis of the survey, observational and test data. A series of t-tests were employed in the analysis of student test data to determine a correlation between teacher training and student growth from pre to posttest on selected measures of writing. Correlation coefficients were analyzed to determine the relationships between test measures.

The data developed in this study support the following responses to research questions:

1. Teacher training can be said to positively affect student growth in writing within the given time frame of instruction and at the given instructional intervention level as measured on the Basic Skills Assessment subtest, A Writer's Skills. Gains for experimental students were consistently significantly greater than control student gains.
2. Teachers selected and incorporated sentence manipulation techniques, pre-writing activities, and alternative evaluation methods readily. They did not incorporate methods for systematic on-going diagnosis and prescription readily.

3. External independent curriculum variables which appeared to interfere with teacher ability to implement writing instruction were the structured reading program and the degree of administrative support for placing priority on writing instruction.
4. Test measures used to evaluate program impact on student achievement in writing are considered partially adequate. The Basic Skills Assessment Subtest, A Writer's Skills, provides a clearer picture of student growth than writing samples subjected to holistic analysis.

Discussion of Findings

Objective data. The findings indicate that program improvement did occur as a result of treatment. Specifically, teacher behavior and attitude were positively affected and student growth for experimental cases was significantly greater than control cases on the standardized test variable. Student growth for experimental cases in the lowest reading level was also significantly greater than that of like control cases on exercise II of the writing sample posttest.

The fact that experimental and control students' scores on the writing samples from pre to posttest were not significantly different with the exception of students in the lowest reading group, suggests several hypotheses: (1) treatment was not effective in altering the rate of student progress in actual writing tasks during the research period. Different and/or more specified instruction is needed to

produce significant gain on the writing sample variable. (2) The eighth grade intervention level is too high for average and above average students as determined by reading levels for instruction to affect composing patterns in a timeframe of less than a year. (3) The nature of the writing sample tasks, frequency of writing sample assessment and nature of writing sample assessment are variables which need to be field tested for validity to determine which combination of such variables will yield the clearest data.

The analysis of standardized test data suggests that students in the experimental group were developing skills in the areas of logic, evaluation, and editing at a greater rate than students in the control group. However students scoring between 30 and 50 on the 75 item test at pretesting made smaller gains than those scoring above 50. Experimental gains in this category were not significantly greater than control group gains. This suggests that further study is needed to determine what kind and amount of instruction will positively alter student performance on this measure for students within specific pre-test score ranges.

Survey and Observation Data

Certain conclusions can be inferred from observing the process of program improvement field tested in this study. The attitude and receptivity of administrators in experimental schools seems to have been a key factor in the effect treatment had on experimental teachers. In school 04 the administrators were supportive and encouraged the two

experimental teachers there to share information and ideas with other teachers. The principal in 04 noted that interest in teaching writing spread throughout the school as a result of the two teachers' enthusiasm about their work with writing instruction. In 03 administrators were responsive to the eagerness of one of the experimental teachers there to get the whole faculty involved at least on an awareness level. The fact that this kind of interest was not generated in schools 01 and 02 seems in part a reflection of lesser administrative interest perceived by experimental teachers in those sites.

Since experimental teachers were responsible for reading instruction which included other aspects of language arts, and writing was not an integral part of the reading program, observing teachers actually teaching writing presented constraints. Teachers did not have a scheduled block of time specifically for writing instruction. Sometimes information on instruction in writing had to be inferred from a review of student folders containing writing activities and from interviews with teachers about those activities.

The literature suggests the need to focus observation on what students do during the process of composing as opposed to what teachers do. A combination of teacher-student observations is perhaps important for program evaluation. For example, students in this study showed tremendous frustration when teachers presented grammar in the form of drills and worksheets with a focus on terminology. Teachers tended to dismiss the issue of such frustration because they felt responsible for students mastering grammar items on unit tests of the reading program.

On the other hand, experimental teachers were clear on which types of writing activities students found success with and which types of activities caused frustration.

Composing trends were also observed in reviewing responses to writing activities in the writing booklet which was developed by the researcher as an aide to experimental teachers. Certain stimuli, directions, and pre-writing activities elicited more organized and mature responses than others. An exercise in paragraphing which provided a frame for starting sentences, making transitions, comparing and contrasting and varying syntax caused students to have success with paragraph fluency and especially stimulated preciseness. The following is an example of such a response. Underlined words are those written by the student. All other words were provided in the paragraph frame.

Example:

I have my own likes and dislikes. For example, I am most content when I walk in the rain alone because I can think over my problems. Nothing upsets me more than others arguing with myself, but listening to soft music will usually calm me down. I like to go to the movie theater, but I don't like to go to the supermarket. I like to wear indigo or violet blue jeans, but I don't enjoy wearing red or crimson colored clothes. The two things I like to do most are read books and watch movies. The thing I really hate to do is wash dishes.

The structured reading program was a key factor in the implementation of the program improvement model. The reading program negatively affected the quality and quantity of instruction in writing. The management system of the reading program was so time consuming and fixed that experimental teachers were unable to devote as much time as they wanted to devote to writing. They were also unable to use the suggested methods of record keeping for writing because of the amount of record keeping required by the reading program. Since unit tests in reading included items related to grammar, the teachers felt required to give some instruction in grammar which was out of the context of writing. There was a feeling among teachers that writing activities were supplemental to the established curriculum. Teachers whose students had completed or were near completion of the reading program felt freer to experiment with writing instruction. It is probable that student outcomes would have been greater and teacher implementation more thorough if a less structured reading program had been used. A specified block of time for writing instruction might have also produced positive effects.

The variables of intervention level and reading program as well as the size of the teacher samples all seem to have affected student outcomes to some degree. Notions about the intervention level as an affecting variable are speculative. Students at this grade level have mastered basic syntax and appear to have the ability to compose narratives fairly well. Case comparisons of individual students indicate that some students in experimental groups began to pay

attention to diction, punctuation, and invention more in posttest writing samples. Further analysis of writing samples using primary trait analysis might provide a clearer picture of this observation. It is possible that the eighth grade intervention level is appropriate for altering some aspects of the composing process but that a lower grade level is more appropriate for dramatic alteration or for rapidly increasing the rate of development of composing skills. The age level at which students compose independently is probably the best intervention level for effective program implementation but such program implementation should also occur in subsequent levels of instruction.

There may be a point at which instruction in writing cannot significantly alter achievement because patterns of thinking and composing have become firmly rooted. Emig's (1971) study of twelfth graders' composing processes supports this hypothesis. She found that students compose differently for self initiated writing tasks than they do for teacher directed writing tasks. Further study in this area will have tremendous implication for instruction. Programs designed to change teacher behavior would benefit from more substantial findings on the kinds of and quantity of effects instruction can have on the composing skills development of students at different age and grade levels.

Change in teacher behavior is not easily measured and the effects of the kind of teacher treatment used in this study are perhaps best observed over longer periods of time than this study allowed. In the course of a year or less experienced teachers probably do not move beyond the stage of experimentation with new methodology. Teaching

patterns are internalized over periods of years and are not permanently altered in brief spans of time.

While some degree of change was observed in all experimental teachers' approaches to teaching writing, the variables of class size, achievement levels, reading program constraints, administrative support, and teacher acceptance of the theory and strategies affected the degree to which individual teachers experienced change with positive results.

Recommendations

Future research which investigates the relationship of maturation and writing skill development will have implications for developing and evaluating program improvement models such as the one field tested here.

This program improvement model could be replicated for other populations but results in terms of student gains cannot be predicted from this study. The following recommendations are suggested for replication of the model or continued field testing of it:

1. Assess the state of students' writing prior to teacher training on a series of writing samples as well as the Basic Skills Assessment subtest a Writer's Skills.
2. Include assessment findings in the teacher training component.
3. Seek administrative support and involvement for each school involved.
4. Determine ways to reduce constraints related to the reading program.

5. Measure program impact over a period of more than one school year and in more than one grade.

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APPENDIX A

- Table 5 - Total Group Experimental and Control T-Test
- Table 6 - Correlation Matrix for Reading Level & Test Variables
- Table 7 - Eighth Grade Teachers' Assessment of Composition
Instruction/Experimental Teachers' Summary
- Table 8 - Eighth Grade Teachers' Assessment of Composition
Instruction/Control Teachers' Summary
- Needs Assessment Survey
- Teacher Monitoring Form
- Control Group Observation Checklist
- Staff Development Summary Report and Workshop Evaluation
Tally Sheets
- Writing Sample Pretest
- Writing Sample Posttest
- A Description of the Basic Skills Assessment,
A Writer's Skills Subtest

Table 5

Total Group
Experimental and Control
T-Test

| Variable | N | Mean | Standard Deviation | F Value | 2-Tail Prob. | T Value | Degrees of Freedom | 2-Tail Prob. |
|------------|-----|---------|-----------------------|------------|-----------------|------------|-----------------------|-----------------|
| READ-LEVEL | | | | | | | | |
| Exp. Group | 115 | 16.9652 | 0.783 | | | | | |
| Con. Group | 166 | 16.4578 | 5.792 | 54.74 | 0.0 | 0.93 | 279 | 0.352 |
| EXIPRE | | | | | | | | |
| Exp. Group | 123 | 5.9512 | 1.674 | | | | | |
| Con. Group | 186 | 5.5806 | 1.809 | 1.17 | 0.355 | 1.82 | 307 | 0.070 |
| EXIPOST | | | | | | | | |
| Exp. Group | 117 | 6.5470 | 1.578 | | | | | |
| Con Group | 167 | 6.5329 | 1.451 | 1.18 | 0.320 | 0.08 | 282 | 0.938 |
| EXIIPRE | | | | | | | | |
| Exp. Group | 120 | 5.1167 | 1.745 | | | | | |
| Con Group | 186 | 5.0484 | 1.747 | 1.00 | 0.999 | 0.33 | 304 | 0.739 |
| EXIIPOST | | | | | | | | |
| Exp. Group | 113 | 5.3363 | 1.618 | | | | | |
| Con. Group | 164 | 5.2561 | 1.417 | 1.30 | 0.122 | 0.44 | 275 | 0.663 |
| BSAPRE | | | | | | | | |
| Exp. Group | 122 | 51.2295 | 13.607 | | | | | |
| Con. Group | 183 | 47.2732 | 13.054 | 1.09 | 0.609 | 2.55 | 303 | 0.011 |
| BSAPOST | | | | | | | | |
| Exp. Group | 122 | 55.7541 | 13.473 | | | | | |
| Con. Group | 170 | 49.0529 | 13.617 | 1.02 | 0.907 | 4.17 | 290 | 0.000 |

Table 6
Correlation Matrix
For Reading Level & Test Variables

| Read-Level | Read-Level | EXIPRE | EXIPOST | EXIIPRE | EXIIPOST | BSAPRE | BSAPOST | |
|------------|------------|---------------------------|---------|---------|----------|---------|----------|--|
| | | | | | | | | |
| | | <u>Experimental Group</u> | | | | | | |
| Read-Level | 1.00000 | 0.32526 | 0.09579 | 0.20898 | 0.13286 | 0.40982 | 0.41117 | |
| EXIPRE | 0.32526 | 1.00000 | 0.23156 | 0.37455 | 0.27895 | 0.47434 | 0.45609 | |
| EXIPOST | 0.09579 | 0.23156 | 1.00000 | 0.13013 | 0.40179 | 0.33086 | 0.36371 | |
| EXIIPRE | 0.20898 | 0.37455 | 0.13013 | 1.00000 | 0.28694 | 0.54280 | 0.56941 | |
| EXIIPOST | 0.13286 | 0.27895 | 0.40179 | 0.28694 | 1.00000 | 0.37086 | 0.40613 | |
| BSAPRE | 0.40982 | 0.47434 | 0.33086 | 0.54280 | 0.37086 | 1.00000 | 0.86148 | |
| BSAPOST | 0.41117 | 0.45609 | 0.36371 | 0.56941 | 0.40613 | 0.86148 | 1.00000 | |
| | | <u>Control Group</u> | | | | | | |
| Read-Level | 1.00000 | 0.09739 | 0.04509 | 0.07581 | -0.06011 | 0.21179 | -0.13264 | |
| EXIPRE | 0.09739 | 1.00000 | 0.19306 | 0.13818 | 0.21581 | 0.43835 | 0.36063 | |
| EXIPOST | 0.04509 | 0.19306 | 1.00000 | 0.09169 | 0.27058 | 0.31817 | 0.36023 | |
| EXIIPRE | 0.07581 | 0.13818 | 0.09169 | 1.00000 | 0.38141 | 0.43289 | 0.35324 | |
| EXIIPOST | -0.06011 | 0.21581 | 0.27058 | 0.38141 | 1.00000 | 0.45490 | 0.53016 | |
| BSAPRE | 0.21179 | 0.43835 | 0.31817 | 0.43289 | 0.45490 | 1.00000 | 0.71421 | |
| BSAPOST | -0.13264 | 0.36063 | 0.36023 | 0.35324 | 0.53016 | 0.71421 | 1.00000 | |

Table 7

Experimental Teachers' Summary
6 Responses
EIGHTH GRADE TEACHERS' ASSESSMENT OF COMPOSITION
INSTRUCTION

Please circle 1, 2, or 3 for questions one through twelve.
(1) = generally, (2) = occasionally, and (3) = never

- | | |
|----------------------------|---|
| 1 2 3 () (4) (2) | 1. I teach writing as it is presented in Holt. |
| 1 2 3 () (6) () | 2. I supplement Holt with a grammar text. |
| 1 2 3 (4) (2) () | 3. I use writing activities from sources other than Holt and grammar texts. |
| 1 2 3 (3) (3) () | 4. I use writing activities to check or reinforce reading comprehension. |
| 1 2 3 (3) (3) () | 5. My priority in teaching writing is developing fluency in written expression. |
| 1 2 3 (1) (4) (1) | 6. My priority in teaching writing is grammar and mechanics. |
| 1 2 3 (4) (2) () | 7. I demonstrate writing techniques before assigning writing. |
| 1 2 3 (3) (3) () | 8. My writing assignments are preceded by motivational or idea building activities. |
| 1 2 3 (3) (3) () | 9. I insist that students proofread and edit before submitting their writing for a grade. |
| 1 2 3 () (1) (5) | 10. I teach less writing to students in levels 14 and 15 than to those in level 16. |
| 1 2 3 (2) (4) () | 11. I have a clear picture of individual students' specific writing weaknesses and strengths. |
| 1 2 3 () (6) () | 12. I use alternative grading methods for writing activities. |

Table 8

Control Teachers' Summary
8 Responses
EIGHTH GRADE TEACHERS' ASSESSMENT OF COMPOSITION
INSTRUCTION

Please circle 1, 2, or 3 for questions one through twelve.
(1) = generally, (2) = occasionally, and (3) = never

- | | | | |
|-----|-----|-----|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 1. I teach writing as it is presented in Holt. |
| (1) | (6) | (1) | |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 2. I supplement Holt with a grammar text. |
| (6) | (2) | (4) | |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 3. I use writing activities from sources other than Holt and grammar texts. |
| (3) | (4) | (1) | |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4. I use writing activities to check or reinforce reading comprehension. |
| (4) | (3) | (1) | |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 5. My priority in teaching writing is developing fluency in written expression. |
| (4) | (3) | () | |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 6. My priority in teaching writing is grammar and mechanics. |
| (4) | (2) | () | |
| | | 1NR | |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 7. I demonstrate writing techniques before assigning writing. |
| (2) | (2) | (4) | |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 8. My writing assignments are preceded by motivational or idea building activities. |
| (5) | (3) | () | |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 9. I insist that students proofread and edit before submitting their writing for a grade. |
| (7) | (1) | () | |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 10. I teach less writing to students in levels 14 and 15 than to those in level 16. |
| (3) | (2) | () | 3RN |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 11. I have a clear picture of individual students' specific writing weaknesses and strengths. |
| (6) | (2) | () | |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 12. I use alternative grading methods for writing activities. |
| (4) | (2) | (1) | |

NEEDS ASSESSMENT SURVEY

Name Experimental Teacher 01No. Courses in Composition None

School _____

Primary Teaching Responsibility:

No. Years Teaching Ex. 10Grades Middle SchoolSubject All Academic

SECTION I.

1. What are your major goals for teaching writing?

Self-Expression, Clarity

2. What primary strategies do you use to motivate and teach writing?

Pictures, Life Experiences, TV, Family Situations, Journals

3. How often do you assign writing?

About Twice a Week

4. How much time do you spend grading compositions?

Varies

5. What percentage of class time do you spend teaching grammar?

1/5 - 1/10

SECTION II

| | YES | NO | IMPROVEMENT NEEDED |
|---|-----|-----|-----------------------|
| 1. Are you generally able to create and maintain student interest in writing | ___ | ___ | X ___ |
| 2. Are you able to diagnose writing deficiencies? | ___ | ___ | X ___ |
| 3. Do you use alternative approaches to evaluating writing? | ___ | ___ | X ___ |
| 4. Are you knowledgeable of current research and theory on the teaching of grammar? | ___ | ___ | X ___ |
| 5. Do you keep records of students' on-going progress in composition? | ___ | ___ | X ___ |

TEACHER MONITORING FORM

NAME Teacher 01 OBSERVER M. Lewis

COMPOSITION

Teacher shows evidence of using:
Date:

| | 2/81 | 3/81 | 4/81 | 5/81 |
|--|------------------------------|---------------------|------------------------|------------------------------|
| I. Sequential Skills Continuum (state specific skill in comment section) | Sentence Develop- ment | Paragraph Frames | Paragraon Expansion | Paragraph Exposi- tion |
| II. Sentence/Paragraph Control Techniques | | | | |
| A. Slotting | X | X | X | X |
| B. Expansion | X | X | X | X |
| C. Movability | X | X | X | X |
| D. Sentence Synthesis | X | X | X | X |
| E. Frame Paragraph | X | X | X | X |
| F. Reading Model | | | | |
| III. Pre-Writing | | | | |
| A. Brain Storming | X | X | X | X |
| B. Group Outlining or Charting | X | X | X | X |
| C. Media or Manipulative Stimuli | | X | X | X |
| D. Process Conferencing | X | | X | X |
| IV. Evaluation | | | | |
| - A. Composition Assessment Checklist | | | | |
| B. Grading Grid Point Scale | X | X | | |
| C. Student Proofing Check- list | X | X | X | |
| D. Holistic Scoring (Pure and/or Modified) | X | X | X | X |
| E. Shared (Teacher &/or Student) | X | X | X | X |
| F. Criteria for Letter Grades or Points | | X | X | |
| G. Buddy proofing credit | | X | | X |
| H. Mechanics, Grammar Lessons in Content of Student Writing | X | some drill | | X |

CONTENTS ON BACK: Please Date.

consistent
implementation

CONTROL GROUP
OBSERVATION CHECKLIST

TEACHER: 09 SCHOOL 05 DATE 3/31/81

OBSERVER Curriculum Supervisor

X Is there evidence that writing activities are occurring?
(e.g. folders, bulletin boards) Idioms, letter writing,
biographical sketches, etc.

 Did you observe the teacher explaining or demonstrating writing activities?

X Did you observe students working in grammar books?

X Did you observe students reading original paragraphs, poems, or stories? tall tales, poems

QUESTIONS FOR TEACHERS

1. How often do you teach grammar? Daily
2. How often do you assign creative writing? At least once per week
3. Is there any special approach you use in teaching writing?
Begin with topic sentence, paragraph, research papers, poetry-haiku, etc.

Summary of teacher's comments.

Teacher expressed a need for more creative writing ideas.
Units Taught: Biography, Autobiography, Short Stories, Read Novels, etc.
Developed a slide presentation on "personality" of 8th grade students.

Summary of observer's comments.

Teacher works with advanced level of 8th grade students.
Feels a need to enrich program.

SUMMARY REPORT
STAFF DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM
1980-81

EIGHTH GRADE PROJECT TRAINING
September 10 & October 28, 1980

Objectives:

To train teachers in the use of project composition strategies.

Methods and Procedures:

Demonstration, lectures, and hands-on experience with strategies.
Manual of strategies provided.

Outcomes:

Teachers indicated eagerness to begin teaching writing.

Recommendations:

Follow-up with observations and technical assistance.

STAFF DEVELOPMENT
WORKSHOP EVALUATION FORM
TALLY SHEET

In-service Acitivity Teaching Composition Date 9/10/80

Please check the appropriate space below in identifying your position and instructional level:

 Teacher Administrator

Please respond to the statements below by checking the appropriate column:

| | Strongly Agree | Moderately Agree | Slightly Agree |
|---|----------------|------------------|----------------|
| 1. This workshop met my expectations. | 5 | 1 | |
| 2. It will be of value to me in the future. | 6 | | |
| 3. The arrangements (preliminary information, physical facilities, etc.) were satisfactory. | 6 | | |
| 4. The workshop had adequate, clearly identifiable goals. | 6 | | |
| 5. The resource people provided appropriate leadership for meeting the workshop goals. | 6 | | |
| 6. The workshop provided sufficient variety to maintain my interest. | 6 | | |

7. Briefly describe the strengths and weaknesses of the workshop session.

A. STRENGTHS

- (1) Well planned
- (2) Good Location
- (3) Helpful Information

B. WEAKNESSES

- (1) Need More Time
- (2)
- (3)

Use back of sheet for additional comments.

OVERALL STAFF DEVELOPMENT EVALUATION

TALLY SHEET

- I. Rate the overall effectiveness of this day of staff development using the scale below. Circle one.

| | | | | |
|------|------|------|--------------------|--------------------|
| 1. | 2. | 3. | 4. | 5. |
| Poor | Fair | Good | Very Good | Excellent |
| | | | <u>3 Responses</u> | <u>3 Responses</u> |

- II. To what extent did the workshops over material that you feel will be useful to use in teaching or supervising. Circle one.

| | | |
|-------------|----------|--------------------|
| 1. | 2. | 3. |
| Very Little | Somewhat | A Great Deal |
| | | <u>6 Responses</u> |

- III. What were the strong points of the workshop?

1. Informal Ease
2. Ideas Practical
3. Good Handouts
4. The Enthusiasm of Mrs. Lewis
5. Applicable to Normal Classroom

- IV. What changes would you suggest be made to increase the effectiveness of this type of staff development in the future?

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

The teaching of English in grades 1-8 needs to be re-evaluated in

light of this workshop, Holt's fragmented English system, CAT test

scores, and the State's minimum competencies. We need a sensible

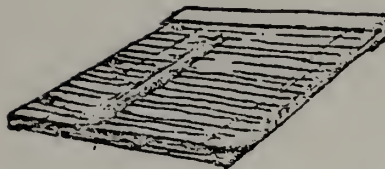
English program with workbooks (commercial or county-made) and

assignments for each grade.

NAME _____
DATE OF BIRTH _____
SCHOOL _____

WRITING SAMPLE

PRETEST



GRADE _____
TODAY'S DATE _____
ENGLISH TEACHER'S NAME _____

DESIGN BASED ON "BASIC SKILLS
ASSESSMENT WRITING SAMPLE".
EDUCATIONAL TESTING SERVICE
ADDISON-WESLEY TESTING SERVICE
1977

| | |
|--|--------------|
| | STUDENT CODE |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |

a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z
a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z

| | |
|----------------------|----------------------|
| Reader Number | |
| <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> |
| <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> |

| | | | |
|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| STUDENT CODE | | | |
| <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> |

We all have events in our lives which we will remember for a long time. Write about an event in you life which you remember well. The following suggestions may help you decide on a particular event to describe.

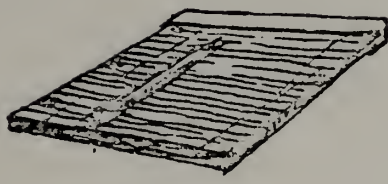
- Suggestions: Describe an experience which involved physical pain.
- Describe an experience which involved the essential use of your eyes.
- Describe an experience which involved fear.
- Describe an experience which involved courage.
- Describe an experience which involved honesty.
- Describe the happiest moment of your life.

If you need additional space, please continue on the back.

NAME _____
HOLT LEVEL _____
SCHOOL _____

WRITING SAMPLE

POSTTEST



GRADE _____
TODAY'S DATE _____
ENGLISH TEACHER'S NAME _____

DESIGN BASED ON "BASIC SKILLS
ASSESSMENT WRITING SAMPLE".
EDUCATIONAL TESTING SERVICE
ADDISON-WESLEY TESTING SERVICE
1977

| | | | | |
|--------------|--|--|--|--|
| STUDENT CODE | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |

A Description of the
Basic Skills Assessment
A Writer's Skills Subtest

A Writer's Skills, one of three Basic Skills Assessment subtests, contains 75 multiple choice items measuring spelling, punctuation and capitalization, usage, logic and evaluation. The Basic Skills Assessment was developed by the Educational Testing Service and a national consortium of schools for use in diagnosing student deficiencies in minimum academic and life skills. National norms were established for the BSA in May, 1977.

Test items are clustered in skills categories illustrated below.

| <u>CLUSTERS</u> | <u>NO. ITEMS IN CLUSTER</u> |
|---|---------------------------------|
| Spelling (Subscore) | 14 |
| Capitalization and Punctuation (Subscore) | 14 |
| Capitalization Only | 6 |
| Commas Only | 4 |
| Filling Out Forms Only | 4 |
| Usage (Subscore) | 16 |
| Verb Problems Only | 5 |
| Syntax Only | 9 |
| Logic and Evaluation (Subscore) | 27 |
| Logical Connections Only | 6 |
| Relevancy Only | 8 |
| Tone and Diction Only | 10 |
| Logical Organization Only | 3 |
| TOTAL NUMBER OF TEST ITEMS | 75 |

Test item content includes application forms, letters, directions, advertisements and narrative passages. The following sample questions illustrate the general content of the test items.

Directions for Question 9: Choose the best answer to the question.

9. Which way should David Albert Woods fill out the following line in an application form:

APPLICATION FOR EMPLOYMENT

Name: _____
(last) (first) (middle initial)

- (A) Woods David A. (B) D. A. Woods
(C) Woods D. A. (D) David Albert Woods

Directions for Questions 10-14: Choose the word or set of words that best completes each sentence.

10. Whenever Jackie rides her bicycle, _____ beside her.
(A) and her dog runs
(B) her running dog
(C) her dog runs
(D) then her dog running
11. My music teacher thinks that Marian Anderson sings _____ any other contralto he has ever heard.
(A) more well than
(B) better than
(C) the most good of
(D) more better over
12. Never use cleaning fluids or polish on a television screen because _____.
(A) of this harming the glass
(B) the glass can suffer from it
(C) of the reason of injury to the glass
(D) they can damage the glass

APPENDIX B

Figure 2 - Scoring Grid/Checklist

Figure 3 - Composition Checklist

Training Manual Excerpts

Writing Skills Continuum

Stimuli, Structure, and Strategy: Some Starting Spots

Overview of Techniques

Composition Contract

Writing Activities for Contracts

Holistic Scoring Handouts

Creative Writing

Student Writing R_x Task Cards

Figure 3 Composition Checklist

COMPOSITION CHECKLIST

STUDENT _____ GRADE _____ TEACHER _____ DATE _____

The student should show improvement in writing areas that he is weak in.

Improvement should be shown in at least five paragraphs kept on file.

The teacher will indicate particular usage deficiencies.

| | Always | Usually | Not Often | See Comment |
|---|--------|---------|-----------|----------------|
| 1. Spells correctly | | | | |
| 2. Writes complete sentences | | | | |
| 3. Follows tense sequences | | | | |
| 4. Writes with continuity and variety | | | | |
| 5. Correct usage | | | | |
| 6. Uses punctuation, capitalization correctly | | | | |
| 7. Conveys ideas in original imaginative way | | | | |

COMMENT:

TRAINING MANUAL EXCERPTS

WRITING SKILLS CONTINUUM

WRITING TO ORGANIZE INFORMATION

lists (categorized, alphabetized)
labels, envelopes
outlines, schedules
sentences (expanding and forming varied patterns)

WRITING TO GIVE AND REQUEST INFORMATION

forms
notices, announcements, messages, memos
directions, want ads
data sheets/resumes
simple reports (minutes of a meeting)

WRITING LETTERS TO GIVE AND REQUEST INFORMATION

format
mechanics
content

WRITING TO SYNTHESIZE INFORMATION AND IDEAS

note taking
test questions
expanding sentences to paragraphs

(The following are sequential areas of exposition)

DESCRIPTION

using the senses

EXPLANATION

sequencing
using examples
defining

SUMMARIZATION

extracting main ideas
paraphrasing
maintaining objectivity

PERSUASION

distinguishing fact from opinion
stating an opinion
giving logical reasons
developing tone

APPLICATION

making generalizations
comparing and contrasting

ANALYSIS

identifying cause and effect

SYNTHESIS

writing creatively

EVALUATION

making judgments
clarifying values

STIMULI, STRUCTURE, AND STRATEGY:

SOME STARTING SPOTS

FOUR BASIC STEPS FOR TEACHING WRITING

I. Stimulate/Motivate

Start with:

- *media/manipulatives
- *discussion/experience

II. Provide structure and strategy through pre-writing activities.

- *group sharing
- *organized models
- *language experience
- *brainstorming, charting, listing

III. Give credit for editing

Instruct students to:

- *slot, expand, move something around
- *group-think, buddy-aid
- process conference

IV. Put the writing in perspective

It must be:

- *practical or pretty
- *shared/valued by the writer, readers, listeners
- *a bridge to a broader concept, insight or body of knowledge

INDIVIDUALIZED LANGUAGE ARTS:
DIAGNOSIS, PRESCRIPTION, AND EVALUATION

ESEA Title IV-C Project 70-014
Weehawken Board of Education

OVERVIEW OF TECHNIQUES

I

SLOTTING

Eliciting words that will occupy the position of key nouns, verbs, and predicate nouns or adjectives in the basic (kernel) sentences. The student chooses appropriate words (or synonyms) from his oral or sight vocabulary to fill in slots (or replace existing words) at these strategic places in the sentences.

Example:

The housewife buys groceries in the supermarket.

The _____ buys groceries

woman
mother
customer
lady
purchaser
man
child

in the supermarket.

Do the same for the verb and the direct object.

II

EXPANSION BY MODIFICATION

The enrichment of sentences by the addition of a variety of modifiers: adjectives, adverbials, attributive nouns, and appositive. The student selects his own words, phrases, and clauses, and inserts them in appropriate places in the sentences.

Example:

Original sentence:

Some carpenters are building a house.

(What kind of?)

(Whose?)

(Where?)

(When?)

(How?)

(Why?)

STUDENT SAMPLES

Give until it hurts.

When
Why
Where

~~At-the~~ During the convention, the secretary will give a complete report about the future budget at EOA until her time is up.

During the convention, the secretary, ~~for~~ because it is her job, will give a complete report about the future budget at EOA until her time is up.

During the convention, the secretary, because it is her job, will give a complete report about the future budget at EOA until her time is up.

The ~~mystery~~ was solved by ~~him~~.

What - the stolen money

Where - At the game

When - Saturday night

The problem of the stolen money was solved by the freshman class Saturday night at the game.

III

SENTENCE SYNTHESIS

The formulation of one or more complete sentences from a series of words and/or groups of words (phrases or clauses). The student creates sentences with a variety of words from his sight and/or oral vocabulary.

(begin with a short series of words or phrases)

e.g. students teachers learn school morning

1. Many teachers believe that students who come to school early in the morning learn more than students who report to school late.
2. Teachers enjoy working with students who come to school every morning ready to learn.

PRACTICE

enjoy experience writing students

Sentences _____

IV

MOVABILITY

The reorganization of sentences by changes in the placement of movable words, or groups of words, within the sentence. The student decides which placements will not only reflect his meanings correctly, but will also produce the intended emphasis or coherence with adjacent sentences.

Examples:

1. Yesterday the senior class visited the Art Museum.
The senior class visited the Art Museum yesterday.

Construct a practice sentence here.

COMPOSITION CONTRACT

I, _____, contract to complete the following writing activities: _____

_____.

My assignments will be completed, proofread, and turned in to _____ on or before _____ teacher

I will share some of my writing with the class by _____ (example: putting it on the bulletin board) _____

Student Signature

Teacher Signature

Parent Signature

Date Begun _____ Date Completed _____

Grades _____

WRITING ACTIVITIES FOR CONTRACTS

1. Write a cartoon series using your own characters or characters you like in a popular cartoon series.
2. Write a comparison of two similar toys in which you explain why one is better than the other.
3. Write a dialogue between two people who are meeting each other for the first time.
4. Write a letter to a school official (principal, superintendent) asking for information on how inflation is affecting the schools. You must mail the letter, but show it to your teacher first.
5. Design a full page advertisement for a useful product. Before you begin, find a good model to follow.
6. Summarize a series of articles on a current news item such as the election for president or the hostage crisis. Attach your articles to your summary.
7. Construct a step-by-step chart illustrating and explaining how to do something such as tie different kinds of knots.
8. Be a TV news reporter. Find a story to investigate. Write your news story and present it live to the class.
9. List two things you would like to describe vividly. Get your teacher's approval to write the descriptions.
10. Write an autobiography of a pet you have had or of an imaginary person.



HOLISTIC SCORING HANDOUTS
PROGRAMS FOR THE ASSESSMENT OF WRITING

1. What is holistic scoring?

A. The theory

1. The whole of a piece of writing is greater than any of its parts.
2. English teachers, though they may have difficulty in giving a verbal description of writing ability that is recognizable to all, can recognize good writing when they see it.
3. Though in an analytic reading teachers may not agree on the weight to be given a particular trait, these same teachers will, in judging a work as a whole, rank papers in much the same way.
4. No aspect of writing skill can really be judged independently; the halo effect is always strong.

B. The method

1. The standards
 - a. Standards are not imposed upon readers; readers themselves determine standards.
 - b. Papers are not judged against an ideal, but against what is: what students have written on this topic at this time.
 - c. Standards must be maintained and reinforced throughout the reading.
2. The judgments
 - a. Judgments are made on anonymous papers.
 - b. Judgments are independent.
 - c. Multiple judgments on each paper are mandatory.

-2-

- d. Judgments must be quick and immediate.
 - e. Judgments must be definite, for the score scale has no middle points.
3. The scoring
- a. The score is the sum of all the readers' judgments.
 - b. Some discrepancies in the scores the readers give are to be expected.
 - c. Wide discrepancies between readers' scores must be corrected immediately.
 - d. Regular divergence from the standards on the part of any reader must be corrected.

II. Why use holistic scoring?

- A. It is efficient.
- B. It is reliable.
- C. It emphasizes what is right rather than what is wrong with a piece of writing.
- D. It requires consensus among readers.
- E. It encourages evaluation of the program, as well as the individual pieces of writing.

III. How is a topic scored? (Actual reading)

- A. The topic is read and analyzed.
- B. The ground rules are established.
- C. The standards are set through the use of sample papers.
- D. The papers are read.
 - 1. First reader's score must remain unknown to other readers.
 - 2. All papers should be read once before any are read twice.
 - 3. Readers must be allowed to rest regularly.
 - 4. Papers must flow efficiently from reader to reader.

IV. What makes a good topic?

- A. The interest to the students.
- B. The interest to the readers.
- C. The range of writing it produces.
- D. The relative objectivity with which it can be scored.

V. Of what use is holistic scoring in the schools?

- A. It can promote communication about the teaching of writing among faculty members.
- B. It can be used to measure growth in students' writing ability.
- C. It enables teachers to score writing assignments quickly and reliably.
- D. It calls for multiple evaluations.

Student Writing



Developed by: Marilyn Lewis
Reading/Composition
Specialist

INTRODUCTION

These task cards are flexible teaching aides which are designed to reinforce writing skills which correspond to sequential levels of cognition. They are open-ended and can be built upon by both students and teachers.

These task cards are built around two assumptions:

1. that writing practice should be short but frequent, and
2. that instruction should emphasize the process of developing fluency, clarity and correctness.

CONTENTS

| | |
|-----------------------------|--------|
| ORGANIZING INFORMATION..... | WHITE |
| SENTENCE SENSE..... | GREEN |
| DESCRIPTION..... | ORANGE |
| PARAGRAPH PRACTICE..... | BLUE |
| PERSUASION..... | LIME |
| ANALYSIS..... | RED |
| EVALUATION..... | WHITE |

R_x

O 1

ORGANIZING INFORMATION

Make one of the following kinds of lists.

1. Tools mechanics use
2. Farming tools and equipment
3. Basic kitchen tools
4. Electrical appliances in the home
5. Shades of the colors red and green
6. Names of well known athletes
7. Reasons for arriving to class late
8. Popular TV shows
9. Names that begin with the letter P
10. Common abbreviations
11. Fast food restaurants

R
X

O 2

ORGANIZING INFORMATION

Make one of the following kinds of lists.

1. Tools mechanics use
2. Farming tools and equipment
3. Basic kitchen tools
4. Electrical appliances in the home
5. Shades of the colors RED and GREEN
6. Names of well-known athletes
7. Reasons for arriving to class late
8. Popular T V shows
9. Names that begin with the letter P
10. Common abbreviations
11. Fast food restaurants

R
X

ORGANIZING INFORMATION

O 3

ALPHABETIZE THE FOLLOWING:

1. The names of your teachers
2. 8 kinds of sports
3. 6 kinds of breakfast cereals
4. The letters in the word THINK
5. 10 words which begin with the letter A
6. 5 words which end with the letters CH
7. A combination of the days of the week and months of the year.

R_x

0 4

ORGANIZING INFORMATION

Make three groups from the following list of words. Categorize them in any way that seems logical to you.

children, grapes, roses, toddlers, tomatoes, books, trees, oak, pencils, infants, puppies, guppies, ponies, paper, kittens, wicker, babies, bushes.

group I

group II

group III

Explain your system of categorizing the words.

R_x

0 5

WRITING TO ORGANIZE INFORMATION

List in order of occurrence, ten things you'll do when you get home. Then rate them in the order of importance on a scale of 1 to 4. How many of each number on the rating scale do you have? How would your mother rate the list? Why would her ratings be different or the same?

SCALE

- 1- MUST BE DONE
- 2- IMPORTANT
- 3- COULD BE DONE LATER IN THE WEEK
- 4- NOT TOO IMPORTANT

R_x

SS 1

SENTENCE SENSE

ENGLISH SENTENCES HAVE TWO PARTS-----SUBJECT AND PREDICATE

Example: Birds fly.

The subject may be expanded.

The tiny delicate birds which sing outside my window fly.

ACTIVITY: Write 5 sentences of two words each. Expand the subject of each sentence.

The predicate may be expanded also.

The tiny delicate birds which sing outside my window fly from one tree to another.

ACTIVITY: Expand the predicates of your five sentences.

R_x

SS 2

WORD CLASSES

There are two classes of words in English. Open classes and closed classes. First we will study closed classes. They include pronouns, prepositions, conjunctions and articles, all of which are structure words. Such words are basic to our language and never change in meaning.

List as many words in the closed classes as you can.

Open classes include verbs, nouns, adjectives and adverbs. New words are always being added to these classes. Meanings often change for these words too. For example, the word shuttle is a noun and a verb. A space shuttle ride may be the tourist attraction of the 80's. New Yorkers shuttle across Manhattan on the subway. Neither of these sentences would communicate meaning to most Cambodian children. List open class words you think are less than 30 years old. Use them in a story.

R_x

SS 3

SENTENCE EXPANSION AND SLOTTING

SLOTTING

dog bonemeal
The animal ate its food.

tiger prey
The animal ate its food.

EXPANSION

The big dog ate its dried bonemeal.

what kind?

what kind?

Can you expand the sentences above by answering the questions why and how?

R_x

SS 4

MOVABILITY

Sentences often sound better if they are rearranged.

EXAMPLE: To school we go everyday.
Everyday we go to school.

Rearrange the sentences below.

Early in the fall the leaves turn gold.

I would watch T.V. if a good show were on.

R_x

SS 5

SLOTting, EXPANSION, AND MOVABILITY

Use slotting, expansion, and movability to revise the paragraph below.

A good breakfast starts my day. I eat cereal and milk, toast and juice. I also drink a glass of water. My breakfast may be boring but its healthy.

R_x

SS 6

SENTENCE REVISION

REWRITE THE SENTENCES BELOW IN AS MANY WAYS AS YOU CAN.

1. The track team went to the meet.
2. The movie we saw last night was hilarious.

R_X

SS 7

SLOTING, EXPANSION, MOVABILITY

Use slotting, expansion and movability to develop the sentences below.

1. People believe.
2. It was wrong.
3. The event made news.
4. A team wins.

R_X

D 1

DESCRIBING

Describe your left hand.

Describe a rubber band.

Describe an orange.

Describe a kernal of corn.

Describe a cloudless sky.

Describe a toothache.

Describe silence.

Rx

D 2

DESCRIPTION

Describe the following T.V. characters for someone who has never seen them.

Mickey Mouse
 The Hulk
 Charles Angels
 Sheriff Lobo
 The Fonz
 Lavern and Shirley

Carol Burnett
 Mr. Rodgers
 The Little Rascals
 Buck Rodgers
 The Dukes of Hazard
 Suzanne Soners

Rx

D 3

DESCRIPTION

Make a list of things that feel good.

Example: a coke going down my throat on a hot day
 an electric blanket on a below freezing night

Make a list of things that look weird.

Example: The letters on a tee shirt in front of a mirror
 a preschooler's finger painting

R_x

D 4

DESCRIPTION

The following descriptive words need nouns to modify or describe them.

| | |
|------------|----------|
| crunchy | plodding |
| crackling | sizzling |
| bumping | dangling |
| flaming | erupting |
| terrifying | cranky |

Write a story or paragraph using as many of your descriptive word groups as you can.

R_x

D 5

DESCRIPTIVE WORDS

Fill in the chart:

| | sight | taste | smell | feel | sound |
|-----------|-------|-------|-------|------|-------|
| COTTON | | | | | |
| CHOCOLATE | | | | | |
| MUD | | | | | |
| SOAP | | | | | |

Sentences:

R_x

Description

D 6

Describe an object in terms of shape, color, feel, taste, smell, and purpose or use.

Suggested objects: sugar cube, oak tree, petroleum jelly

R_x

D 7

DESCRIPTION

Words which describe are often faddish. Ten years ago no one said vucky to describe something distasteful. Make a list of faddish words which you often use to describe things and feelings. Then make a list of words you think might be used by the President to say the same things.

EXAMPLE: Let's split. (president) The time for our departure has arrived.

R_x

D 8

DESCRIPTION

Cliches

Cliches are over-worked phrases such as; slow as a turtle, straight as a pin, sly as a fox, and stubborn as a mule. Another word which describes cliches is a simile. A simile is a stated comparison. Make similes for the following phrases. Then use you simile in sentences.

as clear as
 as round as
 as green as
 as square as
 as dark as

R_x

D 9

DESCRIPTION

Try to describe a place you've heard about but never visited such as the moon, the Appalachia Mountains, the Island of Ohau.

What does it look like?

What is odd or unusual about?

What colors are there?

What is life like there?

Rx

F 1

PARAGRAPH ORGANIZATION

1. Select a paragraph from your folder.
2. List the questions you have answered in your paragraph.
3. Combine 2 related sentences.
4. Rearrange something!
5. Answer a question which you've not included.

Rx

F 2

FRAMED PARAGRAPH

A person's treasures often give us detailed information about their values and/or ideas. For example,

_____ has _____,
 and _____ in his/her room.

This tells me _____

R_x

F 3

FRAMED PARAGRAPH

Parents need to be more understanding. They should

_____ their children. They should

also _____

_____.

Children will _____ for parents

who _____

_____.

R_x

F 4

_____ Magazine

I like to read _____ magazine because it has _____

_____ in every issue. It appeals to people who _____

_____ but not to people who _____.

If I were editor of it I would _____.

Rx

F⁵

Too many Kinds of _____

Have you ever thought about how many kinds of _____ there are? There must be _____ kinds. There are _____ ones, _____ ones, and _____ ones just for a start.

The best kind are _____ because _____.

The worst kind are _____ since _____.

_____ . We could do without the _____ because _____.

Rx

P 1

PERSUASION

Write a dialogue between you and your parents in which you try to convince them that they should buy something for you that you do not necessarily need.

R_X

P 2

PERSUASION

Write a bulletin board announcement which will persuade students to attend a lecture on a Saturday.

R_X

P 3

Persuasion

Write a slogan to persuade people to adopt your position on the following:

1. Drugs
2. Abortion
3. War
4. Child Abuse
5. The legal drinking age
6. Pornography

R_X

P 4

Persuasion

Write a letter to the City Council, County Commission, or politician of your choice in which you try to persuade the person(s) to take action on an issue that concerns you.

R_X

P 5

PERSUASION

List 2 people you feel are persuasive.

Explain in an essay why they are effective persuaders.

R_X

P 6

PERSUASION

Analyze two persuasive TV commercials. Describe all the factors that contribute to the effectiveness of the persuasive messages.

R_X

P 7

PERSUASION

Use specific facts and figures to support your stance on a political issue. Several issues are suggested.

1. Nuclear Armament- expand or cut back.
2. Draft Registration
3. Welfare

R
X

study card

A CRITICAL ANALYSIS

"A critical analysis takes a viewpoint and attempts to prove its validity; its object is to help the reader make better sense of something he is already familiar with.

John R. Tremble, Writing with Style,
p. 18

HOW TO WRITE A CRITICAL ANALYSIS

1. Start with a thesis—a strong position.
2. Don't summarize the plot.
3. Make a list of persuasive points you can use to support your thesis.
4. Find passages of plot actions which illustrate your points.
5. Draft, remembering you have a point of view to defend.
6. Conclude with a restatement of your thesis.
7. Revise. Use glazing, expansion and movability.

A 3

R
X

ANALYSIS

Practice a critical analysis.

Read the poem "Spellbound" and argue against the conclusion or theme of the poem.

Starter sentence:
Margaret Fishback, in her poem "spellbound" takes the position that trying to master English is an impossible task.

SPELLBOUND

It's true, I do not like to spell,
Nor do I do it very well.
If "handle's" "le," why not "cravie"?
Such mysteries I can't unravel.
There's also "pare" and "pear" and "pair,"
Though which is which, I've ceased to care.
I master demons such as "guide"
And "guard" with pardonable pride,
But when it comes to "hear" and "here,"
I can't decide which way to steer.
And then I'm faced with "hair" and "hare"
To plunge me further in despair.
Indeed it seems to me absurd
To scapple with the written word—
I'd better throw away my pen
And never, never write agen.

Margaret Fishback

R_x

E 2

EVALUATION

Write several paragraphs evaluating the way the Carter administration has handled one of the following:

1. The Billy Carter/Lybia affair
2. The Iran Hostage Crisis
3. The Olympic Games Boycott
4. The continuing rise in unemployment

Before you begin, decide on a set of evaluation criteria.

R_x

E 1

EVALUATION

Write several paragraphs making a judgement about the value of a current film using the following criteria :

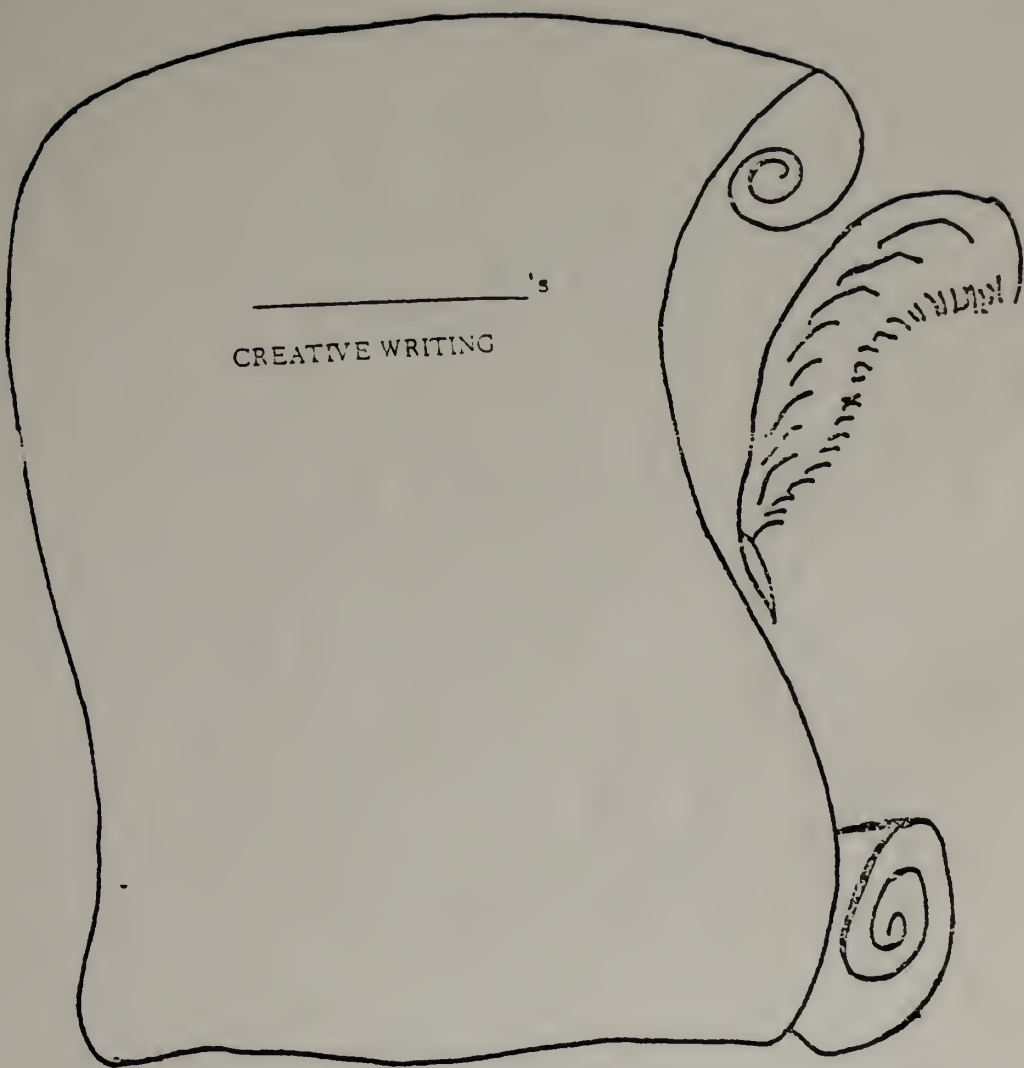
1. Quality of special effects
2. Choice of actors
3. Development of plot
4. Ability of film to impart learnings/morals
5. Importance of theme

R_X

E 3

Write an essay evaluating one of the following aspects of your school. Develop criteria for evaluating the aspect you chose to write about.

1. The schedule
2. The lunch program
3. The athletic program
4. The guidance program
5. The administration's approach to discipline
6. The English Department
7. School clubs





I have my own likes and dislikes. For example,

I am most content when _____

because _____.

Nothing upsets me more than _____

but _____ will usually calm

me down. I like to go to _____

but I don't like to go to _____.

I like to wear _____ but I don't

enjoy wearing _____.

The two things I like to do most are _____

and _____. The thing I really hate

to do is _____.

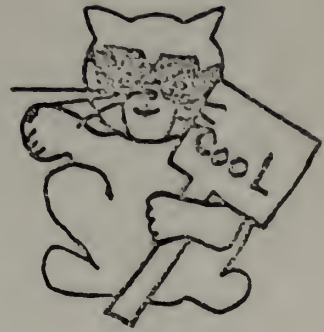
CIRCLE A WORD AND WRITE ABOUT IT LET YOUR THOUGHTS FLOW
FREELY AND WRITE FAST SO YOU CAN KEEP UP WITH THEM .

FOOTBALL CHEERLEADERS COACHES
JOY POWER ANGER DISAPPOINTMENT
POLLUTION STARVATION WAR SOCIETY
PARENTS CHORES PRIVILEGES PUNISHMENT



WHAT DOES THE WORD COOL MEAN TO YOU?

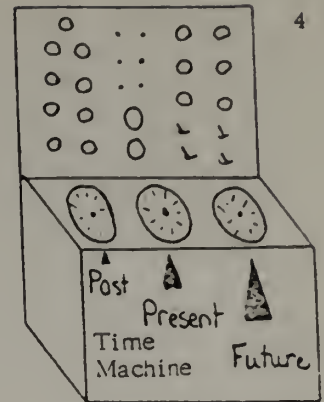
_____ IS COOL
_____ IS COOL
_____ IS COOL
_____ IS COOL



BUT _____ IS VERY UNCCOL.

SOME OF MY FAVORITE THINGS TO SAY ARE:

MY PREDICTIONS FOR THE WORLD OF 2001 are:



IF I COULD GO BACK IN TIME I'D GO BACK TO THE DAYS WHEN. . . .

You have been asked to introduce one of T. V. 's super heroes to the audience at the Circus! Take your pick: Mickey Mouse, Miss Piggy, Wonder Woman, Bat Man, R2D2, Big Bird, Superman, or The Fonz. Write what you will say when you introduce your choice.



PLANNING TO DESCRIBE A PLACE

Vivid descriptions are easy to write when they start with the kind of outline chart illustrated here

| QUESTIONS | ANSWERS | DETAILS FOR SENTENCES |
|----------------------------|--------------------|--|
| What is the place? | Granny's house | Brown, two-story wood frame with stone chimney, swing on porch, white fence around yard |
| Where is the place? | 1275 Jordan Road | Northeast Huntsville farming community, valley below Mt. Sano |
| What do you like about it? | Childhood memories | Playing on the stairs, watching Granny make a fire, hiding in the cellar, eating homemade ice cream on the porch |

Draft a description of Granny's house based on the information above

7

MY SPECIAL PLACE

QUESTIONS

ANSWERS

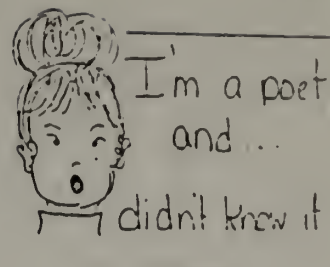
DETAILS

What is the place?

Where is the place?

What is special about
the place?

Write a paragraph or a poem about your special place based on the information you have charted above.



1. Write a noun as: Bell
2. Write 2 (adjectives) describing words as: silver, oval
3. Write 3 ing words as: ringing, glistening, tolling
4. Write 2 or more describing words as: cold, metal
5. Think of a different word to replace your noun as: iron

Should look like this ----

bell
 silver, oval
 ringing, glistening, tolling
 cold, metal
 iron

Forming
A
Diamond

1. Write a noun.
2. Write 2 adjectives (describing words).
3. Write 3 ing words.
4. Write 4 nouns related to #1.
5. Write 3 ing words showing a change.
6. Write 2 adjectives (describing words).
7. Write a noun that is opposite of #1.
8. Write 5.

Car-
Shiny, new
Cruising, stopping, revving
Driver, friends - admirers, darers
Crumpled, bloody
Wreck



Create a job title and write a list of duties for the person who will fill the job.

Example jobs

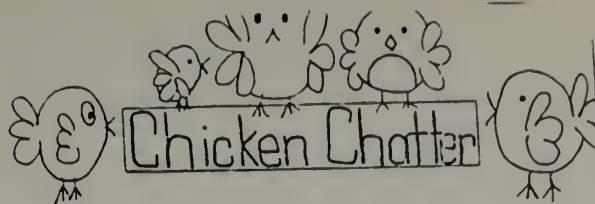
DUST COLLECTOR
MOON COOK
SPACE SHUTTLE HOSTESS
KINDERGARTEN PLAYGROUND REFEREE

JOB TITLE

DUTIES

HOURS

SALARY



12

What do birds and trees discuss?

Bluejay: Mr. Magnolia, can't you provide more shade?

Mr. Magnolia: Oh Bluejay you're never satisfied. I put out 20 new leaves yesterday.

Bluejay: Well if you did sneaky old Wind stole them.

What would a bar of soap say to a pair of dirty hands?

What would a hamburger say to a cola?

What does your desk say about you when you leave the room?

What things do garden plants discuss with the sun?

What would the school floor say to the lockers at 2:35?

What would one library book say to another?

ON YOUR OWN

DATE _____

A large, irregularly shaped writing area with a thick black border. The top-left portion is blank, containing a 'DATE' label. The rest of the area is filled with horizontal lines for writing.

