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The process behind the process : a writing curriculum based on theories of cognitive development.

Carol Talbot Barron
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THE PROCESS BEHIND THE PROCESS:

A WRITING CURRICULUM BASED ON THEORIES OF

COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT

A Dissertation Presented

By

CAROL TALBOT BARRON

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

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION
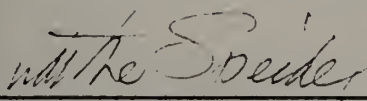
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Education

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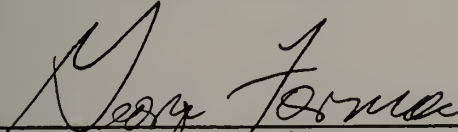
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ABSTRACT

The Process Behind the Process:
A Writing Curriculum Based on Theories of
Cognitive Development

(February 1987)

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Researchers are increasingly aware that different types of discourse require varying psychological and neurological functioning of the individual. Some modes of writing are easier to master than others. This inquiry examines the effects of a curriculum based on both psychological research (primarily Endel Tulving's research into what he terms the "semantic" and "episodic" systems of memory) and neurological studies (the left-brain, right-brain controversy.) The curriculum design uses Britton's poetic and expressive modes of writing to improve transactional (or expository) writing.

Nine basic writers were involved in a ten-week series of six writing assignments which were initiated by a pre-writing visual stimulus and then developed into personal and imaginative modes of writing. The spiral curriculum they followed was governed by the short term storage space each assignment required of the basic writer. The writer moving within the spiral was to develop in what James Moffett has identified as two simultaneous progressions--toward differentiation and toward integration.

A variety of sources was used to determine the effects of the writing curriculum on basic students' writing ability: questionnaires administered

before and after, field observation of the students at work, and, most importantly, individual writing portfolios.

Pre- and post-test data showed that all nine participants experienced significant improvement in their ability to write a transactional paper. Changes were noted in task performance. Two of seven dimensions showed no significant improvement: physical context cues and logical sequence cues. Significant improvement was found in five specific dimensions: extended discourse, classification cues, modification cues, organizational skills, and personal involvement. These improvements in writing abstract discourse indicate that these basic writers had gained enough ability, skill, and short term memory capacity to effectively organize and develop a piece of transactional writing.

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INTRODUCTION

It is difficult to imagine an English teacher who is unfamiliar with
what has become the foundation for much of the research in the teaching of
English for the past fifteen years: writing is a process. For those of us
who have studied in schools of education across the country, this
commonplace informs our curricula and legitimizes our teaching. Those of
us "in the know", however, frequently make two major assumptions: The
first being that it is just a matter of time before most English teachers
will embrace this idea, and the second being that because we have embraced
it, we have effectively improved the quality of the teaching of writing in
our own classroom.

Both assumptions are seriously questioned in a sobering report by
Arthur N. Applebee, <u>Contexts for Learning to Write: Studies of Secondary</u>
<u>School Instruction</u> (1984), based on the National Study of Writing in the
Secondary School, supported for three and a half years by grants from the
National Institute of Education. He observes that teachers are unwilling
to give the extra time that process activities would take, or if they are
willing, feel threatened by the shifting of positions between teacher and
student when process-oriented activities occur. "To implement such
activities effectively, the teacher must shift from a position of knowing
what the student's repsonse should be, to a less secure position in which
there are no clear right or wrong answers" (p.187). A further
complication to incorporating process-oriented writing activities is in the
very nature of the types of writing we assign in the English classroom:
78% is analysis, 12% summary, and 10 % imaginative writing. Thus, 90% of

1

English classroom writing tasks have right or wrong answers, with the teacher or reader/evaluator being the holder of truth. And so the writing task is designed to measure a limited amount of stored information introduced by either teacher or textbook or both. The information from which 67 % of those writing tasks drew, was either teacher- or text-based. It is clear that in most school writing tasks, opportunities for using personal experience as the basis for writing were limited. It seems to me that if we are really to revolutionize writing instruction and improve it as well, some fundamental changes in teacher roles and writing curriculum must first take place.

Applebee makes the observation in his extensive report that most of the teachers he interviewed were sincere in their desire to improve student writing and understanding, but were unable to establish the instructional support or "scaffolding," as he refers to it, to do so. Most high school curricula acknowledge that in high school there is a shift from reliance on primarily time-ordered or descriptive modes of presentation toward more analytic methods of organization. Both the scaffolding and the writing curriculum should reflect this shift; however, it is clear from Applebee's study, that the scaffolding is not there to help students make this transition. Nor are the writing tasks designed to develop the analytical modes of organization--informational writing, 90 % of what students are asked to write, stops far short of analytical writing tasks.

In the face of what is clearly an inadequate writing environment in our schools across the nation, how can writing researchers offer the right kind of convincing support to encourage teachers of writing that a change is necessary? This is a difficult question. It is dangerous to answer it

with the "romantic" theories of writing teachers such as James Moffett or Peter Elbow, or the educational theories of Jean Piaget and Jerome Bruner, for no matter how enlightened or knowing they are, their close association with the romantic education movement of the seventies makes them difficult to sell to a conservative American public. If, however, current scientific and psychological research show these same theories to be still the most sound base for any curriculum, then we have an answer.

The romantics ask that teachers of writing first consider the individual and individual psychological processes in any writing context. Teaching methods and writing curriculum must conform to what we know about how the individual makes meaning out of his experience. This is the natural order--not the reverse order as is the case in many secondary schools, where established curriculum rules unchallenged and students fail to learn how to write. If we do look closely at the individual involved in the writing experience we can begin by questionning the role of the basic psychological process of perception. What is the role of vision in the writing process? Attempts to answer this question lead to another fundamental question about how the brain itself works not only in perceiving, but in storing and manipulating the objects of perception. Answers to these questions may lead indirectly to a new understanding of the writing process and its psychological processes.

Background for the Study

It has become increasingly clear over the last ten years that the boundaries separating such traditional fields as rhetoric, psychology, philosophy, linguistics, reading, communication, and English are fading. The meeting ground for these disciplines is in a growing interest by all investigators in substantiating theoretical positions about human behavior with what we know about the functioning of the human brain. As scientific methods for studying the human brain become more sophisticated and subtle, the possibilities for understanding the functioning and disfunctioning of the human being also increase.

Writing research since the first seminal work by Janet Emig, The Composing Processes of Twelfth Graders (1971), has been moving toward such a combination of disciplines--and the possibilities for greater understanding of the cognitive processes involved in the writing process are expanding. Most recently, the inaugural issue of Written Communication: A Quarterly Journal of Research, Theory, and Application includes an article by Linda Flower and John R. Hayes, "Images, Plans, and Prose: The Representation of Meaning in Writing" (January, 1984), which combines the forces of an English teacher and a cognitive psychologist in the study of the writing process. This partnership has been a very successful one, as Flower and Hayes developed a cognitive model for the writing process using such psychological terms as long-term memory and short-term memory in talking about the task environment of writing a piece of discourse.   While Flower and Hayes' article is a comprehensive summary of what psychologists do know in general about the functioning of the human brain, an earlier article by Janet Emig in 1978, "Hand, Eye, Brain: Some

`Basics' in the Writing Process", asks probing questions about more specific organic functions of the human brain—demonstrating once again her brilliance by asking the right questions at the right time.

Emig's speculations about the writing process assume the position that first of all, writing is a process. Although she breaks the process into three stages, the pre-writing, articulation, and post-writing stages, she acknowledges that these stages are not actually mutually exclusive or linear in design, but recur throughout the writing process. If we think of pre-writing in Gordon Rohman's terms, that is, the stage of discovery in the writing process when a person transforms a subject into his own categories (1964), we can see that pre-writing is a recurring cycle as the subject is expanded and elaborated upon by the personal experience and understanding of the writer. The conception and incubation of ideas occur throughout both the conscious and unconscious life of the perceiver, not just in those few minutes before putting pen to paper. Not only before the writer sets pen to paper, but during and after, the writing activity considering who, what, whom, medium, purpose, and effect occurs. Accepting then this qualification of the term "pre-writing", consider Emig's provocative question: Is the eye probably the major sense modality for presenting experience to the brain in pre-writing? If so, do the symbol-making propensity humans possess have to be visually activated? Do we literally examine a subject or experience visually? The answers to these questions should affect what we do in the classroom when teaching writing as a process. If we do "re-see" a subject before we attempt to write about it, would pre-writing activities and writing assignments dependent on a continuous visual stimuli (some sort of visual media) be more than a faddish experiential left-over from the sixties revolution—an

organic beginning in the writing process? These questions, in effect, ask about the role of perception in how the writer makes meaning out of experience.

Once one begins to question the role of vision in the writing process, any attempt to find answers leads inevitably to far more complex question about the function of the human brain in the writing process. Janet Emig's article illustrates this point quite effectively. After raising questions about how the blind write, she makes further inquiries into the role of the hemispheres in the writing process---asking ultimately if the classical and contemporary rhetorical terms such as argument and poetry, or extensive and reflexive, (or to use James Britton's terms transactional and poetic) reflect "century-old intuitive understandings that the mind deals differentially with different speaking and writing tasks? To put the matter declaratively, if hypothetically: modes of discourse may represent measurably different profiles of brain activity" (p.71).

This study has taken as its starting base Janet Emig's two major questions about the writing process. This researcher has first attempted to ascertain the role of vision in the pre-writing process, the assumption being that answers to this first question can affect the design of pre-writing activities in the writing process. Secondly, this researcher has explored the question of the split-brained human being, with each hemisphere possibly being responsible for different functions, the assumption being that answers to this second question can affect the modes of writing taught in the writing classroom. It seems clear that answers to these questions will have to be at best tentative--vulnerable as they are to the ever-increasing means scientists have of investigating the human brain. Nonetheless, current research can inform the basis for writing

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brain. Nonetheless, current research can inform the basis for writing

theory and writing curricula--not to acknowledge and act on this research

is irresponsible. As Janet Emig concludes her essay: "Perhaps the only

base for the curriculum should be what research suggests is literally

organic. And for the process of writing, what is truly organic? Let us

begin to find out" (p.71).

The Problem

The English teacher's fundamental problem is how to improve student writing. Contemporary practitioners recommend that students write more in school. In the Applebee study, the average amount of time students spent writing in the typical high school was just 3% of the total time students spent in any school learning, either in or out of school. Obviously, writing more, a great deal more, will address part of the problem. However, just writing more without structuring and designing the types and sequence of tasks is to proceed in ignorance.

Some teachers might argue that the crux of the problem is students' unwillingness to learn how to write: they resent writing and are unwilling to attempt it. Only the threat of failing English can force them to write. Students of course feel otherwise. For many of them, even when they try to write a successful paper, encounter failure. Clearly, this is an unsatisfactory situation. Students are caught in a dilemma: needing to write more because they fail, but resisting writing because they fear failure. Nonetheless, teachers are given the responsibility to make them write. Let me here, however, raise the important question of what types of writing are we asking them to write?

An experienced and successful English teacher once told me never to assign a writing task to others I wouldn't want to write or read myself. It took me a number of years of doubt before I acted on this advice. But once I did, the writing environment in my classroom changed dramatically. I can think back to a particular ninth grade class of thirty unhappy writers, ten of whom had failed to pass the basic skills test in English at the end of their eighth grade. They resented English in general, and writing in particular. But when they discovered that writing was not

focused on essay writing but rather on short stories and personal narratives--they couldn't help themselves; they enjoyed creating their own fictions and telling others about their personal experiences. They felt that my English class was "easy," especially in comparison to other classes where, when they did write, they wrote primarily academic writing. In a sense they were correct: my class was easy. The interesting question was why did it seem easier to them? They wrote and read a great deal that year. The amount of language experience was at least equal to if not greater than comparable classes. All but two students passed the basic skills make-up test at the end of the year. Intuition and experience told me that I was doing something right, even if I was "easy." But think back to what we know from experience and intuition:

Tasks seem easy when you know how to do them.

Doing something that you can do well gives you pleasure and a sense of accomplishment.

A sense of accomplishment is a satisfying and rewarding feeling that can build up self-confidence.

Self-confidence is necessary when facing a new and potentially threatening task.

Different assignments require different types of cognitive, linguistic, and textual manipulations on the part of the students--and some assignments are easier than others. For most students, stories and narratives are modes of discourse which they have mastered to some extent.

A study by Stephen Kucer (1983) of students writing in five
different modes, concluded that "different writers were affected
differently by different tasks and were sensitive to different aspects of
each writing condition." For ninth graders in the early stages of formal
operations and abstract thinking, this diversity of task complexity is an
overwhelming reality. We can generalize to say that for most ninth
graders, writing tasks requiring increasing levels of abstract thinking are
increasingly difficult--and for the basic writer they are even more so.
Taking this into account, can we say then that the curricula now offered in
the typical high school, which focus on expository writing to the exclusion
of other modes, are following a developmental curriculum?

Understanding the psychological processes which affect writing
attitude and ability can help us to understand why experience and intuition
can be excellent teachers. Curricula in our high schools can be designed
for predictable intellectual development. The problem here is to identify
those processsess, establish an order of increasing cognitive complexity,
and, finally, frame a curriculum that acknowledges this development.
Simply stated: Can we make writing an organic process that our students
can grow with?

Purpose and Significance of the Study

The purpose of this study is to explore the effects of instruction in the expressive and poetic writing mode on students' transactional writing skills. The instruction is based on a spiral curriculum designed to reflect the natural development of writing abilities in adolescents as they move from concrete to formal operations. Ninth graders were chosen as the focus of the study because they are at a transitional stage in human development when increasing use of abstract reasoning and analytical thinking is both possible and desirable. However, as they are asked to adopt new writing styles and structures they find both alien and unnatural, ninth graders find this transitional year perhaps the most difficult one. For many ninth graders, this is the year they are introduced to academic writing and the spectre of the five-paragraph essay. For many ninth graders, ninth grade is also the year they stop enjoying writing. It is my belief that an English curriculum can be designed to keep alive students' interest in writing while at the same time easing their transition into more abstract forms of writing. It is the purpose of this study to describe what actually occurs when ninth graders follow a sequentialized writing curriculum based on psychological theory and neurological development.

The study took as its subjects students in a ninth-grade writing class. Basic writers were chosen as the focus of the study because they frequently have marked difficulty in making the transition to academic writing. These students had not passed a state-wide basic skills test in English given at the end of the eighth grade, clearly indicating a handicap in attempting academic writing. The duration of the study was ten weeks, comprising the third quarter of the 1986-87 school year. The

nine students chosen to follow the curriculum received instruction in different modes of writing. Each writing task began with a visual referent designed as a concrete stimulant to initiate and compel the writing task. The data source included questionnaires administered to the nine students at the beginning and end of the investigation and thorough examination of their written products (including all jottings and doodles) in sequential order. Thus, the in-depth study of the three case studies was descriptive in nature, revealing individual writing behaviors in a small, select population.

The results are important from a number of points of view. First, they demonstrate the effectiveness of a curriculum designed to help set the stage for cognitive development in a student population expected to eventually master the more abstract, academic writing. Although there have been a number of interesting studies on the effect of poetic writing on transactional writing within the last five years, most notably in the unpublished doctoral dissertations of Linda Waitkus (1982), Leslie Meskin (1982), Alfred Reynolds (1983), and Art Young (1983), none of the studies uses psychological or neurological research to support its theories. These previous studies begin with Britton's theories as the basis for their work. Ultimately, their research design stems from informed theory. This study, although deeply indebted to these early researchers (most particularly James Britton and James Moffett) has researched the problem from a psychological and neurological position, and concluded by supporting the same informed theory. This curriculum design, altering both Britton's and Waitkus' schemas for the modes of discourse into a spiral curriculum, is based on studies of human behavior and what we know about the function of the human brain.

Secondly, and even more importantly, the results indicate a way in which we can alter our current curricula designs to help our students become better writers. Pedagogical decisions about what to teach and when to teach it are complex and difficult, but they should not be based on tradition or whimsy. Some writing tasks are easier than others, and our curricula should reflect this sequential order. The study here indicates ways in which we can review and evaluate existing writing curricula to help our students achieve greater intellectual flexibility and confidence.

Thirdly, the results will indicate the value of combining what are now considered in most writing curricula two different types of writing: creative writing and expository writing. Creative writing, or imaginative writing, is usually taught in a separate course, chosen as an elective by a minority of students. However, this study demonstrates that it is a natural and vital part of any academic writing program, and so we must reconsider its importance in all curricula.

Delimitations

The number, age, and ability of the students in this case study clearly limit the study. Ninth graders have special needs, and the nine students chosen as subjects have differing writing habits, obstacles, and attitudes from perhaps a majority of their peers. For these students, academic writing is a task they have learned to dread and avoid if possible. For the same reason, it is this type of student who should be the focus of curricula development.

The ten-week time period of the study limits the measurable benefits from the proposed spiral curriculum. Measuring changes in attitude and skill in such a complex task as writing most appropriately required a longitudinal study. Ideally, the study should have followed these students the duration of their high school career. However, practical considerations dictated that the project be restricted to a single quarter--more than the usual time devoted to teaching writing in an average English class in a year. At the conclusion of her dissertation, The Effect of Poetic Writing on Transactional Writing: A Case-study Investigation of The Writing of Three High School Seniors, Linda Waitkus asks if a shorter period than the eighteen weeks she investigated her case studies would yield similar positive results. In a sense, this study answers that question.

There were no control groups in the study. As the design is descriptive in nature, my intention is not to extrapolate to a broad population, many of whom have no problem adopting the academic style and attitude deemed suitable for most school writing tasks. My intention is to show what happens to individuals when they participate in a sequentialized curriculum designed to help them master all modes of discourse, including the academic writing they must learn in order to survive.

C H A P T E R   T W O

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The review of the literature consists of two sections: the first is
an investigation into the role of vision in the pre-writing process; the
second is an investigation into the role of the right and left hemispheres
in the writing process. These two interrelated research problems were
chosen because they lie at the heart of the creative process--and writing,
of course, must be considered to be one of the most demanding acts of
creation.

Because I came to these two psychological/neurological fields as an
English teacher and not a research psychologists, my study was exploratory
in nature. I began with assumptions common to a layperson, initially
following obvious hunches to acquaint myself with the territory. Of
course, extensive enquiry told me that many of my assumptions were false,
and many of my hunches were wrong. I have decided to incorporate the
narrative of my search in these sections--most obviously in the first
section on visual imagery--believing that most of my readers will be
English teachers like myself who have similar assumptions and hunches based
on experience and intuition. Beginning with this common ground should help
to make the unfamiliar territory more familiar.

Visual Imagery and Pre-Writing: An Investigation Into the Role of Vision in the Writing Process

It may seem a commonplace to observe that human memory plays a fundamental role in all cognitive activities, including writing; however, only recently have teachers of writing tried to understand the cognitive dimensions of the writing process. At the heart of that writing process is human memory--a complicated storehouse of the writer's interactions with the world. In the memory system, organized for later use are concepts, schema, linguistic knowledge, remembered experiences, procedural knowledge, and visual memory. How these records of experience are translated into the writing process is obviously complicated and complex, and fascinating. Researchers such as Sondra Perl, Janet Emig, and Linda Flower have attempted to unravel these interrelated strands of experience, hoping to find some more complete way to understand the writing process. Taking inspiration from them, I enrolled in a course of cognitive psychology, hoping to find some answers about how the memory system functions. Psychologists don't have all the answers to some of the most complex cognitive questions--the world still has its mysteries. And yet this course told me much about what I didn't know. It heightened my interest and made me alert to any mention of the human mind and memory system-- questioning even in casual reading of a novel by Walker Percy (The Second Coming) the neurological information he offers his reader:

> It was a scene from his youth, so insignificant a recollection that he had to reason to remember it then, let alone now thirty years later. Yet he seemed to see every detail as clearly as if the scene lay before him. Again the explanation of the neurologist was altogether reasonable. The brain registers and records every sensation, sight and sound and smell it has ever received. If the neurons where such information is stored happen to be stimulated, jostled, pressed upon, any memory can be recaptured. Nothing is really forgotten.   (p.6)

How reassuring to know that nothing is really forgotten. And yet, as teachers of writing and writers ourselves, we know that stimulating the right neurons is a fundamental difficulty. Is it part of our function as teachers to understand as much as we possibly can about the dynamics of human memory, then consequently design writing curricula which reflects this understanding?

I have had a number of excellent writing teachers say to me in heated tones, "You don't need to know what is going on in the brain in order to teach someone to write." They speak with some truth. Experience and intuition can be the basis for effective teaching--and for most of us the only basis we have to date. The fact that human memory is so fundamental, so complex, and only indirectly observable, has encouraged us to accept it as a given more easily than many assumptions we live by. Nonetheless, when it is possible for us to reinforce our intuition and experience with knowledge, no matter how rudimentary, shouldn't we try to do so?

Ironically, my investigation into the cognitive processes in writing began with my own limited experience and intuition. Experience had taught me that some writing assignments that I had designed were more effective than others in producing "good" writing; my intuition said that the poorer writers needed help and encouragement most intensely at the beginning of that well-designed writing assignment. At this point in my understanding I saw pre-writing as the initial stimulus for those neurons that needed to be fired. Of course, at the time, my understanding had been influenced by theories of experiential learning. English journals celebrated new curriculum designs that emphasized the importance of pre-writing as the first stage in a linear writing process. I ran a computer search in the mid-seventies that found innumerable articles on pre-writing, the proto-

typical one being Dennis Hannan's "Learning to Juggle Oranges: The Pre-writing Experience." In Hannan's multi-experience approach (brainstorming, journal writing, class and small-group discussions, sensory perception experiments, creative drama, free-verse writing, to name a few) he offers all the methods one seems to need. But why do we need to juggle oranges? When we are trying to artificially stimulate a storage of immediate experiences in our students, that is, when carefully engaging students' intellectual involvement, what are we activating for them when (or if) we are successful? What lies behind the methods?

In her article "Hand, Eye, and Brain: Some 'Basics' in the Writing Process" (1977) Janet Emig asks if seeing is the sensory mode in which most pre-writing is conducted. She suggest that in pre-writing the eye is probably the major sense modality for presenting experience to the brain. Admittedly, in juggling oranges, we focus on seeing them move in space. When we remember watching oranges being juggled, don't we "re-see" them looping from hand to hand? But Hannan's metaphor is misleading—or I have mis-used it. His methods draw on complex combinations of all senses as well as complex conceptual tasks. Can the eye be the source of all this complex activity? In the same year that Emig was posing her speculations and questions, Thomas Gage, in his article "Composing; The Art of Letting Your Right Brain Recognize What Your Left Brain is Recalling," gave his own answers to similar question he had tried to answer. Gage divides the visual and auditory functions of the brain into the left hemisphere, which he terms the "broadcasting source of radio," and the right hemisphere which contains the "family photograph album" where visual images are encoded and stored. Gage's, perhaps now familiar, separation of the brain's function by hemisphere suggests that Emig is partially correct in her speculations—

seeing, which may be a dominant mode in much remembering, is one of two major sources of information--hearing being the other. The encoding and storage of experience is dependent on a two-track, predominantly two-sense system. My own subjective experience says, why yes, this must be the case. When I try to remember an experience and am successful, it seems right to say that I have a sound movie going on in my head.

If Thomas Gage is correct in his theoretical explanation of how experience is encoded and my own subjective feeling that this is indeed what I experience when I try to remember an experience, we can begin to ask a number of important questions about the development of writing ability. Does our visual sensory register--one of two major controllers of perception--first translate experience into a cognitive image from which language and writing then develop? In children just beginning to write is there a reason for their dependence on visual images such as drawings and doodles before actually trying to communicate in writing? The seven-year-old of Donald Graves' now well-known article, "The Examination of the Writing Process of Seven-year-olds" (1975) draws first a pictorial representation of his subject before trying to translate it into written text. If we look at this young boy in the first stage of writing development, we could say that he is trying to transfer the picture in his mind into the most direct representation he knows--a picture on the paper. Indeed, this he must do in order to translate it into the abstract symbol system of language--his intellectual inexperience limits his ability to make the conversion without the pictorial stimulus. Can we then extend these speculations about the needs of a seven-year-old to the possible needs of remedial writers? Are they, too, less able to move between the representational systems because of their inexperience? Perhaps visual

referents of stimuli could help them translate experience into written
language. If this were the case, then pre-writing activities emphasizing
first-hand visual experiences would be appropriate. It was, however, only
after I enrolled in a cognitive psychology class, that I realized that
Thomas Gage's view of perception and the function of the brain was
simplistic and controversial; and, therefore, my speculations about the
writing process, premature.

My first surprise was to discover that what had seemed an obvious
assumption—that we do have movie pictures in our head—is a source of
heated debate in the cognitive study of mental imagery and human memory.
My first awareness that intuition and subjective experience in this realm
is best set aside was in John R. Anderson's, introductory text, Cognitive
Psychology and Its Implications: "People have a natural tendency to think
of images as 'pictures in the head.' Most theorists in this area resist
this temptation and for good reason (p.84)." What are the reasons? Before
answering this difficult question let me establish the positions in this
theoretical controversy.

The Dual Code/Common Code Controversy

In the dual code/common code controversy psychologists are positing
how experience is encoded (made into a memory trace) in long term memory (a
permanent storage capacity, storing all the knowledge we have of the
world.) The dual code theory maintains that experience is recorded in two
separate but interacting systems: the verbal code, involving the
description of an event or object, and the imaginal code, involving the
visualizing of an object or event. (Although dual codists recognize that
there may be other senses being coded, these theorists minimize their role

as almost negligible (Ellis, 1983, p.95). Allan Paivio, a major dual code proponent, specifies that the image is specialized for dealing with perceptual information concerning nonverbal objects and events; the other is specialized for dealing with linguistic information. The two systems may be directly aroused in memory or associatively aroused when an object elicits its verbal label. Chains of symbolic transformations can occur between the two systems, thus mediating in perceptual or verbal learning.

Allan Paivio's theory, when it was first received in the late sixties, was the first such major theoretical research, and was accepted initially by many who now reject his theory, including John R. Anderson (1980) who is at Carnagie-Mellon Institute and working in cognitive psychology, along with John Hayes, who has been recently publishing with Linda Flower essays examining the writing process. Anderson and his influential mentor, Gordon H. Bower, believe, in contrast, that knowledge gained from both non-verbal experience and verbal experience are coded in the same underlying memory representation. Common code theorists understand this representation to be a set of abstract descriptive units of both verbal and pictorial materials. They agree that we do experience images, but not because images are stored in memory. Rather the images are generated from the underlying propositional representation. The common codists believe that pictures are visually more distinctive, allowing for a quicker semantic interpretation than is possible for words--or that words must first undergo some acoustic phonemic processing before undergoing semantic processing (John te Linde,1982). The same code underlies both forms of storage, but the processing can be different. The form of storage, the propositional network, is a series of propositions (a term borrowed from logic and linguistics, meaning the smallest unit of knowledge that can stand as a

separate assertion, that is, the smallest unit about which it makes sense to make the judgement true or false) tied together in a complex, interlocking series of networks. The propositional network can have many varied means of access, but not guaranteed access. When someone is trying to remember something, the ability to recall is dependent on how strongly the propositions are encoded and connected.

Discussion of the Dual Code/Common Code Controversy

At the outset of my investigation I had a strong conviction that the dual codists described what I knew subjectively to be true. Even though I agree with Gordon Bower that "people utter an awful lot of nonsense about their mental imagery....The normal person's introspections are frequently neither very discriminating nor particularly valid (1970, p.529)." it is still difficult to renounce what one has taken for truth. Paivio's argument for the strength of the imaginal code is reasonable: Although most experiences or events can be remembered through both imaginal and verbal codes, the visual/imaginal code will be the stronger, more accessible code, producing better memory because the visual image retains more concrete detail than does the verbal code. Therefore, man has a superior memory for pictures than words. When he relates his theory to language acquisition, we see how it relates to the teaching of writing:

> Imagery is assumed to be specialized for the symbolic representation of concrete situations and events, speed and flexibility of transformational thinking...and parallel processing in the visual-spatial sense. The verbal system, on the other hand, is presumably characterized by its capacity to deal with abstract problems, concepts, and relationships, and for processing sequential information. (1971, p.434)

This model of language acquisition, beginning with the concrete operations of the infant and concluding with the relatively autonomous intra-verbal level of abstract verbal skills, has some specific psycholinguistic implications: Verbal descriptions of concrete situations and events are likely to be mediated efficiently by nonverbal imagery, whereas abstract discourse and verbal expressions of abstract reasoning are more likely to be mediated entirely by the verbal system. A second and equally important implication for this study is that verbal behavior mediated by imagery is likely to be more flexible and creative than that mediated by the verbal symbolic system. Thus concrete language is likely to be more creative and faster, while abstract language is slower and more difficult.

We can, therefore, conclude from his theory that: (1) if one is trying to write about a concrete situation or event, one is likely to depend upon visual imagery, which through its interaction with the verbal code, becomes a description of the experience. But first the visual code is activated; (2) the visual code has the advantage of greater flexibility and creativity, as its symbols are not tied to any linear production (as words are) but rather operate relatively freely both spatially and operationally; (3) tasks which are more abstract in nature (for instance, a definitional essay) will be both slower and more difficult.

If Paivio is correct in his speculations, then we might venture the following conclusions for teachers of writing: (1) language use based on concrete, immediate situations or events will be easier to effect; (2) the products of this act have the greater possibility of being "creative"; and (3) some writing tasks will be easier than others. However, I must emphasize that these conclusions are necessarily relative, as Paivio

cautions his readers to remember that "neither images nor words ordinarily act as independent processes but interact continually in both functions (1971, p.32)."

Paivio's speculations and my own applications to the teaching of writing, both of which stress the increasing difficulty of linguistic acts as they move from concrete to more abstract levels, may sound familiar to students of Jerome Bruner and Jean Piaget. Bruner's educational hypothesis posits a developmental shift from iconic (visual dominance) to verbal-symbolic modes of representation as learning tasks shift from concrete to more abstract representations (1960). Piaget too, in his stages of cognitive development has formal operations, including abstract and formal thought, preceded by concrete operations (1972). For both Bruner and Piaget the shift is a developmental one corresponding to the increasing maturity of the individual. Paivio, however, qualifies this development by suggesting that people of equal age and experience show individual differences in their dependence on imagery. He cites a study by Griffitts (1927) who distinguished between people who are "visual types" (concrete thinkers) and "auditory-motor types" (verbal thinkers) and suggests that Griffitt's approach and results are consistent with his own conceptual distinction of the two symbolic processes (1971, p.479). And so Paivio concludes that although the individual's uniqueness may result in different dependencies on imagery, both processes become increasingly capable of representing and manipulating information not present in the here-and-now as the individual matures. Thus it would appear that increasing linguistic competence is dependent initially upon a substrata of imagery that

continues to develop:

> Through exposure to concrete objects and events, the infant develops
> a storehouse of images that represent his knowledge of the world.
> Language builds upon this foundation and remains interlocked with
> it, although it also develops a partly autonomous structure of its
> own. (1971, p.433)

Ultimately the mature individual has a complex store of both concrete

experience and semantic skill upon which he draws, but individual

dependencies on imagery can be a manifestation of learning style, not

necessarily of age and development.

If we now go back and once again consider Donald Graves' seven-year-

old who draws his picture first and then tries to write, perhaps we can now

see his struggling to move from a concrete stimulus (his drawing) which at

this level in his language development he must have to use, to a verbal

symbol system he is only just beginning to understand. It would seem that

according to a dual code interpretation, the visual code is more

immediately and more easily activated; this is what the development of the

verbal code depends on. For the five-year-old children in Marie Clay's

study of writing development in children, What Did I Write? (1979),

attempts at producing language are almost always preceded by pictures or

doodles. Clay does not here discuss what seems such an obvious first step

in the development of writing—drawing a picture. The pattern is there to

see in almost every individual subject's early writing sample. At a later

stage in language generation, when concrete words can carry the imagistic

features of a picture, a concrete noun as opposed to an abstract noun was

found by A. Reynolds and Allan Paivio to elicit more speech, faster

latencies of definition, and fewer unfilled and filled (ah) pauses. The

concrete words evoked faster associative reactions than did the abstract

words (1971, p.450). Even professional writers may choose a concrete word

to evoke associative reactions: Ray Bradbury's standard procedure for
stimulating inspiration is to run his finger down the page of a dictionary
with his eyes closed. The word he stops on, usually a noun or a verb, then
becomes the basis for his fiction. One of the most imaginative products of
his process is a story entitled "The Veldt" which takes the word that he
chose at random, "nursery," as the scene of an imaginary African plain
where the two spoiled children in the family love to play. So to some
extent, Paivio's speculations do have something to say about cognitive
activities in both child and adult, novice writer and professional. His
theoretical speculations appeal to both my intuition and experience.

However, to complicate matters, the common code theory, too, has
corroborated my experience, if not my intuition. For a number of years I
have used a writing program designed by Roger Garrison and introduced to me
by Charles Moran of the University Writing Program at the University of
Massachusetts. Students are first given writing tasks, the first five
being descriptive in nature (describe an object, experience, friend, and so
on in increasing complexity). The first step in this tutorial design is
for the students to brainstorm individually a list of descriptions. As
they are involved in this pre-writing task, the teacher's function is to
act as a facilitator, trying to encourage them to become more detailed in
their descriptions by asking them specific questions about color, size,
time of day--whatever seemed appropriate. When I first taught this program
a number of years ago, the students in my particular classes were basic
writers. Their essays, based on an important personal experience, were
frequently just seven or eight lines long. For what I suspect were a
complication of problems, they were unable to elaborate on their
experience. What they wrote was a summary of the experience--a

conceptually convenient tag that allowed them to refer to the experience in memory without having to re-experience it or try to express their feelings necessarily involved in the experience. They were unable to get beyond the convenient subjective label, their own implicit ego-centric understanding, to re-create an experience for an audience to share. James Britton might observe that such a basic writer is still unable to act as a spectator or, as James Moffett might conclude, to anticipate an audience. They appreciated my intervention, recognizing that I was helping them to develop something they enjoyed reading to their friends. However, I never quite understood how I was actually affecting their cognitive processes until I was introduced to John Anderson's propositional framework for long term memory.

John Anderson's ACT Theory of Activation

If we accept the neurologist's statement quoted from Percy's novel,
that the brain registers and records (almost) every sensation, sight, and
sound it has received, and that nothing is really forgotten, then we have
to assume that the information which even a poor writer is trying to
recall, is stored--not forgotten, just not available. In the common code
conceptualizing of memory, information stored in long-term propositional
networks is activated by association. Activation spreads through long-term
memory from active portions to other portions of memory, and this spread
takes time. In Anderson's ACT, spreading activation theory of memory,

> Working memory (or short term memory) contains the information
> currently available to the system for processing and so combines
> encoding of information about the current environment, inferences,
> current goal information, and traces from long-term memory....At any
> time certain working memory elements are sources of activation--
> either because they are encodings of perceptual events or because
> they are internal concepts currently being processed. Activation
> can spread from these elements to associated elements in the network
> of elements and units. As soon as the source drops from attention,
> its activation begins to decay, as does the activation of the
> network supported by the spread from it. (1983, p.263)

It is important to emphasize here that memory depends on the strength
of the association--some memories may be too weak to be sufficiently
activated and hence cannot be recalled. In my own particular classroom
situation, the cognitive writing tasks were designed by Roger Garrison to
depend upon experiences that figured significantly in the life of the
writer, and so for the most part retrieval should have been possible. My
function in the situation was to help activate the spread of information.
My associative cues (asking about size, color and other descriptions of the
event) were helping to keep the working memory activated and spreading its
associative strength down less powerful memory paths. My questions were
intended to help students activate a semantic network that was too weak for

them to activate alone. Instead of being called a "writing teacher," a more appropriate title for me might be a "propositional network activation enhancer"--but I won't encourage its adoption.

This distinction between the common code theory and the dual code theory--that I am activating a semantic network, not a visual code--is important, especially when we reconsider Janet Emig's initial questions about pre-writing: Is seeing the sensory mode in which most pre-writing is conducted? Do we literally re-examine a subject or experience visually? Emig asks for research to be undertaken on the congenitally blind and the partially sighted in the hope of finding some answers.

A recent article by Jerome Zimler and Janice M. Keenan, "Imagery in the Congenitally Blind: How Visual Are Visual Images?" (1983),attempted to answer Emig's question. Their conclusions, that the blind performed equally well on visual imagery tasks, must be questioned. Their experiment was flawed for two important reasons: their blind subjects were not all blind from birth, and their median age was seven years older than the sighted control group. Janet Emig's question still needs to be answered.

Some Conclusions about Memory Coding and Its Implications for the Teaching of Writing

In a thorough discussion of the code controversy, John T.E. Richardson (1980) after reviewing hundreds of studies similar in design to Zimler and Keenan's (in that they, for the most part, depend upon various combinations of paired associates for stimuli) concludes that any theory of human memory which includes no provision for a specific pictorial memory is inherently inadequate. However, the dual coding position is not a sound theory either for "there are findings which present grave difficulties for that

position." In tests where evidence supports dual coding (with again the exception of memory for human faces) by virtue of the fact that visual images seem to be encoded more strongly than a semantic counterpart, another interpretation is possible: propositional structures with spatial or perceptual qualities can be encoded with more strength. That is, spatial or perceptual experience creates a stronger propositional encoding, thereby making it more easily activated on retrieval.

Perhaps in the face of this final observation we can draw some conclusions, if not precisely about how experience is encoded in long term memory, at least about what kind of experiences might be most strongly encoded--whatever the theoretical framework. We can conclude that visual stimuli, for whatever reason, can be strongly encoded in the long term memory--and as a consequence, they can serve as a strong stimulus for retrieval. So it may not really matter whether or not I am activating semantic networks or helping my students "re-see" an event or situation; the procedure is the same. Nonetheless, we may also conclude that the cognitive task itself can affect the retrieval process. Writing tasks that focus on descriptive writing, sensory perceptions, and personal experiences, rooted as they are in more concrete, more strongly encoded memory traces will be less difficult: first, they will enable students to access that memory store more easily, causing them to write with greater flexibility, creativity, and sense of confidence (because the task "seems" easier); and secondly, if individuals still have difficulties in knowing what to write, we can help them by either stimulating their semantic networks or helping them "re-see" with visual cues. Writing tasks which ask for more complex, cognitive tasks, such as abstract essays of definition, classification, or argument, will be more difficult both in

degree and nature. These conclusions, I suspect, will not startle many teachers of English, who already through intuition and experience have incorporated them into their classrooms and curricula; but perhaps the theoretical discussion interpreting their experience will make them more alert to the power of various visual/concrete stimuli in the teaching of writing. Books such as Stop, Look, and Write, which depend on picture stimulation to activate some cognitive response, might indeed serve as an effective pre-writing tool for students with writing blocks. Films, visual icons, home photographs--any visual means to actively involve perceptual experience might be a fast, immediate stimulus for writing. It is still an interesting question to ask if vision is the major mode of pre-writing. Janet Emig's question does not seem answerable at this point, but vision certainly can function as a crucial stimulus to the writing process.

When I was first trying to make connections between dual code theory and the teaching of writing, I kept Emig's question hovering over the material I was reading. I was especially intrigued by the relationship I had assumed existed between imagery and autobiographical memory. This interest came from my own personal writing, and from my experience with the Garrison writing program in my classroom. The earliest Garrison writing tasks begin with autobiographical memory. Students are asked to describe an event, place, person, and neighborhood of personal importance. At first it seemed clear to me that vision was the main perceptual mode being called on in the memory system. Now, of course, that assumption is questionable. But in my search for some answers I came across another cognitive theorist whose theories about autobiographical memory were provocative and useful.

Endel Tulving's Theory of Episodic and Semantic Memory

First presented in a paper in 1972, Endel Tulving's speculations on
human memory begin with an assumption I am now willing to grant: that
enquiring _how_ memory is stored (whether in a dual or a single code) is
ultimately not the most useful question to ask. Instead, he classifies
memory according to how it functions in the life of the individual.
Tulving uses what he calls the "heuristic" (that is, for purposes of
discussion and analysis he posits a possible truth) of dividing memory into
two systems, with his emphasis on one system--the episodic.   He avoids the
coding controversy, accepting that knowledge may consist of propositions
and images, and focuses instead on what he calls "propositional knowledge"
that is broken down into two separate but inter-connected systems: the
episodic and semantic systems. In attempting to classify the two systems,
he asks two different questions: what kind of information is processed by
them, and what are the characteristics of their operations.

Definitions of the Episodic and Semantic Systems

The episodic memory is a system that receives and stores information
about temporally dated episodes or events, and temporal-spatial relations
about them. Events in episodic memory are stored in terms of their
"perceptible properties (p.21)." Episodic memory is human autobiographical
memory:

> Thus we can think of a person's life as consisting of successive
> episodes as readily as we can think of the appearance of words,
> pictures, or other items in a to-be-remembered list as miniature
> episodes, embedded within a larger episode. (p.21)

Semantic memory is the memory necessary for the use of language. It is a "mental thesaurus, organized knowledge that a person possesses about words and other verbal symbols, their meaning and referents,...algorithms, formulas, rules, concepts, and relations (p.21)."

Tulving is careful to establish that although both episodic and semantic memory can be seen as functionally different, they usually interact, influencing the processing of information. Most importantly, the semantic system helps to retrieve the episodic memories. Tulving compares his theory to Jerome Bruner's distinction between "memory with record" and "memory without record." his episodic memory having record, the semantic having none (p.57). Like Bruner's distinction, Tulving's, as he modestly assures his reader, is intended to act as a valuable heuristic for discussing the functioning of memory. His theoretical constructs are "armchair speculations" that might prove useful to cognitive studies. By enabling writing teachers to understand some of the dynamics of autobiographical memory, his theories may have some interesting implications for the teaching of writing. In the following pages I will be discussing both systems; however the emphasis will be on the episodic system, the basis of autobiographical memory.

The basic unit of episodic memory is an individual act of remembering "that begins with the witnessing or experiencing of an event or episode and ends with its subjective remembering (recollective experience), with the conversion of the remembered information into some other form, or both (p.11)." Is it safe to assume that all perceptual experience is then stored in the semantic system? Are those "movies in the head" coming from the episodic store? It would appear to be the case:

Occurrences of simple visual and auditory stimulus events, even if

they are not readily identifiable and have no known purpose, can be
registered in the system as sensory experiences that occurred in a
particular place at a particular time. (p.36)

The workings of the semantic system are different, however. For the

information to be stored in semantic memory, the content of the occurrence

of the episode must be understood and comprehended; that is, related to

existing knowledge. One can see now why, when writing about an

autobiographical experience both systems are activated--the semantic code

is necessary for making the experience in episodic form communicable. The

organization of the episodic memory is temporal (one event precedes, co-

occurs, or succeeds another in time), whereas the semantic organization has

a tight conceptual structure independent of time and space.

One of the more crucial aspects of the episodic system is that each

event in the episodic domain is referred to a particular instant, date, or

period in time--but the referent is not chronological time or calendar

time; rather at the occurrence of the event it is the rememberer's

personally experienced time, and at recollection, his personal past. At

the heart of this system of perception is the individual, involved in the

"me-ness" of experience. It is this system that gives the perceiver the

subjective feeling that what he remembers is true, or as Tulving phrases

it, gives the rememberer the "feeling of veridicality." Although Tulving

does not quite understand the basis for this sense of truth (he calls it a

deep mystery, p. 40), the fact that the episodic registers information more

directly than the semantic system and is able to record and retain

information about perceptible properties of stimuli that can be apprehended

immediately by the senses, may have something to do with the phenomenon.

Episodic experience is "experiential" learning (p.41)--experience we must

agree is a powerful teacher. Perhaps we don't completely understand why,

but episodic memories serve to define and strengthen the rememberer's personal identity. The episodic system seems to involve a sense of "consciousness" at the heart of its interaction with the world. This is, I believe, the personal context which is brought into the writing act, a context which Gordon Rohman, as early as 1965, cautions writing teachers not to forget. He states:

> every writing occasion presents the writer with two contexts to discover: one we might call the "subject context," that is, some things about a "subject" that may be learned in an encyclopedia....The writer has a second, more crucial, context to discover, what we might call the "personal context"....A good deal of behavioral research, in writing as well as in other things, has attempted to ignore the reality of the conscious, responsible, willing person. (1965, p.108)

Rohman's call for "self-actualization" in this article on pre-writing was paralleled in educational circles of the sixties and seventies by a call for experiential learning. Now these innovations have, to a considerable extent, been replaced by conservative pedagogy. No one now asks about the "affective component" in a learning task or writes "affective objectives"-- at least in my high school, that consideration left with the mini-courses and electives. But what have we lost? Perhaps Tulving's discussion on how the affective component of an experience can affect its later recall will give us some answers.

Tulving explains how little psychological research has been done on the relationship between affect and memory; however, using casual observation and intuition (his own "me-ness") he states:

> It makes sense to assume that only episodic memory has affective components, or at least that affect plays a more important role in the episodic than in the semantic experience. Personal experiences are often "emotional", or take place while a person is in a particular mood, and information about the state of the rememberer may be recorded as part of the memory trace of the event. This affective component of the memory trace may then play a role in the

retrieval of information about the event. A person may also read about material, or vicariously experience events that arouse an emotional state, and the information thus acquired may be "emotional" to the extent that the episodic affect is conditioned to the semantic content of the episode. (p.43)

Encoding

The affective component of the episodic memory system has important implications for the storage of information for later retrieval in the writing process. When experience is being encoded (made into a memory trace), the more emotionally affecting an experience is the more memorable the experience. Traditionally the strength of a memory trace was considered "deeper" because the deeper and more elaborate the perceptual system must analyze the stimulus, the richer and more detailed will be the episodic memory trace (p.125). Tulving's theory asks us to rethink this assumption: it is not a matter of degree, but rather of content. Experience encoded into the episodic system is three-dimensional--a unique combination of time and space, with a certain place, certain time, beginning and end. It is this three-dimensionality that makes the memory store both more complex and extensive. This quality too will affect the way that the memory trace is retrieved, and its greater chances of being retrieved.

Retrieval in the Episodic System

Remembering experiences of an absorbing nature is actually a four-staged process. The first stage involves putting the cognitive system in a "retrieval mode." Although as rememberers we cannot detect a difference between the retrieval mode and the encoding of memory, retrieval mode opens the system for remembering. Tulving's explanation does not say whether it

is cognitive, affective, or what—but he explains how we know the mode
exists:

> When something that happens to us—an event we witness, an anecdote
> we hear, an odor we smell, or whatnot—reminds us of a personal
> episode, we do not feel that we are in a different state than we are
> when similar happenings have no cueing effect....It is difficult to
> study something of which we are not aware, and how can we become
> aware of something that is always present? (p.170)

The second stage of retrieval involves a stimulus or a retrieval cue.
As defined by Tulving, a retrieval cue can be thought of as the especially
salient or significant part of retrieval information, which in daily life
is presented to the rememberer in an ongoing interaction with the
environment. Retrieval cues are also "descriptions of descriptions." He
elaborates:

> First, we assume that "experience is the formation of a description"
> which, or part of which, is retained, and then we think of the
> retrieval cue as "the formation of a description of the information
> sought." Putting the two thoughts together we end up with retrieval
> cue as the "present description of a past description." (p.171)

Tulving's final definition of a retrieval cue as a "present description of
a past description" can be useful if we return once again to consider my
role as a 'propositional network activation enhancer," referred to earlier
in my discussion of the writing teacher's role in the Garrison writing
laboratory. Within the Tulving theoretical framework, I was helping
students construct a past description by giving them cues or present
description of what I could project from their current list. Why do some
students need more cueing than others? I would conjecture that the
difference between a skilled confident writer and a remedial writer, is the
automaticity, fluidity, and appropriateness of available cues. Good
writers supply themselves with cues, and the cues that they generate are
more effective. The most effective cues must be a "product of the
rememberer's mental activity both at the time of the formation of the

engram (the memory trace of the original experience) and the time of attempted retrieval (p.175)." Retrieval, states Tulving, is always cued.

The <u>third</u> stage of retrieval he calls "Ecphory", the event-like process that converts the relevant information in the retrieval environment and the original or recoded engram into ecphoric information. The term was originally invented by Richard Semon (1904), its root being from the Greek word meaning "to be made known." Tulving has appropriated the term and defines it as "the process by which information stored in a specific memory trace is utilized by the system to produce conscious memory of certain aspects of the original event (p.176)." He uses this term in order to emphasize that retrieval is a process, not a static state. This ecphoric stage combines information from two sources, the engram and the cue. He is adamant that the retrieval cue that activates the ecphoric process does not work by association as in other theories of activation (for example, Anderson's Act Theory, 1983) but actually interacts with the stored information. In other words, the cue becomes a part of what is remembered, rather than simply triggering something else.

We can see why the appropriateness of the retrieval cue is vital. Retrieval cues actually combine with the stored engram and may affect what is finally remembered. Thus what we finally "know" can be distorted because the final ecphoric information may be only similar to the original engram. Tulving elaborates:

> Ultimately because of this interaction, although a good deal of remembering is more or less veridical, a good deal of it is not....Like a person's perceptual experience of the present environment, recollective experience of past events can at best be only an incomplete and stylized mode of the apprehended reality. The feeling that the present recollective experience is veridical, that is, that it presents the past faithfully, are given as an integral part of the subjective experience of remembering. (p.188)

We can see that the role of "cue-giver" is important in this theory of remembering. Some cues can enhance memory, while others can distort it.

The fourth and final stage in the act of remembering a particular episode is a recollective experience in which the rememberer is aware of the ecphoric information—the result of ecphory. A rememberer does not have to be consciously aware of the ecphoric process—it is the information resulting from the process about which he knows. This information may then be simply "thought about" and not expressed in any overt fashion. However, for my purposes in the writing classroom I am interested in the conversion of this information into observable behavior—the writing process—and communicable experience—the writing product.

The Ecphoric Process and Its Implications for the Teaching of Writing

Tulving's theoretical construct emphasizes the complexity of what we might usually consider to be a simple task—remembering. We know already from our own experience and recent research that the writing task is a difficult cognitive one which relies on memory. The question to ask now is whether or not Tulving's model of human memory can help us re-structure our questions about the writing process. Clearly, the process of ecphory, its activation and conversion, plays a crucial role in any stage of the writing process: Is pre-writing another way of cueing in ecphoric information for easier conversion into writing behavior? Is pre-writing actually a continuous, repetitive activation of ecphoric information which is then convertible into language by the semantic store? Before offering some possible answers to these questions, I will look briefly at two means researchers in the teaching of writing have recently used to look at the writing process as it is taking place—the protocol analysis and detailed

observation of writers at work. What can these studies tell us about the psychological behavior of writers? Is it possible to interpret the behavior of writers within the Tulving theoretical framework?

Researchers in the teaching of writing have tried to understand the writing process by observing writers at work. Their frustration at trying to understand a task that is going on in a place they can least observe is understandable. Pioneers in the current interest in cognitive processes, such as Linda Flowers and John Hayes, are depending upon protocol analysis as their means of understanding the complexities of the process. Yet this method of research is severely limited, as most astutely noted by Marilyn Cooper and Michael Holzman in a recent letter in College Composition and Communication (Feb., 1985)

Cooper and Holzman have a number of objections to the protocol method, as employed by Flowers and Hayes. Their objections center on the introspective nature of the protocol. They refer to Wilhelm Wundt, generally regarded as the originator of the method, who had highly trained "introspectors" attempt to trace their own thinking. However, as Cooper and Holzman note, there were two major difficulties with this method: "the technique was limited to static and relatively simple mental states and that the consideration of 'process' had to be put to one side, because mental processes are simply not additive--each new complexity changes the entire process or state of mind (p.289)." These two objections are crucial ones. My own experience while sitting at the typewriter, trying to shape my thoughts, tells me that I know really very little about what is going on--and it is not a matter of lacking training to understand it. Rather, it is the fact that the process is so complex--with part of it coming from the unconscious, as well--that to try to consciously capture it in a semantic

system seems almost absurd. Cooper and Holzman's observation, "It is, after all, rather an odd thing to talk about what you are thinking about while you are doing something," suggests an important cognitive limitation to this method. For in order to "speak about" something we must summon a "working memory"--that is, activate a process that <u>describes</u> current thought processes but is <u>not strictly equal</u> to conscious thought. Much of thought processing may occur below the level of awareness (Ellis & Hunt, p.78). Ultimately, one has to answer the question that Cooper and Holzman pose: "Do protocols capture a detailed record, or invent one?" by saying that it stands as an invention in itself--not a scientific record. That it is a useful window on the process is a dangerous assumption to make. It is a window with a restricted view of the whole scene; what it leaves out of the picture is necessary to understanding what it leaves in.

One must ask, can there be any "science" to our study? Another method of observation we have, limited as it too might be, is to record all observable behavior in the hope of finding distinguishable patterns.   In a probing article, "Understanding Composing" (1980), Sondra Perl describes the writing process in observable behavior--trying to create her theories by watching writers write.

Sondra Perl's "Felt Sense" and the Ecphoric Process

Perl begins her study by asking what basic patterns seem to occur during composing. One of her most emphatic and vital statements is that writing is not a linear process. We cannot as theorists break it up into three separate stages such as pre-writing, writing, and revision. She emphasizes the recursiveness of the writing process that "throughout the process of writing, writers return to substrands of the overall process, or

subroutines, and writers use these to keep the process moving forward (p.364)." She establishes first three recursive elements in writing:

1. The most visible recurring feature or backward movement involves reading little bits of discourse.

2. The second recurring feature is some key word or item called up by the topic. Writers consistently return to their notion of the topic throughout the writing process. Particularly when they are stuck, writers seem to use the topic or a key work in it as a way to get going again.

3. There is also a third backward movement in writing, one that is not so easy to document. It is not easy because the move, itself, cannot be immediately identified with words. In fact, the move is not to any words on the page nor to the topic but to feelings or non-verbalized perceptions that surround the words, or to what the words already present evoke in the writer. The move draws on sense experience, and it can be observed if one pays close attention to what happens when writers pause and seem to listen to or otherwise react to what is physically felt. The term used to describe this focus of the writers' attention is "felt sense." (p. 364)

Perl's study tries to answer the question: to what are these writers returning? She is able to identify the "what" in the first two elements stated above--bits of discourse and/or key words--and then uses a philosopher's term of "felt sense" to describe the third recursive element. When I first read her study, I was impressed by her ability to describe the complex and painful task of writing. Now I am impressed by how her description of the process so perfectly delineates the cognitive processes at the base of Tulving's episodic and semantic memory systems. Tulving offers us the possibility of answering not just "what" the writers are returning to, but "why" they return as well.

Let us look at the first two elements in Perl's analysis. I would like to rearrange their order, however. First, it seems to me that the key words or items consistently returned to serve as retrieval cues. They are the descriptions of descriptions which bring the retrieval mode into

attention. Once in retrieval mode they function to keep the system in an ecphoric stage where the cue and engram can then be remembered in a recollective experience, and then written about. Writers who read and reread cues are perhaps asking that the system offer a richer ecphoric arousal or that different propositional networks be activated; or perhaps the complexity of the ecphoric activation is too much for one arousal to fully convert, so arousal and conversion must take place more than once.

Regarding Perl's first observation that writers seem to reread bits of discourse in an attempt to get started again, I would like to suggest that what the observer is seeing is the process of converting ecphoric information that is activated into a sequential, restrained semantic network. The rereading of gists, it would seem to me, suggests the effort the rememberer has in converting episodic experience (rooted in time and space and sequential only in its relationship to the rememberer's sense of time) into sequential language and thought.

Let us now consider Perl's final and most intriguing observation: the third backward movement that is most difficult to describe and analyze--a movement to which she gives the quasi-philosophical term "felt sense." Perl's descriptive term was first described by Eugene Gendlin, a philosopher at the University of Chicago as:

> the soft underbelly of thought...a kind of bodily awareness...that can be used as a tool...a bodily awareness that...encompasses everything you feel and know about a given subject at a given time....It is felt in the body, yet it has meanings. It is body and mind before they are split apart. (Perl, 1980, p.365.)

Perl takes Gendlin's term and applies it to writing:

> When writers pause, when they go back and repeat key words, what they seem to be doing is waiting, paying attention to what is still vague and unclear. They are looking to their felt experience, and waiting for an image, a word, or a phrase to emerge that captures the sense they embody. (p.365)

Perl finally labels this process of attending, of calling up a felt sense, and of writing out of that place, the process of "retrospective structuring." "It is retrospective in that it begins with what is already there, inchoately, and brings whatever is there forward by using language in structured form. She further clarifies that "it seems as though a felt sense has within it may possible structures of forms. As we shape what we intend to say, we are further structuring our sense while correspondingly shaping our piece of writing (p.366)."

If we think back to Tulving's original statement about perception-- that much of what we experience is stored in memory images (or perceptual engrams not transformed into semantic knowledge; thus carefully avoiding the difficulty of deciding what kind of code those images are stored in)-- much of what lies available in the episodic system is unprocessed sense perceptions. He observes:

> occurrences of simple visual and auditory stimulus events, even if
> they are not readily identifiable and have no known purpose, can be
> registered in the system as sensory experience that occurred in a
> particular place at a particular time." (p.18)

Could Perl's "felt sense" be a part of the final conversion process, as what was known inchoately is brought forward into structure? It seems fair to me to say that what Perl describes from observation, Tulving theorizes to be a complex, non-linear process of Ecphory, as it stands for a state in which complex experiences are brought to activation, and then translated by the semantic store into sequentialized and organized communicable text.

The Ecphoric Process and the Search for Discovery in the Writing Process

If we accept Tulving's model of making meaning, we can see that it encompasses an infinite amount of variety in possible combinations of senses, meanings, and words. The creativity, or process of discovery, involved in the writing act--and so often emphasized by a writer such as Peter Elbow--has its origin in the ecphoric process, the quasi-conscious realm where stimulus and stored memory are synergized. This realm of discovery is aptly described by Barrett J. Mandel in his article "The Writer Writing Is Not at Home":

> I mean that the writer during the actual process of symbol-making is not in that most familiar of all places, his or her conscious mind. The writer does not answer the doorbell; writing is occurring, there is no one home thinking about it--at least not during the process itself. Of course, a moment before and the moment after, yes, consciousness is there. Also, the writer's consciousness is all too present as he wracks his brains, suffers, feels that all is hopeless, wants to rush from the desk. All of this is the familiar livingroom of consciousness--cramped and uncomfortable, but very safe in its familiarity. (1981, p. 370)

Of course, not all writers agree that writing is a process of discovery and a number of them would fell quite unsafe in Mr. Mandel's living room. Erwin Steinberg, for example, who edited with Lee Gregg, Cognitive Processes in Writing, rarely finds writing to be a process of discovery:

> ...writing is a process of discovery only when forced to write immediately....I seldom have a piece of writing that is significantly different from what I had in mind before I started to write it." (1980, p.159)

But we must see that Steinberg's approach is limited. Peter Elbow warns writers against employing this one extreme end of the spectrum of writing processes: "One extreme is the dangerous method of painstaking writing where you figure out your meaning entirely before you start and thereby maintain complete control while you write." Finally, Elbow advises that the painstaking method may ultimately save time and perplexity, but it

often leads to "dull thinking (1981, p.59)." There is danger in not listening to felt sense while writing--writing with discoveries is regenerative writing.

We may heed such cautionary voices as Carl Bereiter, who rightly rightly qualifies that the process of discovery depends on a number of factors, including the complexity of the task, the maturity and automaticity of the writer's skills, and finally the confidence and flexibility of the writer's mind (Gregg, 1980, p.81). However, at almost any level of writing ability the possibilities for discoveries of both a personal and an intellectual nature must be encouraged and designed for. For many writers the searching back for a "felt sense" or a listening to ecphoric information allows them to activate various schemes at different times--schemes that cannot be kept simultaneously active, especially in the immature writer. Many writers return to already written pieces of discourse in the form of gists or key words in order to once again activate the episodic and semantic memory store, searching for perhaps a new organizational or conceptual framework to express their "felt sense".

This painful process of discovery that has its rememberer returning repeatedly to the scene of the crime is captured in an apt image by Peter Elbow. He uses the metaphor of wrestling a powerful snake into a bottle: "It writhes and writhes and you can't get control over it. You have two main options, putting it aside and wrestling once more (1981, p.129). Elbow explains later that it is this wrestling that allows you to find "your center of gravity"--perhaps another description of felt sense? Here Elbow's experience and intuition corroborate Sondra Perl's observations of the recursive nature of writing, the need for retrospective restructuring. Peter Elbow uses another metaphor to describe the creativity or discovery

in the writing process: "The loop writing process comes from letting your topic slide half out of your mind and doing some initial bursts of directed raw writing. This gets more of your experience linked to your thinking (p.129)." I especially like Elbow's loop metaphor for two reasons: first of all, he does not take for granted the profound relationship between experience and thinking; and secondly, he recognizes the necessity for some means of activating that relationship--in this case "bursts of raw writing" or writing just to start writing. This heuristic is especially effective because it allows the writer to "retrospectively structure" (to use Perl's term) past experiences without the inhibition of looking for the correct form.

For basic or remedial writers, having the confidence to return to discover that felt sense is a crucial problem. In her article, "Basic Writing", the late Mina P. Shaughnessy discusses the difficulty of basic writers in keeping the concentration and confidence to "gain access to themselves through written words." She cites a number of writing teachers who stress some form of narrative or autobiographical writing as the "natural place to begin (p.151)." She states:

> It would be difficult to argue against the accumulation of experience in basic writing that suggests autobiographical content, expressive forms, and write-think or feel-think models of composing as most effective for beginning writers, even where the intent is to end up with formal academic writing. Certainly experience with children supports a method that encourages the development of both a personal and formal style of writing, with the personal coming first in the sequence of instruction. (p.151)

The experience and intuition of Peter Elbow, the theoretical discussions of discourse by both James L. Kinneavy (in a Theory of Discourse, as cited by Shaughnessy), and James Britton (in his article "The Composing Process and the Functions of Writing,") all emphasize the greater immediacy and fluency of personal writing based on autobiographical experience. If we look once again at Endel Tulving's model of the episodic system, we can draw some conclusions as to why both experience and theory make good sense

Autobiographical Writing: Drawing on the Subjectivity of the Episodic System

Consider again that one of the most crucial aspects of the episodic system is that each event in the domain is referred to a particular instant, date, or period in time—and the referent is the rememberer's personally experienced time. At the heart of the system is the "me-ness" of the experience. This subjectivity has three major consequences: first of all, it gives the rememberer (or more specifically for our discussion, the writer of autobiography) the feeling of "veridicality", or subjective truth. For the basic writer, the certainty of "knowing" the topic is frequently necessary both to begin and to complete writing tasks; secondly, the sense of "me-ness" gives the autobiographical writer a unique purpose—no other writer can relate the experience; thirdly, the "me-ness" is the most easily retrievable experience because such an experience has a three-dimensionality—a unique combination of time and space, with a certain place, certain time, beginning, and end. Because this three-dimensionality makes the memory both more complex and extensive, the final engram is encoded with a multiplicity of cues which facilitate its later

retrieval in Ecphory. It is to the advantage of basic writers to draw upon a system with highly elaborated engrams; they are less likely to become blocked or frustrated during the writing process, as their source of knowledge is readily available.

The autobiographical writing task involves two major types of discourse—narration and description. The sources for each type of discourse are found elaborately encoded in both time and space. The episodic experience itself has a narrative scheme, beginning with the start of the experience and concluding with its end, hence its obvious time frame. The episodic experience also encompasses a unique space which becomes the source for descriptive writing as the writer tries to re-create the dominantly visual perceptions of that unique experience. Thus, regardless of how those images are encoded in memory, they exist for the subjective remember to re-visualize in order to describe them. Ultimately, through narration and description the writer translates the episodic experience into a semantic artifact to share with an audience.

Autobiography is a "natural" source for writing. Because it is rooted in the private experience of the writer, it has pre-writing built into it. In this sense pre-writing begins from the day we are born. But that is not to trivialize other forms of pre-writing—it is simply that autobiographical writing is the most immediate, personal, and concrete source for writing. This is why it is a natural beginning for writers "even where the intent is to end up with formal academic writing," to use Mina Shaughnessy's words.

And so it seems that I am concluding in a sense where I began this investigation: rooted in experience and intuition. These final observations are already understood by experienced teachers of basic

writers. One writes a curriculum that has at its center what it is trying to educate: the individual learner. Understanding how the individual responds to experience, encoding it and later using ecphoric arousal to retrieve and reconsider it, however, gives even further support to experience and intuition. Writing teachers such as Roger Garrison have informed curricula which begin with personal writing and then, with gradually increasing complexity, move to more conceptual modes of discourse. Of course, the danger to guard against in this progression to more conceptual modes is forgetting the individual at the center of the episodic system. Endel Tulving's model of two systems for human processing offers the possibility of understanding why experience and intuition are good teachers within the humanistic tradition.

The Question of the Hemispheres: Introduction

When I first began teaching, I taught much as I had been taught,
emphasizing expository writing to the almost complete exclusion of other
forms of writing. However, going to graduate school in education in the
seventies shook me loose from this limited view of writing. I embraced
the curriculum reforms proposing to teach to the "whole child", the
"whole brain."   Recent conservative emphasis on "basic skills," has made
defensive those of us who emphasize the individual learner. We are once
again a minority. Textbooks of the eighties emphasize expository writing
to the virtual exclusion of all other forms, as investigated by James
Berlin and Robert Inkster in Freshman English News in 1980 (as cited by
Maxine Hairston in her illuminating article, "The Winds of Change: Thomas
Kuhn and the Revolution in the Teaching of Writing"). James Britton in
1982 makes a similar observation that from recent surveys undertaken in
America and other English-speaking countries, expressive writing is little
encouraged in most schools (p.129). Most of my colleagues in a rural,
regional high school teach much as my own high school teachers taught,
focusing on expository writing to the almost total exclusion of expressive
writing.   This paper is an investigation into that part of the human
psyche not addressed in most writing tasks in our schools--the creative
imagination. When we spoke about teaching to the "whole child" or the
"whole brain" in the seventies, we spoke about teaching to more than the
analytical capacities of human beings. We wanted to reach the source of
creativity: the imagining, synthesizing human being. Has the human being
changed so much in ten years that we can ignore this vital component now?

Early neurological research in the sixties led to the positing of a "split-brained" human being, with each hemisphere being responsible for different functions. Researchers associated language ability with the left hemisphere and non-verbal ability with the right. These investigations led to the modern-day myth that we are left-brained or right-brained people, and as such, have distinct learning styles and abilities. If this myth is actually a neurological reality, the way in which we encode experience, store it, and later retrieve it, has serious implications for the teaching of writing. Knowing how the two hemispheres function can give us a window on the cognitive processes underlying the writing task, while at the same time, help us to see that different writing tasks make different demands on human experience. Different modes of discourse ask that we make meaning out of experience in different ways. To focus on one mode to the exclusion of all others, as is the case in our current conservative revival, is to bind human experience and imagination.

Overview Of The Problem

In a recent article in Psychology Today, Jerre Levy, an experienced neurological researcher, warns modern readers not to be fooled by the once-popular notion that man has two separately functioning brains, each responsible for a different mode of perception and cognitive development. Levy's warning that the brain is not a two-moded system comes at the tail end of a flurry of research about the role of the hemispheres in learning , proliferating in courses and programs that propose to teach to the "whole brain." These new designs were aimed at re-activating the right hemisphere's ignored skills of visiospatial flexibility and oppositional

thought—its ability to synthesize and create. These are skills which were sacrificed to the left-hemisphere's superior ability to analyze, and to process language.   A casual reader of the magazine might read Levy's cautionary note little realizing that when Levy modestly states that she is a "researcher who has spent essentially her whole career studying how the two hemispheres relate to one another and to behavior" she speaks of roughly thirty years of experience beginning as a very young researcher working with Novel Prize Winner Roger W. Sperry, who studied split-brained patients, concluding that each cerebral hemisphere had its specialization—the right hemisphere being superior to the left in spatial tasks but mute and deficient in verbal tasks such as decoding complex syntax, short-term verbal memory and phonetic analysis. As early as 1968, Levy was exploring the different perceptual capacities in major and minor hemispheres—but she sought to understand the complexities between the two hemispheres, not reduce their information processing specialties to a simple oppositional construct. And yet, even Levy`s research indicated the way to an oppositional construct. She, along with Sperry in 1968, are quoted as saying that the minor hemisphere is:

> specialized for Gestalt perception, being primarily a synthesis
> in dealing with information input.   The major speaking hemisphere,
> in contrast, seems to operate in a more logical, analytic, computer-
> like fashion and the findings suggest that a possible reason
> for cerebral lateralization in man is basic incompatibility of
> language functions on the one hand and synthetic perceptual functions
> on the other. (Ornstein, p. 111)

It was only a short step from their cautious research to the educational generalization that we have been teaching primarily to the the left side of the brain and ignoring the important, albeit minor left hemisphere.

An example of this simplification that occurred in education can be found in Richard D. Konicek's 1975 article "Seeking Synergism for Man's Two-Hemisphere Brain." Konicek, then teaching at the University of Massachusetts, asks that the development of both hemispheres be given high priority in education. He concludes that "Sometimes listening to the other hemisphere is exciting, and sometimes it is frightening at first. But I strongly believe that it can and must be done (p.39)." He considers the left hemisphere to be the source of creativity and invention--relegating these two enormously complex cognitive abilities to one hemisphere alone. A more probing article by Susan V. Garrett, "Putting Our Whole Brain to Use: A Fresh Look at the Creative Process (1976)," ends with a similarly simplistic conclusion: "It is by using these languages (the techniques of the arts) in the classroom that the right brain can be educated and given a chance to develop its strengths (p.248)." However, as attractive as is to once again give "the arts" their due, we must ask if the cognitive resources do actually function separately. If, as Levy warns, it is inaccurate to talk about "educating the right brain" as if it were a separate processing system, to what extent can we talk about its supportive role in cognitive processing? We know that the fully grown adult who suffers lateral brain damage has predictable disabilities (Ornstein,1968;Corballis, 1983). To what extent can we say that certain cognitive functions are lateralized and how may we incorporate this knowledge into the classroom--or is its use in education indeed a "scientific shell game," as Howard Gardner terms it?

Evidence For Specialized Processing By The Cerebral Hemispheres

Nineteenth century discoveries by Paul Broca and Carl Wernicke that left-hemisphere lesions affected both the ability to speak and the ability to comprehend speech were the beginning of our relating cerebral dominance to the left hemisphere for the production and comprehension of language. For obvious reasons, the loss of language function both fascinated scientists while allowing them at the same time to easily measure its deficit. Until 1930 the right hemisphere was regarded as the minor hemisphere and dominant for nothing. Questions were not asked about non-linguistic functions until Weisenburg and McBride observed that patients with right-sided lesions were qualitatively unlike those with left-sided lesions (Levy, 1974).

In the twentieth century the most famous hemispheric studies were made by Roger Sperry(1960) and his students on a small group of epilepsy patients who were unresponsive to medication. Surgical operations were performed which severed the corpus callosum, the large connecting tissue between the two hemispheres. In effect, Sperry split the brain in half. The patients found that they had diminished epileptic seizures, and yet could in fact function in the outside world as normal people. However, in tests performed on visual half-fields, doctors did find a confirmation of hemispheric lateralization. As provocative as their research is, it has come under considerable question recently. The fact that these patients had suffered innumerable epileptic seizures before the operation, must distinguish their brain functions from those of the normal population. The brain is a remarkably flexible organ, able to re-organize and restructure itself, something it had quite likely had to do after repeated seizures. In a study by H.A. Whitaker and G.A. Ojeman, as referred to in C. Hardyck and R. Haapanen's "Educating Both Halves of the Brain:

Educational Breakthrough or Neuromythology?" the history of the

commissurotomy patients was investigated. They concluded that for a

majority of the patients the probability of major functional

reorganization was quite high since they had had the disorder since birth

or early childhood. To further confound Sperry's conclusions, it was

questioned whether the difficulty in estimating the extent of trauma or

damage was caused by the surgery itself. Whitaker and Ojeman point out

that most of the commissurotomy patients had retraction of the medial

surface of one hemisphere, thus running considerable risk of damage to the

opposite hemisphere.

Another difficulty with the study is the lack of distinction made

between passive and active language function. Perhaps, as Thomas

Blakeslee, in The Right Brain observes,"it is conceivable that the

language ability of the right brain is a passive one whose function is

primarily to make use of verbal information for clarifying the context of

other sensations (p.132)." In general, patients with right-hemisphere

damage may suffer from spatial deficiencies, inability to recognize faces,

drawing disabilities, emotional loss or imbalance, (Corballis and Beale,

1983),and most interestingly for English teachers, an inability to deal

with narratives, metaphors, jokes , morals, and other complex or subtle

aspects of language (Gardner, p.311).

Later research has suggested that the right brain does indeed have

some linguistic skills (Moscovitch, 1977). Moscovitch's interesting

article refers to a study by E. Zaidel in which right hemisphere language

is qualitatively different from the left. The right hemisphere processes

language in global holistic ways and relies much more heavily than the

left on contextual and semantic cues. "Thus the right hemisphere has

difficulty interpreting utterances or concepts that must be analyzed into

their constituent components if they are to be understood properly (p.

198)."   And so the issue is becoming increasingly more complicated.

Instead of a simple left-brain/right-brain dichotomy, we have different

types of language reception and production seemingly occurring in

different parts of the brain.   Howard Gardner summarizes the apparent

complexities and contradictions arising from the research:

> Pursuing their separate interests, neuroscientists have con-
> verged impressively in their views about the forte of each
> hemisphere. New findings emerge monthly, contradictory findings
> are being reconciled, and cognitive functioning of the brain is
> increasingly well understood. Indeed, precisely because
> scientists have been making   steady and sometimes even
> spectacular progress and because their own quest has such
> intrinsic interest, overblown claims about brain laterality are
> especially vexing.(p. 283)

As early as 1974, Michael Gazzaniga, one of the early Sperry

associates, re-considered brain laterality and the left-brains's seeming

dominance. His hypothesis is that there is a variety of activities

occurring in both left and right hemispheres crucial to everyday

interaction with the world.   He views the left hemisphere as the

necessary dominant sphere coordinating activities of the various neural

components, thus bringing unity into the system. So he considers the

function of cerebral dominance as a decision system. He offers support

for his thesis by focusing on learning disabilities arising from a weakly

lateralized cerebrum. He further supports his theory by noting that split-

brain monkeys or humans become confused when the two decision systems are

called upon to take action (p.377).   When the brain is considered as a

decision system, talking about listening to the right brain alone is

absurd. With, however, this note of extreme caution, one can say that

there are cerebral components peculiar to the right brain which qualitatively affect the performance of the whole brain.

The Appositional Mind

Keeping this cautionary note in mind, consider now another theoretical approach to the study of split-brained research by Joseph E. Bogen, who, like Gazzaniga, is a neurologist with years of experience studying split-brained patients. Again building on the complementary functioning of the two sides of the brain , Bogen poses in his article "The Other Side of the Brain: An Appositional Mind" (1973) complementary modes of consciousness. He first establishes that there are significant right hemisphere capacities: language in descriptive phrases, similes, and metaphorical expressions are available to patients suffering from left-brain damage. Secondly, injuries to the right hemisphere produce certain existential, rather than phonetic or semantic, errors. Thirdly, certain kinds of verbal activity (poetry) may appear subsequent to left-hemisphere lesions, to choose just a few of the hemisphere's capacities. Bogen theorizes that the right hemisphere involves a qualitatively different interaction with experience. Whereas he characterizes the left brain as "propositional", meaning that the distinguishing feature of the major hemisphere is that it uses words in a sequence, words referring to one another in a particular manner so that each modifies the meaning of the other (p.108), he terms the right brain "appositional". This term implies a capacity for apposing or comparing of "perceptions, schemas, engrams, etc., but in addition has the virtue that it implies very little else." In redefining these two modes of thought Bogen seeks to give equipotential roles to both hemispheres. The appositional mind functions in a

visuospatial realm, a realm characterized by being synthetic, concrete, complex, and disorderly. It is an easy step from this formulation to the idea that the right hemisphere is the more creative hemisphere as well.

Setting aside for the moment discussion of the elusive concept of creativity, and granting the attractiveness of the idea of an appositional mind, consider some more recent evidence suggesting that equipotentiality of the hemispheres is not likely: Marcel Conspiring and Merrill Hiscock (1977) in studying asymmetries in infants concluded that even in infancy humans have a greater propensity to respond to a phoneneme transition on the right-ear channel during dichotic presentation of speech sounds (p.187). Because the right-ear channel is the source of hearing for the opposite hemisphere, the left hemisphere is the hemisphere being activated. Thus they conclude that every time speech occurs or a verbal mental set is adopted, the left hemisphere is activated and enriched with verbal knowledge. They do accept the possibility that initially both hemispheres are not significantly different in their ability to become neuronally organized to receive and produce language. From infancy, the development toward increasing lateralization proceeds. When, for instance, a situation occurs in which it is necessary for the right hemisphere to mediate language recovery following early left-hemisphere damage, it is right hemisphere plasticity, rather than hemispheric equipotentiality, which is responsible. A study by C. Netley (1977) concludes that not only is one hemisphere more neurally developed to mediate language function, but that there is a genetic predisposition governing the programming of the hemispheres. Morris Moscovitch theorizes further in his article "Lateralization and Cognitive Development" (1977) that it is the left hemisphere which actively suppresses the linguistic performance of the

right hemisphere via interhemispheric pathways. That is, through the neurological connections of the hemispheres, including the dominant group of nerve fibers, the corpus callosum, the right hemisphere is inhibited in its language performance. He further speculates that this suppression may lead not only to the suppression of linguistic development in the right hemisphere, but also to the differentiation of structures on the right from those potentially linguistic in function to those which are primarily nonlinguistic. He then discusses the nature of right-hemispheric language. We can see in the following description, that regardless of why or how the neurological development of right hemisphere is qualitatively different from the left hemisphere, different it most certainly is.   Indeed, what Moscovitch describes is an appositional brain, which if not dignified by power equal to the propositional mind, has, indisputably, a power all its own: Citing Erin Zaidel's 1973 study, he concludes that the right hemisphere processes language in a global, holistic way, relying much more heavily than the left on contextual and semantic cues; thus, the right hemisphere has difficulty interpreting utterances or concepts that must be analyzed into their constituent components if they are to be understood properly (p. 199). Moscovitch raises the question if this right hemisphere tendency is the result of a right-hemisphere innate structure, or due to the domination by the left hemisphere.   He offers one fascinating study of Genie, a girl who had been raised in total isolation from about 20 months until she was almost 14-years old. In his study of the mind, The Universe Within ,Howard Hunt explains that Genie had been locked away by her parents all her life, was discovered at age thirteen by Los Angeles Authorities some years ago. He describes her as mute, incontinent, crawling on all fours, and virtually unable to understand anything said to

her (p.228). In effect, she was a twentieth century wild child, who at the age of thirteen was introduced to language for the first time. Genie has been the focus of considerable attention in a number of other studies of hemisphericity, such as The Ambivalent Mind and Right Brain, because she offered the unique opportunity to study a human being who had developed in a world without human contact and language. One would expect that because Genie was not exposed to language development the relationship of the hemispheres would not be usual: the left brain would not exert the usual neurological dominance over the right brain. If this expectation were the case, her language development, occurring as it must in hemispheres which may even have reversed the usual order of dominance, would reflect a right-brained disposition. Moscovitch observes that one of the most striking developments was that her subsequent linguistic development at the age of 14 was similar to that of a normal child in many respects, but very different in others: "Only after a few months of exposure to the real world, her general cognitive skills far exceeded her verbal skills, and within the domain of verbal skills, her vocabulary was much larger than that of children whose syntactic development was comparable to hers (p. 201)." Her language use was holistic, responding more directly to the concrete world around her--while the propositional mind was slower to develop syntax and sequential language. Genie's case suggests that the right hemisphere does function in a holistic, gestalt manner, which when left to develop without the dominance of a propositional left hemisphere, does have qualitatively different language development. What then may one conclude about hemispheric equipotentiality? Let us grant that there does indeed exist an appositional mind, which functions as a vital complementary system to the

propositional mind. Both function within a decision system that

coordinates their varying tasks, so that we may function as a whole. So,

although one may not grant the appositional mind equipotentiality except

possibly at birth, the right hemisphere does have distinct processing

modes, and works in conjunction with the left hemisphere.

Hemisphericity Seen As A Possible Indication Of A Dual-coding System

The visuo-spatial nature of the right hemisphere has led to

inquiries about the way the individual both processes and encodes

experience in the right hemisphere. Does the distinction of two

hemispheres indicate separate coding strategies? The dual code theory

proposes that experience is recorded in two separate but interacting

systems--the verbal code , involving the description of an event or

object, and the imaginal code, involving the visualizing of an object or

event.   It is quite tempting to see the hemispheres as reflecting this

duality: the left brain, or propositional mind, encoding experience in

semantic codes; the right brain, or appositional mind, encoding experience

in visual codes.   The difficulty here arises when one fails to

distinguish between what type of experience is being encoded, and the

encoding system itself. As mentioned previously, evidence that experience

is processed in two different systems, and perhaps stored separately as

well, does not necessarily indicate that the coding itself is not the

same. Just as I found in my previous study of cognitive coding, a more

educationally useful way to view the involvement of the hemispheres in

coding experience can be found in Endel Tulving's heuristic dividing of

human memory into two systems.

Tulving's theory appears to be supported by hemispheric research. Most especially, his memory system parallels the propositional/appositional dichotomy of Bogen.

Possible Implication Of Hemisphericity In Endel Tulving's Episodic/Semantic Distinction

Tulving divides memory into two systems--the episodic and semantic system. The episodic memory receives and stores information about temporally dated events or episodes. Events in episodic memory are stored in terms of their perceptible properties. It is human autobiographical memory--or memory with record, as Jerome Bruner defines it. All perceptual experience is stored in the episodic memory system, in a three-dimensional space, with the rememberer at the heart of the system. Thus the episodic system involves the sense of "consciousness" at the heart of its interaction with the world. The semantic system, on the other hand, is a "mental thesaurus, organized knowledge that a person possesses about words and other verbal symbols, their meaning and referents,...algorithms, formulas, rules, concepts, and relations (Tulving, p.21)." This is Jerome Bruner's memory without record.

Tulving assures his reader that the systems do not function separately but interact as the human being interacts with the world. Nonetheless, one might ask if there are any conditions under which an individual might manifest one mode more strongly than the other. Split-brain patients may provide some insight into this possibility Can we assume that patients with hemisphere damage will show predictable deficits in their interaction with the environment?

It has been well-documented that what would constitute Tulving's semantic system--that mental thesaurus of words, verbal symbols, and their meanings--is severely affected by left-brain damage (Corballis, 1980; Domangue, 1984, Blakeslee, 1980).   Recent studies have indicated that the right-hemisphere too has rudimentary language skills (Corballis, 1980), possibly learned early in life before the complete dominance of the left-brain was established, when language was coded in both hemispheres. However, the full complexities of right-hemisphere function are not understood. When the right hemisphere is surgically removed in an adult, the change in the patient may be complex and subtle. Thomas Blakeslee has observed that the removal of the right hemisphere leaves language basically unimpaired, but computerlike.   Although the patient may insist that he is normal, his understanding of inflection, metaphor, and emotional tone is considerably reduced. And what is most important for our purposes as educators, the patient may lose personality, insight, imagination and initiative (p.153).

Howard Gardner confirms this observation in his book The Shattered Mind (as cited in Thomas Blakeslee's The Right Brain) as he observes that the relationship between the patient's capacity to express himself in language and his knowledge of the world is impaired. "He resembles a kind of language machine." There seems to be, as well, a reduced emotional capability in the patient with right hemisphere damage or removal. Thomas Blakeslee speculates in The Right Brain that the reason for the different degrees of emotional depth lies in their difference in organizations. He proposes that the right brain reacts immediately to sensory experience in a more primitive and direct way, so that the feelings retain their immediateness and power. However, the left

brain interprets sensory inputs in words, and thus the sense inputs lose much of their emotional value. He concludes that the dichotomy is thus "a difference between a cold intellectual approach and a 'gut level' approach." (p.143) Blakeslee's interpretation sounds remarkably like Endel Tulving's distinction between the semantic and episodic systems. Later in his theoretical discussion, Blakeslee offers further evidence of right-hemisphere involvement in emotional states of the patient. He cites an example of a forty-seven-year-old man who had his left lobe removed. His remaining speech was predominantly emotional;, however, his emotional responses and well-balanced personality remained as they had been before the operation. The right hemisphere is clearly vitally involved with the emotional life of the individual, further confirmation of Tulving's episodic/semantic distinction, as his episodic system involves an important affective component,which the semantic system lacks. Personal experiences, because they are often "emotional", would appear to be a part of right hemisphere knowledge.

Corballis and Beale qualify the types of emotion most likely to be disrupted by hemispheric damage. They believe that the right hemisphere might be the more critically involved in emotion, or at least in the more negative emotions such as depression, anxiety, and guilt. (p. 163) Howard Gardner in his book Art, Mind and Brain (1982) offers the notable example of Associate Justice William O. Douglas' experience with a right hemispheric stroke. Although people initially regarded him as normal after his apparent recovery, it became increasingly clear that he was too impaired to resume his duties on the bench. Contrary to his previous good-nature and rational behavior, he became paranoid, aggressive, and irrational. This emotional change was paralleled by an intellectual

change, for not only was his behavior bizarre and erratic, his language
became fluent, but aimless. He was unable to understand the progress of
a complicated trial or to come to logical conclusions. Apparently, without
the full power of the right hemisphere making meaning out of language,
whether it be in the form of a lawsuit, narrative, joke, or metaphor,the
individual is severely impaired. Although there has been some research
at Brandeis University (Wingfield, Milstein, and Blumberg, 1984) showing
that the left brain functions more effectively in narrative recall, it is
important to emphasize that they were measuring the ability of the
patient to remember details, not understand the meaning of the story. It
is the right brain which seems to be clearly implicated in the process of
making sense out of the whole narrative, even if it depends on the left
brain to remember the discrete details of the experience. Howard Gardner
studied stroke patients who have suffered major injuries to the right
hemisphere and notes that while their linguistic capacities seem normal,
they are literal-minded talking robots or "language machines."

Viewing these findings from a Tulvian viewpoint, one could say that
their semantic system has remained intact, but the system that makes sense
out of experience--the episodic system--is clearly harmed. These
observations point to a separate storing system for episodic information
and semantic information--a finding corroborated by Hermann and Mclaughlin
(as cited in Tulving,1983). Identifying these storage systems, however,
is a complicated and increasingly complex problem. Recently, the role of
the hippocampus in storing experience has led to questioning the validity
of the simple left-right dichotomy. In an especially provocative book,
Brain and Psyche: The Biology of the Unconscious (1985), Jonathan Winson
discusses the example of H.M. who suffered from severe epilepsy and

underwent surgical removal of the amygdala (a brain nucleus or assembly of
cells lying immediately in front of the hippocampus, a bilateral,
elongated, sausage-like structure tucked into the inner wall of the
temporal cortex), almost all of his hippocampus, and limited areas of
associated neocortex on both sides of the brain. As a result of the
operation, H.M. has no memory for new events, although he can learn new
tasks that depend on the acquisition of new information. He has no memory
either for the three years of experience before his operation, but can
remember events from his life previous to those three years. After lengthy
consideration of H.M.'s case and other corroborating evidence, Winson
conservatively concludes that the hippocampus plays at least a permissive
role in the three-year memory-forming process--that is, the structure
makes some contribution, the release of a brain hormone or the like,
without which the process cannot occur (p.160). There would seem to be as
well, a split between procedural memory and memory of events. The
processing of autobiographical memory is a three-year process triggered or
controlled in some way by the hippocampus, at the conclusion of which
memory is stored somewhere else in the brain where it is independent of
the hippocampus as far as recall is concerned. The hippocampus too is
intimately involved in the emotion of an event. It lies at the beginning
of the limbic system, which is neither directly sensory nor motor but
constitutes a central core processing system of the brain that deals with
information derived from events, memories of events, and emotional
associations to these events (p.32). As both the hippocampus and the
amygdala lying immediately in front of it are bilateral structures, a
simple left-brain dichotomy of function seems too simple an answer, for

the processing would appear to be bilateral--even if the storage is possibly separate.

One must ask now what the implications of this recent research have for Tulving's model of episodic/semantic memory. It would seem that the less complex model of two memory systems responsible for processing and storing experience along hemispheric lines is suggestive more of how the information is stored rather than how it is processed. In this respect we can say that Tulving's model does have the heuristic benefits he professes. Experience does seem to separate into the episodic/semantic distinction, at least in so far as it is stored in the brain.

However, what one can say with confidence is that there does seem to be in the normal human being a hierarchical functioning at some deeper central structures that coordinates these substructures so that the human being can function as one conscious individual. The complexity of the interaction of the human brain makes it almost impossible to apportion precise roles along hemispheric lines--Sperry's split-consciousness seems again only part of the story. As D.M. MacKay states in "Conscious Agency with Unsplit and Split Brains"(1980), obviously, the surgeon splitting the corpus callosum to relieve an epileptic patient leaves intact as many central brain structures as possible--and that would include the most basic and dominant deeper central structures of the brain.

When we consider the importance of the episodic system to the functioning of both language and the individual's way of making meaning out of existence, we can see that it is at least as important as the semantic system in man's everyday activities. It is for this reason, that the right hemisphere must be considered with the importance that E. Bogen wants to bestow on it with the term "appositional mind." Even if we

accept the complexity of the brain and our fundamental ignorance about its interacting system, we can see that the right hemisphere has an equipotentiality which shouldn't be ignored.

A legitimate question to be raised now, after exploring what may seem material only remotely related to the writing process and pre-writing specifically, is how does the appositional mind function in the writing process? What role does it play in pre-writing and during the writing process itself. The question is complex, and admittedly for this writer, too complex to offer any conclusive answer. Nonetheless, a few basic assumptions can help point the way to understanding at least some of the answer. The first assumption is basic, and, perhaps for some teachers of writing, the foundation of any writing curriculum: writing is a creative act. It is one of the highest forms of problem solving, requiring not only analytical abilities, but imagination and flexibility, as well. And yet it is my contention that different types of writing demand different uses of our experience stored in our memory systems. When talking about creativity in writing it is important to realize that a task may draw more heavily on one source of experience than another. Thus, creativity may depend on the accessibility and fluency of a memory system. The question to ask now is to what extent is creativity a province of the right hemisphere?

Creativity And The Appositional Brain

One of the first difficulties in talking about creativity is in trying to define it. Allen Rothenberg posits in his book The Emerging Goddess(1979) requirements for creativity, requirements which could lead us to ask whether or not we can indeed talk about creative potential in every human being: the creative process consists of a series of thoughts, acts, and functions that result in a product with both newness and positive value. He rejects as too subjective and unverifiable the seventies revolution in America and its educational emphasis on the creative potential in everyone—"intersubjective validity," as he refers to it. In order to avoid this complex and volatile issue, I would like to take the position that there is the possibility in every writer to arrive at a new, unique, and useful artifact which, if not necessarily recognized as valuable to the society at large, is recognized as valuable and unique in the small society of the classroom. This definition may seem too all-encompassing, but I believe that individual creativity is both personal and relative. As teachers, we can design for our student experiences which encourage personal creativity.

The most obvious application of what we know about right hemisphere skills is in the visual arts. Betty Edwards book, Drawing on The Right Side Of the Brain (1979) and Robert McKim's Experiences in Visual Thinking (1972) emphasize the importance of visual imagery in creativity. They offer exercises designed to help individuals become more creative by re-seeing everyday experience, and, by using concrete representation of the mental images excited, these individuals are led rapidly to new visual associations. Their programs are designed to allow individuals to re-discover their ability to experience the world with the sense of play and visual excitement they lost as they developed an increasingly verbal and

conceptual ability. While these programs can bear obvious fruit in the areas of the visual arts, it is far more difficult to measure their possible affects on the writing process. What role can a nonverbal, concrete, holistic right brain play in the writing process--a process so clearly dependent upon the left brain's sequential, logical, verbal command? The most obvious answer is that in any piece of good writing both brains must be working. The logical, semantic role interprets and evaluates the holistic, imagistic functionings of the episodic role. If we one again look at Tulving's heuristic distinction between left and right hemispheres and their relative specialties, we can see why the two cannot act separately: the episodic experience is dependent on the semantic system for its retrieval. This fact is most obviously seen in the writing act, an act which begins with the writer standing at the center of his own thoughts and feelings with the sense that they begin with him. Gordon Rohman, in an influential essay written in 1965, analyzed this situation: the writer at this point is faced with two contexts to discover: one the general knowledge or worldly information context, and the second the personal context. As James Moffett so eloquently points out in The Universe of Discourse (1968), writing tasks vary in their emphasis on the two contexts. Children as they learn to write begin by first exploring the personal, experiential world, as they try to understand their personal experience through language. When, however, the relationship of the speaker and listener moves from being one in the same, the nature of the discourse and the discovery has to change. And as the distance increases, moving from the concrete to the increasingly abstract, the emphasis moves from the I-me to the I-it relation (p.33). In personal narrative, journal, or autobiographical writing the writer stands quite

clearly in the episodic system, using the semantic system to clarify and communicate what he sees and feels in the I-me world. Thus both affect and experience are encoded within this system in a holistic, spatial, imagistic mode. Children begin thinking here. And they begin writing here. It has even been said that primitive man stayed here and thus could retain the wonderment of continually responding to his sensory environment (Durio, 1975). Jerome Bruner has termed this stage in child development as "iconic" and a predictable stage in young children before language maturity appears. And yet the term "stage" suggests that like the first stage engine of a rocket it should be jettisoned in order to attain higher levels of thinking. This attitude certainly seems to be the bias of our school system, and reflects the inflexibility of our society. However, the analogy is a false one, for in any creative act one must retain--no, even nourish--the first, immediate response to experience. It is in the imagistic, non-rational, spatial world of the right hemisphere or episodic experience that man can find the flexibility and iconic representations necessary for the creative act.

Experiential Learning: Iconicity, Affective States, and Creativity

        In his book The Thread of Life (1984), Richard Wolheim distinguishes between two types of remembering in the iconic mental state of imagination: "acentred event-memory," which is when one is involved in an event but does not play a major role in it--that is one doesn't figure into the event;   a second type of remembering is called "centred event-memory," which is when one not only remembers the event, but plays a central, egocentric role in it. This second centred event-memory is distinguished by its affective aspect; it touches the heart, not just the

head. And for this reason experiential memory is a cognitive component distinct from all others. Centred event-memory is a philosopher's equivalent of Tulving's episodic memory, as it is concrete, personal, and imagistic. It is also the appositional mind of Bogen, as it is the source of emotion, and understanding, or how we make meaning out of experience. If we think back to the case of Genie, who did not learn to use language until she was fourteen, but once she did it was holistic, reflecting a direct response to the concrete world around her, we see someone whose perceptions and experience were not automatically translated into categories, schema, or concepts. Her world representation must have been organized around her fresh, egocentric response to experience. Unlike many of us for whom words are our primary organizational mode, Genie responded from centred event-memory where images directly presented by the senses and images(which are interiorized experiences of sight, sound, movement, touch, smell, and taste) are most directly encoded. Her language reflected her perceptions. Genie's way of relating to the world is suggestive of James Britton's language of "spectator", who, unlike the "participant" eager to get things done with language, uses language instead to "be and become." James Britton, an English educator and theorist whose influence was first felt across the Atlantic in the sixties, can help us to understand the varied ways we use language to reflect our internal sense of meaning.

Britton's Transactional/Spectator Continuum and Its Implications for the
Teaching of Writing

     James Britton observes that all writing develops as speech develops,
moving from the egocentric world of expressive speech to the public world
of transactional speech. Writing begins as written down speech used
mainly to express the reality the child sees--not to communicate to
someone else. However, as education proceeds, expressive writing may move
in one of two ways: to transactional writing which is intended to fulfill
the role of participant, that is in Britton's terms, the language for
getting things done; and to poetic writing which is intended to fulfill
the role of spectator. (Britton's model here, parallels James Moffett's
observation of the increasing distance between the speaker and listener.)
In Britton's spectator role, language reflects the pattern or form of
experience and tries to come to terms with it (p.118). At the center of
language of the spectator, is the individual attempting to express a
relationship with the world. In this sense, language is attempting to
communicate both cognition and affect; it is not used simply to organize
representation of the world, but to communicate as well a personal
response to the world. The highest form of this communication is found in
art, where it becomes a highly organized expression of both affective and
cognitive responses. Many "art-like" responses seen especially in young
children and primitives, can, according to Britton, share major aspects of
great art in that they are holistic, intuitive, organic perception of an
experience (p.215). The creative individual has retained the power and
need to return to this center of experience, listen to it, and ultimately,
translate it for spectators to experience as well.

It is important to emphasize that both transactional and poetic
writing begin at the center of the writer--at the expressive, personal,
subjective center. However, transactional writing requires that one move
away from the affective and intuitive components of the psyche, whereas
poetic writing requires an embracing of them in order to communicate.
This difference is crucial. Obviously, one must become skilled in a world
which requires one to get things done; but what happens to the creative
center of the individual when getting things done is all that is being
taught? Britton is very careful to emphasize that the movement from
expressive to transactional writing, although being a natural part of a
child's increasing ability to conceptualize and analyze experience, must
be gradual enough "to ensure that 'the self' is not lost on the way...as
it provides the un-seen point from which all is viewed; there can be no
other way of writing quite impersonally and yet with coherence and
vitality (p.179)."

Developing a writing program K-12 which gradually moves children to
higher levels of transactional writing is a necessity, certainly. But of
importance too is the move from expressive to poetic, for what better way
is there to ensure that the self remains a vital force in the writing act
than to encourage the exploration and celebration of the self in poetic
writing? The frequent complaint by teachers of older grammar school
students that they lose their earlier creativity, and the observation by
those same teachers that children enjoy writing less as they grow up in an
educational institution can be attributed to the same phenomenon--the
decreasing use of emotion and intuition in writing tasks. For many
students the 'self' does indeed get lost along the way and thus the
vitality is gone from both their writing and their interest in writing.

<u>Pre-writing: Confidence, Activation, Visualization, and Exploration</u>

I realize that this heading sounds like a return to the "romantic radicalism" of the period Allan Glatthorn, in his introductory essay of <u>A Guide for Developing an English Curriculum for the Eighties</u> (1980), assigns to English curriculum development in 1968-1974. But that was my intention. In only mildly ironic tones, Glatthorn discusses this period:

> Rhetoric of the time seemed to couple a romantic Rousseauan view of the child with a radical critique of the schools and the society....At such a time people began turning inward, worrying about their deeper feelings and 'true selves'. (p.8)

He continues to examine the naivete of the American educators who listened to the British (I suspect that Glatthorn has James Britton in mind, although he does not mention him by name) who focused on child-centered curriculum and concern for the language of the child. Glatthorn, who calls our present educational period of conservative retrenching, "privatistic conservatism," easily dismisses the theoretical contributions of James Moffett, James Britton, and Jerome Bruner as "romantics." By using such charged terms it is easy to ignore the appropriateness of these theorists in the new light of recent cognitive studies. Scientists looking into the function of the brain find increasing indications that the interaction between the two hemispheres, while being complex, is also to some extent lateralized along hemispheric lines. The appositional mind, with its emphasis on gestalt perception, holistic and visual memory, and emotional subjectivity is indeed to be taken into account in educational curriculum. The romantic forces in the sixties and seventies sought to re-introduce the "self" by emphasizing its primacy in any educational endeavor. In doing so, they were attempting to teach to the "whole

brain." James Britton's request for more spectator writing in the academic classroom (a request made as recently as 1982 in Prospect and Retrospect) is valid both humanistically and scientifically; in a convincing way, he is asking that we put the whole brain to work in the writing classroom. Acting on his request would entail changes in both the nature of the assignments and the nature of the pre-writing experience for the assignments.

Look once again at the definition of pre-writing offered by Gordon Rohman (another romantic!): "pre-writing we defined as the stage of discovery in the writing process when a person assimilates his 'subject' to himself." As Rohman observes, this process is an internal one and involves the writer in a "groping" process, as he or she tries to find out what to say. Groping involves rearranging patterns and experience into a unique combination of words. I believe, however, that we can say even more about the unobservable stage of discovery. It begins, first of all, with an attitude—an affective aspect—that is a part of the writer's everyday interaction with any experience. A writer has to want to grope in order for the process to be successfully aroused. One can discuss the writing process as if it were a purely cognitive function devoid of temperament and will, but that makes the process only easier to talk about, not more accurately analyzed. The writing process begins in the appositional mind, rooted in the "self". Gordon Rohman discusses the importance of journal writing as a pre-writing activity, where writers can "collect" themselves. Daily writing from the self encourages the writer to have the confidence to explore his or her unique relationship with the world. The daily writing frees one up for discovery.

Discovery, nonetheless, does not come so easily for the adolescent writer whose experience has been limited to writing formula essays and book reports since leaving grammar school. I have to disagree with a number of writing theorists who believe that the adolescent writer knows what to write about and can write about it. The adolescent in a typical high school today--including the one I have worked in for fourteen years-- has been trained almost exclusively in transactional writing. The form of expressive writing she or he might most typically have been exposed to is the personal essay. However, the self that should make this kind of writing alive is lost to the dullness and routinization of these writing tasks. How can one help adolescent writers to use writing once again as a means of exploring both their inner and outer worlds, as they used it in the expressive writing of childhood?

To Awaken The Inner Eye: Intuition And Imagination In The Writing Classroom

The focus of a recent book by Nel Noddings and Paul J. Shore of Stanford University, Awakening the Inner Eye: Intuition In Education, is quite clear from its title. In our narrow world of "privatistic conservatism," this 1984 publication is a brave book by two theorists who straddle the cross-disciplinary boundaries of philosophy, psychology, and education. Central to their position is a concern with the appositional mind, although they do not designate it as such--rather, they call it the "intuitive mind." In their discussion of intuition, they make extensive use of gestaltist concepts, and stress the relationship between intuition and "seeing," the importance of concrete experience, and the "Will" of the individual at the center of this dynamic interaction. They define the

territory they are exploring: "we explore...the connection between our individual quest for meaning and our immediate apprehensions" (p.42) Although they understand that intuition does not function alone, but rather functions in a complex relationship with analytical and conceptual reasoning (just as we know that both hemispheres function in complex interaction), they emphasize that component of human perception activated as the organism interacts with the concrete world. In effect, what they ask educators to reconsider is the role of the appositional mind in any learning task. They emphasize that in educational experiences the goal for the student should not be any mechanical application of a procedure, nor any glib response, but a "Eureka!" response: "I see! So that's it ! Now I know!" (p.103) Their interest is in encouraging intuitive education through exercises involving doing and looking.

In more general terms one might term a "doing and looking" form of learning as experiential learning or, as Robert Shafer (1983) terms it, "creative enquiry." Stephen Judy, among others, includes almost any kind of writing in his definition of the experiential approach, involving creative as well as expository and academic modes. He is, however, careful to separate experiential writing from "stimulus" writing, where "young people are 'charged up' through the use of clever or gimmicky activities, then set loose to write" (p.38). He opposes "priming" by superficial means to stimulate student writing. I understand his reservations--no one wants to be accused of promoting superficial writing-- and yet it seems short-sighted to me not to accept that we can add significant experiences to our students' education that are carefully designed to awaken the inner eye. Noddings and Shore emphasize the

importance of repeated contact with the initial experience:

> Now it is clear that subjects operating in an intuitive mode are
> using concepts. They must in order to communicate. But they
> return again and again to the object. They allow contact with
> the object to direct their thought, whereas analytic thinkers
> are directed by concepts they have attached, to the object.   )
> (p.70)

Intuition involves sensory encounter, subjective response, and a

willingness to try to understand the experience. We can consider this in

Endel Tulving's terms "ecphoric arousal," as the senses respond to

experience, assimilating and accommodating the new information. Noddings

and Shore consider this initial stage to be a monitoring, scanning

function--looking at structures and for structures, not imposing them. It

is an incubational process for which terms like "watch," "listen,"

"grasped," "moved" have been used. Janet Emig has called it "felt sense"

and Peter Elbow "center of gravity." A writing curriculum can be

designed to stimulate an intuitive response to experience. Such a writing

curriculum emphasizes holistic pictures, visual displays, and hands-on

experiences. It would offer new experiences with language, encouraging

writers to play with words. Experimentation encourages writers to play,

re-see, re-experience both language and the world around them--when seen

in these terms, such stimuli can hardly be considered superficial. What

they do is establish a pre-writing atmosphere which encourages writing

in Britton's spectator mode. Although such activities obviously must work

in conjunction with more analytical modes of writing, they should not be

ignored as they are now in conservative English classrooms. After all,

what is more basic than the "self" at the center of the appositional

mind? Indeed, we must educate all the mind.

CHAPTER THREE

DESIGN OF THE STUDY

The design of this study was based on the acknowledgement that
writing is a complex, cognitive task dependent on both conscious and
unconscious processes. Each writing act is unique both in dynamics and
context. That is, no two writers approach the same task with identical
experience and attitude. The individual writer depends exclusively on the
complex working of his or her memory system to transform the writing
assignment into linguistic episodes recorded on paper. The case-study
design of this investigation emphasizes the individuality of the writing
act.   A number of researchers have pioneered this method of research,
most notably Janet Emig (1971) and Sondra Perl (1979), and it has also been
used successfully by recent researchers working in the field (Waitkus,
1982; Penniman, 1985).

There are a number of methodologies one could employ when using the
case-study method of investigation.   Sondra Perl bases her manual, "Coding
the Composing Process: A Guide for Teachers and Researchers" (1984) on
composing aloud protocols. She defends this controversial methodology by
noting that it is the only method researchers have to glimpse the writing
process as it is occurring; it is the researcher's only window into the
writing process as it is happening. However, Perl is very careful to
acknowledge the limitations of this method: primarily, the act of
composing aloud changes the nature of the writing process because it
changes the private writing act into a public one, and in so doing places
additional constraints on the writer; nor is what one hears a full view of
the composing process, as only a fraction of all that is occurring is

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understood and translated. Although Perl's method had much to recommend it in that the method attempts to systematize a complex and varied process, I had serious doubts about the "window" that it professed to offer on the writing process.   In order to "speak about" something we must summon a "working memory"--that is, activate a process that describes current thought processes but is not strictly equal to conscious thought. Because so much of thought processing occurs below the level of awareness, this window offers a misleading view of the whole scene. For these reasons the composing aloud protocol method was rejected as a possible methodology, as was any methodology which fundamentally affects the process under study. This rejection included, as well, the spontaneous interview where the writer is subject to questions from the interviewer at any point in the process. Changes in the process were measured only after the process had been completed by examining the products of the process.

The window I opened on to the process, viewed it only in retrospect, since this method seemed the only way to avoid fundamentally changing the individual writing process. Background interviews and attitude measurements provided the context for the individual writing act, and in-depth analysis of the products of the writing process provided the data for understanding the multiple variables at play in the writing process.

Assumptions and Research Questions

The major assumption on which this investigation rested was that the writing act is a complex, cognitive task involving the individual writer's complete nervous system. The writing act does not simply engage the "intellect" or the generalizing and hypothesizing abilities of the writer,

but the imaginative faculties as well. It is a fallacy to distinguish between intellect and imagination, and yet the almost exclusive teaching of expository writing in our high schools does, in effect, do just that. The tradition of teaching expository writing exclusively in our high schools ignores the "whole person" engaged in the writing process. The writer must be viewed as a whole system, at whose center lies a store-house of memories (experience) and an emotional network filtering that experience.

When this assumption informs curricula other assumptions follow: that writing is a natural process in that it depends upon the growth of the individual writer; that there is a developmental progression in writing ability; that most persons want to write and can learn how to write; that our curricula should reflect this natural process.

The following research questions were raised about the specific behavior of ninth graders who had made an initially unsuccessful start in the academic writing they were sure to be asked to do for the next four years of high school.

(1) Do ikonic symbols (visual stimuli which do not include the written word), when used as a pre-writing stimulation, enable ninth grade students to elaborate on and extend further a piece of discourse? This question stems from the initial inquiry into the role of vision in pre-writing. If, as my research on the literature suggests, visual stimuli (other than the printed word) can help the basic writer stay engaged with the writing process by repeatedly stimulating "ecphoric arousal" (to use Endel Tulving's term), then their writing should reflect increasing fluency and elaboration. Thus, not only will individual items in the discourse be elaborated on, but the discourse as a whole will be developed further.

(2) <u>Does expressive writing, when used as a pre-writing device for autobiographical and imaginative writing tasks, lead to involved writing?</u> The expressive free-writing tasks which initiate each writing assignment have been designed to engage the personal and emotional involvement of the writer. If they are successful, they should lead to lower writing anxiety, increased interest in exploring the topic, and greater interest in completing an honest expression in written discourse.

(3) <u>Do ninth-grade writers undergo any significant change in attitude toward writing, as a result of following what has been designed to be an "organic" writing curriculum?</u> Students' abilities can affect their attitudes--and attitudes can affect their abilities. By designing a curriculum which uses what students already can do as a foundation for what they are as yet unable to do, can we effectively give them the support for and enthusiasm to master a new skill?

(4) <u>Do the transactional writing abilities of ninth-grade, basic writers improve by writing in expressive and poetic modes?</u> Good expository writing is certainly a skill highly valued in our high schools and colleges as expository writing is seen as a way of clarifying rational thought. This question will be answered, in part, by looking at the pre-tests and post-tests of transactional writing. This will be a complex question to answer; however, there are a number of changes we can look for: greater fluency in the post-test essay, greater personal involvement in the topic of the essay, and finally greater specificity in the target audience of their essay.

Instructional Methods and Materials

The following curriculum design is based on conclusions reached after reviewing studies in cognitive psychology and hemisphericity. The pedagogical plan has been designed to control as much as possible the complete writing process--that is, from before students put their pens to paper until such time as they have completed to their own satisfaction a particular form of discourse. The design here recognizes that ikonic symbols can be a powerful and beneficial means of pre-writing stimulation which can activate and keep aroused short term memory, one of the major challenges facing basic writers. It recognizes as well, that there is a fundamental difference in the complexity and form different modes of writing involve--thus, any attempt to evaluate the writing process and its subprocesses, must account for both stimulus and mode of the writing episode. It recognizes, finally, that the writing process is an individual process involving both the intellectual and emotional maturity of students in differing stages of development. Thus, the curriculum places students in a developmental writing program whose sequence recognizes increasing complexity and abstraction in writing tasks, as well as the individuality of the writers themselves.

Rationale for the Curriculum

When developing a writing curriculum for secondary education, there are two major sequential concerns: the first is to be sure that the sequence reflects the best knowledge about the child and his/her individual development, and the second is to be certain that the sequence reflects what we know about language development. Allan Glatthorn states in his 1980 publication, A Guide for Developing an English Curriculum for the

Eighties, that it "would probably be unwise at this juncture to impose some
sequence on the taught curriculum, since there is no inherent superiority
in any given sequence (p.43)." This dismissal of the sequencing problem
is misleading, however, for some sequences are more informed than others.
Glatthorn ignores the significant influence of Jean Piaget and Jerome
Bruner on developmental psychology within the last two decades. Because of
these two theorists and the investigations they spawned, we do know a great
deal about the individual and intellectual development--to dismiss this
knowledge, as Glatthorn does, is to perpetuate an already inadequate
theoretical base informing our existing curricula. Designers of curricula
must first look to the developmental theorists for a justification for
their approaches and sequences of their writing programs.

There are three major perspectives which have influenced the current
field of developmental psychology: the Piagetian, Brunerian, and
information-processing perspectives. Robbie Case of the University of
Toronto argues persuasively in his brilliant and lucid book Intellectual
Development: Birth to Adulthood (1985) for a view of cognitive development
which can accomodate all three perspectives. His comprehensive theory
includes: the Piagetian four stages of development based on viewing the
child as a young scientist. In Piaget's theory, the child constructs ever
more powerful theories of the world by the application of a set of
logicomathematical tools of ever increasing power, of the child's making,
yet "at the same time following each other in a universal and logically
necessary sequence (p. 388)." Case's theory includes, as well, Bruner's
view of "the child as the inheritor of cultural tools; he should proceed
in an educational environment from enactive to iconic to symbolic forms of
representation, thus laying the groundwork at lower levels for continued

development at higher levels" (p.389). Finally, his theory includes the most recent of the theorists,like John R. Hayes and Linda Flower, who advocate an information-processing model. Case's model of intellectual development allows that in many ways the human brain is indeed an information-processor, but it is a processor to be distinguished from a machine by its predictable logical and cultural development. Flower and Hayes' model of the writing process, developed most completely in their article, "Images, Plans, and Prose: The Representation of Meaning in Writing" (1984), focuses on the possible forms of representation an expert writer brings to the process. They acknowledge that at only about the age of fourteen do children "rise to occasional conceptual planning and work with gists, notions of purpose, and alternative orderings" (p.152). The major accomplishment of their model is that it helps us to understand the complexity of the process; and yet it is crucial to keep in mind that the process is a developmental one tied intimately to the intellectual, physical, affective, and, finally, cultural development of the child. Their model does not help us to understand what kinds of representation children of differing ages bring to the writing process.

Case's approach, which derives elements from these three perspectives, aims to provide children with "the sort of high-level problem-solving structures most valued in their own particular culture" (p.408). The method he advocates is to involve them in actual problem-solving at their own developmental level from the outset. For the teaching of writing, this clearly implies that writing must be viewed as an individual process which involves the personal participation of the knower at varying developmental levels. He divides his theory into three major groups, according to whether they deal with the nature of children's basic

intellectual structures, the stages through which these structures develop, or the process of stage transition. His completed model, developed in considerable detail (pages 411-415), moves in both a horizontal and vertical manner, as new operations related to a specific stage of development are first mastered, and then hierarchically integrated into a different form and function. Hierarchical integration occurs as the result of a consolidation of two previously distinct structures into a more efficient representation which functions as smoothly as each structure functioned in the past. Heirarchical integration, however, is dependent on the growth of short term storage space. That is, in order for the integration to take place, the individual must be able to pay attention to a number of mental elements at one time. The maturation of the cortex will regulate or set a limit on the types of integration possible. Practice, experience, and cortical maturation all affect the short term storage space. And of course, behind any integration , or movement from one level to the next is the affective component integral to any action by the individual.

Case's model of intellectual development shows a somewhat different view of the ladder of abstraction—the ladder has become a series of ladders, connected to each other by a plateau of hierarchical integration. This ladder of intellectual development rests on the physical capacities of the short term storage space as well as the efficiency of the neural transmittors. Case states that "Individual children can differ in the rate of their general executive development. These differences can result from (1) differences in the rate of growth of their STSS (short term storage space) or (2) differences in the efficiency of their regulatory sub-processes" (p.414). Ultimately, Case sees his

model as being the base for an entire school curriculum, to help curriculum designers spell out the general sequence of attainments which could be expected in any given domain at different ages, as well as the hurdles that have to be overcome in passing from one level to another. Given Case's model, one might ask how can we possibly apply this to the teaching of writing where the skills are complex and intimately interwoven with the affective nature of the task?

The following curriculum model (page 96) has incorporated Case's emphasis on both horizontal as well as vertical movement in intellectual development. The form it has taken, however, differs from the stage model Case envisions, as this design is in the form of a Brunerian spiral. In The Process of Education (1969) Bruner discusses in general terms the ideal curriculum which turns back on itself at higher levels (p.13). He envisions the model in the form of a spiral. The form of the spiral is appropriate in terms of Case's model as well, since the spiral moves in both a horizontal and vertical direction at once--but Bruner's model has the advantage over Case's in that it allows the learner to revisit basic ideas and experiences repeatedly. The proposed spiral was chosen for a number of other reasons:

(1) The design of the spiral emphasizes the affective nature of the writing act. The individual is clearly the source of all perception and all activity. At the heart of the writing process is the individual and, in Endel Tulving's terms, the episodic system. The individual experiencing, encoding, and finally remembering events is the basis of all writing. The spiral helps us visualize that any writing requires a complex accessing of stored experiences, and that the closer one is to the concrete

experience of the writer, the more easily those experiences are accessed in ecphoric retrieval.

(2) This design suggests why autobiographical writing is perhaps the easiest type of writing for the basic writer, since it involves the processing of information which is closest to the expressive center of the human being.

(3) The spiral suggests the recursive nature of the writing process. If we see that the spiral lines encompass a complex world of knowledge, we can see why writers must, in Sondra Perl's words, "retrospectively structure" past experiences without the inhibition of looking for the correct form.

(4) The design indicates the vast amount of material the writer does have to write about and the infinite possibilities for creative combinations of that material. Creativity is within the possiblity of every writer.

(5) This design incorporates James Brittons' scheme of the three modes of discourse: Transactional, Expressive, and Poetic. However the spiral curriculum necessarily alters their interrelationships.

Britton's original diagram of the three modes is a two-way schema illustrating how both transactional and poetic writing originate in expressive writing. The diagram has two major difficulties, however, when writing is put into a developmental framework: (1) it shows no relationship between the two extremes, and (2) it fails to consider developmental levels of abstraction.

Britton recognizes that although his design suggests that the poetic and transactional modes are distinct and separate, this is not always the case. In satire, for example, discourse can be seen as a

combination of the transactional mode in that it is writing in order to inform, while at the same time, it can be seen as expressive in that it exists as an aesthetic artifact as well. By making use of a spiral, the proposed model incorporates and emphasizes Britton's observation that the expressive mode is the source of all later modes; however, it illustrates as well the interrelatedness of the other two modes. There is a point in the diagram when the meeting of transactional and poetic writing can result in satire. The model retains Britton's emphasis on the expressive beginnings of all writing, but suggests, as well, that transactional writing is a more abstract mode of writing, and, developmentally, more difficult to master than poetic writing.

(6) The dynamics of this design show the movement from the center of the self outward that is the basis of James Moffett's theory of discourse. In Teaching the Universe of Discourse (1969), Moffett establishes a heirarchy of abstraction that moves from the implicit to the explicit, and in so doing, involves increasing elaboration, increasing abstraction of conception, and, finally, increasing consciousness of abstraction. Moffett stresses, however, that this development is not to be seen as a simple climb by the child up a ladder of growth. Mental growth "consists of two simultaneous progressions—toward differentiation and toward integration " (p.29). Thus upward movement depends on a downward thrust into details, discriminations, and subclasses. The spiral curriculum incorporates this movement of simultaneous progression.

The spiral reflects, as well, Moffett's notion of the increasing distance between the speaker and audience. Language development begins with "egocentric speech," or the child's interior dialogue, in Piaget's original sense of the word. Written discourse begins as written down

egocentric speech with the "self" being the sole audience. As the mode of discourse becomes increasingly more abstract, the audience becomes more universal and distant. In more philosophical terms, the child moves from representing reality to the self into representing reality to others.

(7) The placement of different types of poetic writing presented some difficulty for this design. Poetic writing, including any form of imaginative writing, involves the writer in the role of spectator. Both James Britton and James Moffett treat the fiction mode differently. For Britton, the fiction mode moves in another direction altogether; in his design, the extreme ends of transactional and poetic writing have no connection whatsoever. They are at opposite ends of the writing spectrum. In Moffett's design, the fiction mode moves in reverse through his abstracting sequence. Because the fledgling writer first expresses his or her psychic identity in fictions far-fetched and remote from personal experience and only then gradually works back toward himself, the sequence is reversed in its design. And for Moffett, poetry presents a particular problem as it is presentational symbolization akin to music and art. Thus, poetry runs transversely across his levels of abstraction. I placed poetry on the most abstract loop of imaginative writing, thereby showing its most abstract position in imaginative writing, while acknowledging at the same time its distinctiveness from any form of transactional writing. Other modes of fiction have been placed one loop further on the scale of abstraction than their autobiographical counterpoint, thereby indicating their increasing involvement of a sense of audience and increasing distance from the direct personal experience of the writer.

Specific Variables Involved in the Curriculum Design

The following chart indicates the three major variables which can affect the writing process: (1) space, or the distance between the writer and audience, (2) time, or the dependency on chronological order, and (3) the short term storage space demands of the specific mode of discourse. I have used the measures low, medium, and high to represent an average distance, dependency, and storage space requirement, while offering at the same time a rationale for the choice of degree. For the sake of uniformity, I used the same measures for all three variables despite the awkwardness of using these terms to indicate distance ("near to far" would be more appropriate in this category.) One may determine from the chart that the least complicated mode of discourse would have low distance, high chronological dependency, and thus low short term storage space requirements. Correspondingly, the most challenging mode of discourse included in this curriculum, would have the highest distance from self, the least dependency on chronological time, and thus the greatest short term storage demands. This is, admittedly, a simplified view of the whole process. What it leaves out is significant: the social and psychological context in which the writing task is to be undertaken. However, because of its overwhelming complexity and variability, the context cannot be generalized--indeed, it is what makes the writing process an intensely individual process.

The following writing assignments, an alternating series of autobiographical and imaginative writing tasks, are included in the chart in this order:

Autobiographical account (first person)

Imaginative autobiography (first person)

Character sketch based on personal experience (third person)

Imaginative character sketch (third person)

Short story (first person narrator)

Short story (third person narrator)

Poetry (haiku)

Personal essay

Type of Discourse	(Distance From Self) SPACE	(Chronological Dependence) TIME	(Short Term Storage Space Required: Dependent on Space and Time) STSS
Expressive (Journal "Starts")	Low: Reality being represented for self	High: Coincides with actual time, as well as personally remembered time	Low: Move by association between personally coded time; use of arousal cues
Auto-biography 1st person	Low: Audience is self and personal	High: Chronologically, remembered time: focus on one experience situated in fixed time	Low: Arousal cues activate a schema, which, because chronologically packed, is easier to unpack
Imaginative Auto-bio-graphy 1st person	Medium: Audience less personal; reality is being created for writer and reader	High: Chronological time governs beginning middle and end of discourse	Medium: Chronological time scheme; but lacking personal previously packed schema--arousal must be continually reactivated
Character Sketch (nonfiction)	Low: Personal experience being represented for personal listener	Medium: Chronological time may govern sketch; it is rooted, however, in writer's own sense of time	Medium: Possible chronological time scheme--personal involvement with character makes encoding stronger
Imaginative character	Medium: Reality being created for both writer and more general audience	Medium-low: chronological time may govern sketch but there is no corresponding personal time in writer	Medium-high: Possible chronological time scheme must keep audience and subject continually in mind: subject not a part of previously encoded and organized material
Short Story 1st person narrator	Medium: Reality created for both writer and general audience First person encourages sense of "veridicality"	High: Coincides with chronological actual time, involving the detailing and development of one event in imagined time	Medium-high: Chronological scheme on which to build, but must keep audience of both self and others in mind
Short Story 3rd person narrator	Medium-high: Reality being created for both writer and general reader No illusion of "veridicality"	High: Coincides with chronological time, as it focuses on one event, its causes and consequences	Medium-high: Chronological schema on which to build, but must keep audience of self and others in mind--must consider narrator's attitude and relationship to experience
Poetry (Haiku)	Medium-high: Reality being created for both writer (as spectator) and anonymous reader, yet source is immediate sensation and perceptions	Medium-low: May correspond to immediately sensed time (actual time of self) and yet not be controlled by a chronological narrative	Medium: Haiku structure affords formal, restricted schema--ecphoric arousal is stimulated by immediate sensation
Personal	Medium-high: Reality being created for others primarily	Low: Chronological time could dominate body of essay--however, whole piece of discourse organized around a generalization	High: The form of essay and dominant concern with anonymous reader must be activated, as well as the generalization and elaboration supporting it
Other	Increasingly higher	Increasingly lower	Increasingly higher

Chart 1. Types of discourse and their corresponding variables which affect the writing process.

Poetry (Haiku)

Short Story

Imaginative Character Sketch

Character Sketch

Imaginative Autobiography

Autobiographical Account

Episodic System
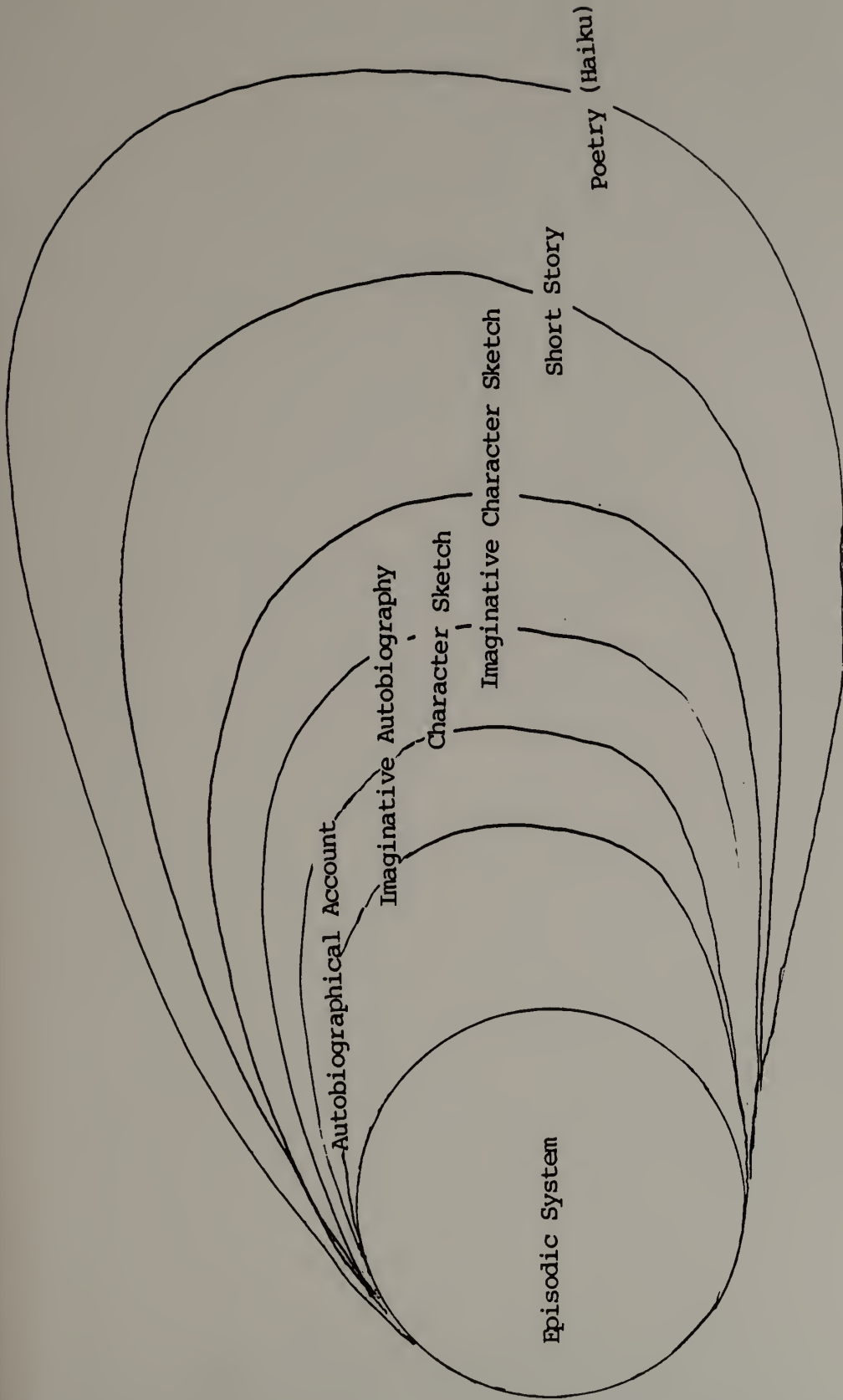
Curriculum model of writing assignments.

Design of Individual Writing Assignments

The curriculum consisted of seven individual assignments, each of which involved the students in a process beginning with visual stimulation by ikonic symbols, followed by expressive writing (or "starts" as I like to term them, thus avoiding the term "journal writing" which to many students means diary writing—or a form of writing they already dislike by ninth grade because it had been used so often in other classes), then production of a rough draft (or a series of rough drafts), and, finally, the production of a final draft.

The ikonic symbols served a number of functions: they stimulated an initial response in the writer, and, more importantly, they acted continuously as a retrieval cue (or stimulus) for ecphoric arousal throughout the process. The ikonic symbols were specifically chosen to initiate in the writer a creative response to a concrete situation or individual. The images were intended to trigger a fresh egocentric response to either past experiences in the writer's own life, or provocative situations in other people's lives. In this way, the assignments were designed to elicit a personal response to the world—not to simply organize representations of the world. The visual images acted to elicit a holistic and intuitive response to a situation thereby helping the writer to explore that response throughout the recursive writing process. An example of such a "start" was when I chose an atmospheric photograph of a moon rising over a hill, and then posed a number of questions designed to encourage students to explore the photograph in a number of different ways. They were first encouraged to describe what they saw, and then asked to describe what they saw from differing points of view and differing senses. The questions I posed anticipated the skills

required in the more formal writing task which followed the initial starts--
in this particular case, the writing task was to write a short story. .

An additional advantage to using visual stimulation was that it
afforded me an opportunity to share in the experience when necessary. If
students were having a difficult time "unpacking" stored impressions, or
seemed unable to elaborate details or extend a piece of discourse, the
iconic symbols served as a common starting ground for me to help students
activate propositional networks.

The iconic symbols encouraged the writer to follow the downward
progression of the spiral curriculum, as the writer rooted higher
generalizations in details, discriminations, and subclasses.

The expressive writing was designed to lead the writer to discovery;
the writer was encouraged to explore his feelings and reactions to a
situation. These "starts" were guided to some degree to help students
explore a wider variety of responses.   The writing in the starts was not
concerned with spelling, punctuation, grammar, or penmanship. The students
had a time limit, for the object of the starts was not to finish a piece of
discourse, but to explore various possible discourses, only one of which
was selected for further development.

Following the starts for the imaginative writing assignments,
students were encouraged to share their products with the rest of the class
(the class, as previously noted, was a small, remedial class.) By reading
aloud students could "hear" their experiments and hear what others had
done. This procedure was not followed, however, for the autobiographical
assignments. Because they were designed to be personal in nature, privacy
or selected sharing was more appropriate.   A day intervened before writers

were asked to choose one start to develop; in this way, students had at
least one night to allow both conscious and unconscious processes to affect
their choice and execution of a topic.

The rough draft and final draft stages of the curriculum proceeded
much as they would have in any basic writing class. I was available
throughout the process for consulting and questioning. (Note: individual
papers were not graded; rather, there was a weekly participation grade plus
a final grade given on the completed portfolio of assignments.)

Instruments and Procedures

The study utilized two data sources. The first instrument was an
open-ended questionnaire, which was administered to the nine participants
in the study (one at the beginning and one at the end). The second
instrument was the record of the writing experience of each student. For
reasons stated previously, this record does not include oral composing
tapes nor does it involve any questionning of the writer as the writing
process was occurring. The analysis of any change in writing ability came
from direct examination of the students' work as it progressed. Each stage
of the writing process was saved, ordered, and examined. Only once did a
student discard or lose any of the papers involved in the process. That
student was not chosen for the more in-depth analysis of the three case
studies.   The major results of the study have come from detailed
descriptions of what the students have written in faithful adherence to the
procedures previously described.

Individual Measurements of Transactional Writing

Confident and accomplished writers have at their command the ability to move freely and successfully through the abstraction ladder. Their fluency derives from this ability to make increasingly abstract classifications about their experience, while at the same time, rooting these abstractions in discriminating details and examples. These writers have moved to the top of the heirarchical integration ladder. They are able to manipulate their own experience in time and space; their short term storage space can accomodate a greater range of experience because they have achieved this level of heirarchical integration. What are the indicators that would allow a researcher to measure this growth, determining a difference, let us say, between one transactional piece of writing and another completed some weeks later?

Look once again at the two variables which affect short term memory storage: (1) space, or the distance from self, and (2) time, or dependence on chronologically ordered time. What are the linguistic cues which indicate changes in the writer's ability to control these variables? The following delineation of measurable cues is derived largely from the essay "Measuring Changes in Intellectual Processes" by Lee Odell in Evaluating Writing (1977), in which he discusses Kenneth Pike's classification of intellectual processes and their linguistic cues. I have selectively chosen and arranged these cues as indicators of variability in space and time.

(1) Measuring distance from self: As writers become increasingly aware that they are writing for both themselves and an audience, they are called upon to use increasing flexibility in shifting from their personally remembered and organized experience to the audience's understanding of that same experience. There are three major ways of representing that reality for both audience and self: developing a physical context, classifying that reality in terms of other experience, and finally, comparing and contrasting what that reality is with other experience. The one measure which I will focus on is the first and, perhaps, most fundamental measure for writers at this stage of development--physical context. When writers develop a physical context for the reader it means that the writer must unpack stored impressions, re-creating experience which has already undergone classification and organization.

The linguistic cues to physical context are: nouns that refer to a geographical location (for example, the name of a city, geographical region, a point on a map), an object in a physical setting (for example, a house or tree), a sensory property of a physical setting (for example, the sound of wind in the trees). These linguistic cues, as described here by Odell on page 119, are the foundation of descriptive writing. Written in this order, moving from geographical order, to physical setting, then finally to sensory property of a physical setting, the focus becomes increasingly narrow and detailed. We can see, as well, in this order the workings of the ecphoric system as retrieval cues effectively lead to retrieval of increasingly discrete details. It is most appropriate here to refer again to Endel Tulvings' definition of "retrieval cues" as "present descriptions of a past description." The organization and selection of these "descriptions of descriptions" improve as the writer improves in

writing ability. In more general terms, this improvement may be termed "fluency" or "increasing elaboration." <u>The order, number, and selection of physical context linguistic cues will improve as the writer develops an increasing distance from the self, seeing his or her own writing increasingly from a spectator's viewpoint.</u> Thus, an analysis of the physical context linguistic cues will form the basis for measuring changes in the spatial dimension.

(2) Measuring dependence on chronological time: Looking once again at the chart of types of discourses, it is apparent that the time dimension does not fit so conveniently into a predictable pattern. Clearly, expressive writing offers a high dependence on chronological order, as both actual writing time and personally remembered time coincide. But moving down the chart, we can see that chronological order may or may not dominate a piece of writing. What we can see, nonetheless, is that a personal essay, the most abstract writing task presented here, requires the least dependence on chronological time. Actually, because the task is termed an "essay" it requires that the writer manipulate, classify and present experience in a framework outside of chronological time. Indeed, if the writer depends solely on a chronological framework, without stepping out of that framework, then he or she has not written an essay. An accomplished essay writer moves between past, present, and future (to simplify the time continuum) subordinating time to the ideas which dominate the essay. Writers gaining the ability to work in this mode of writing use increasingly the linguistic cues which refer to time sequence and logical sequence.

Consider, first, linguistic cues to time sequence (again using Odell's explanation): They are adverbial elements indicating that something existed before, during, or after a moment in time (for example, "then", "when", "next", "later", "meanwhile", "subsequently", "previously", "earlier", and "at that moment"). These adverbial cues indicate that the writer is analyzing and possibly re-organizing a time sequence originally experienced in chronological time. The more appropriately these adverbial cues are given, the more aware the writer is of his or her audience, and the need to make personally experienced time understandable to a public.

Consider, secondly, linguistic cues to logical sequence: they are words implying a cause-effect relationship, such as "because", "therefore", "since", and "consequently". These linguistic cues show their users to be classifying and organizing chronological time in complex ways. First of all, they may be using them to indicate a causal relationship within one continuous time frame (a narrative for instance). Let us say that a writer is talking about his uncle Harry's passion for diamonds which resulted for Harry in a ten-year term in the Folsum Prison. The causal relationship is being limited here to Harry's experience. But the causal relationship can work in a number of dimensions obviously. Perhaps Harry's nephew adds another causal link to his own behavior--the fact that he has never been interested in women who wore diamonds. We can see now that the linguistic cues connect two quite different time frames. The more fluid the writer, the more adept the linguistic cues to logical sequence. By measuring the number and appropriateness of causal linguistic cues, we can measure the writer's increasingly sophisticated manipulation of personally remembered time.

Thus, by measuring the linguistic cues to physical context, time sequence, and logical sequence, we can measure increasing fluency and elaboration in student writing. And, by extension, we can measure as well that elusive ingredient "honesty" or "self" which both Britton and Moffett emphasize as basic to good writing. If writers are, indeed, expanding their ability to deal with their own experience in time and space, they are supporting general classifications and ideas with personally remembered experience and time. They are becoming increasingly skillful at moving within the spiral continuum, moving as Moffett describes in "two simultaneous progressions--toward differentiation and toward integration."

Selection of Subjects

The participants in this study were nine ninth-grade students in a public, regional high school. Volunteers from two basic English classes, they were selected on the basis of their having failed the basic skills English test administered to all students at the end of eighth grade. These students had failed the basic test which measured, primarily, their ability to write a transactional piece of writing.

The students were informed at the beginning of the study that they would be involved in an experimental program which would last for roughly ten weeks, and take the place of their regularly scheduled English writing laboratory (which consisted of three consecutive days a week, out of a total of five English periods a week.)

I would like to emphasize here that although it could have been a controlled experiment, I chose to examine solely, the behavior of this small sample of subjects. Of course, it would be natural to see students

make some improvement after taking them out of a class of twenty-five and placing them in a small class of four or five. Nonetheless, if there were significant improvement in specifically measurable aspects of the writing process, the statistical evidence would indicate such a change. The case studies which follow the reporting of the statistical measures are intended to explore in what way these specific variables in the writing process were affected by the curriculum. I have used the disinterested judgements of my three readers to help choose the three case studies to focus. I wanted to focus on one writer for whom the curriculum was highly effective, and on another for whom the curriculum elicited little change in writing behavior, and on a third on whom the curriculum had only mild effects.

These three students were asked to provide background information about their writing experiences, to describe their writing processes, and to respond to an attitude measurement test both before and after the treatment. Pre- and post transactional writing samples were taken from each participant. The task involved in the writing sample was identical to the basic skills test administered to each of the subjects at the end of eighth grade. Each student completed the ten-week experimental curriculum which I taught. The writing produced during those ten weeks was dated and collected. That material formed the basis for the three case studies which follow results of the statistical analysis.

Procedures

The ten-week study involved a total of six writing assignments (excluding the pre- and post test writing samples taken on the first and last day of class). The writing laboratory remained exclusively a writing classroom (students were held responsible for the standard curriculum,

reading outside assignments for the two "literature" days they shared with their classmates). For each of the alternating series of autobiographical and imaginative writing tasks, these students followed a standard procedure instituted and directed by the teacher.

First, students observed a personal photograph or a slide chosen by the teacher. They were then asked a series of questions about the visual stimuli. After each question was posed, they were asked to respond on a separate sheet of paper in what was termed a "start." The "start" terminology was used to encourage these students to approach the pictorial subject with a fresh sense of discovery each time they looked at the it. They were not told how the individual starts might lead to a complete piece of discourse nor were they told what specific type of discourse they were preparing to write; they were merely encouraged to answer the questions to their own satisfaction, including as many details as they could. Clearly there is nothing novel about this initial step in the writing process--it is controlled brainstorming. For the basic writer, this controlled brainstorming can overcome a number of the obstacles that face an insecure writer (see rationale for the study). My questions were designed to break down the task into possible parts or sequences (thereby decreasing the short term storage demands) which the writers could then reorganize, develop, or eliminate as they saw fit. The questions were designed to encourage both expressive and imaginative writing.

The repetitive stimulation took a full class period. Giving this much time to the stimulation was vital, for it was at this point that students were asked to make repeated contact with a sensory experience, thus making it the most immediate and intuitive stage of the writing process. Looking once again at the importance of intuitive responses to

experience (p.83), the repeated exposure was the moment when ecphoric arousal was stimulated, or, as Noddings and Shore described this stage: it was a monitoring, scanning function--looking at structures and for structures, not imposing them. My questions stimulating ecphoric arousal were designed to vary the type of arousal, thus stimulating the "groping" process Gordon Rohman observes as the first stage of the writing process.

Secondly, students read their starts aloud, if they chose. This sharing took place both on the first day of stimulation (after each "start" was written) and the morning after they had to choose their most promising "start". Their classmates were then encouraged to ask questions about the starts if they wanted to. They could focus on any one part of the "start" and ask the writer to elaborate on or develop it further. Their assignment for the next days' class was simply to reread their "starts" that night for homework and consider which "start" they thought was most successful and how they could possibly develop it further.

In the second class period of the week (falling usually on the next day), students were given the nature of the assignment they were asked to fulfill and asked to begin a rough draft in class. Initially, these rough drafts were completed very quickly (no more than twenty minutes) and then read aloud to the class. Again, questions were asked, suggestions made, and students were then free to decide how to go about writing a final draft. They were given the choice of developing the rough draft further that night and then bringing it in for another reading or of completing the final draft that night. Significantly, as the study progressed and students became more comfortable with the process and the teacher, the amount of time they spent on rough drafts increased noticeably. Indeed, as the weeks progressed it became increasingly difficult to follow such a

clean schedule. Peer listening and editing consumed more time as students became more self-confident and secure of their writing ability. They became, as well, more interested in what both their peers and teacher thought about their pieces. Mechanics were considered of secondary importance during the ten weeks of the study. Students were encouraged to develop their writing first; only on the final rough draft were mechanical concerns discussed. (I did, at this point, take the responsibility to help them with this editorial aspect of their writing, offering suggestions for organizational difficulties and mechanical problems.)

I would like to emphasize here that this writing laboratory was indeed a "laboratory" and a collaboratory process. The two separate classes of four and five students became a nurturing, exploratory writing group. They were eager from the start to improve their writing abilities, and became even more eager to come to class as we became a supportive environment for talking, listening, and writing. These students had all the support and reasons for improving their writing ability. However, I do believe that the ways in which they improved reflect the appropriateness and effectiveness of the curriculum design.

C H A P T E R   I V

INDIVIDUAL PROFILES

The case studies presented in this chapter are based on an analysis of
two sets of data: (1) the subjects' reports on their own attitudes and
writing experiences, and (2) the subjects' writing products during the
course of the study. The first set includes the students' questionnaire
responses and individual writing assignment responses. The second consists
of all the students' study writings including all notes, doodles, drafts,
as well as the finished papers.

Presented in this chapter are individual profiles of three of the nine
case-study subjects. The one male and two female subjects were chosen
primarily on the basis of how they responded to the treatment. I wanted to
analyze three subjects who together showed a range of abilities and
improvement. I was interested in trying to understand why the curriculum
had such a strong effect on some of the subjects, while having less of an
effect on others.   One of the three subjects showed remarkable
improvement, another considerable improvement, and the third showed some
improvement, although it was far less dramatic than the other two
subjects. Two of the subjects had the lowest holistic rating score
possible in the May 1985 writing sample. In the March 1986 writing sample,
one of them still had the lowest possible holistic score (three #1
ratings), while the other two had moderate scores (one with three #2
scores, and the other with two #2 scores and one #3). It should be noted
here that because of the nature of the program, none of the nine students
was more than a basic writer to begin with. Thus, the analysis is limited
to a certain quality of writer.

Completeness of work was not a criterion for selection. Remarkably, all the subjects completed the study. Only two students missed one of the writing assignments completely (this, in one case, was the result of being ill and absent from school for over a week, and in the other the result of chronic procrastination).

The narrative form of the three individual profiles indicates the overall difference in performance between the initial transactional writing sample and the final writing sample; secondly, this narrative explores ways in which the curriculum itself relates to this overall difference. In other words, what has the treatment done, and why has it been effective? The four research questions form the basis for this discussion.

The analysis of each student's writing collection appears as a separate section of this chapter. Each section begins with an introduction to the writer, followed by an index which notes the differences which occur in the writer's March transactional essay in comparison to his/her May sample. Each index describes what each writer did.

Sandy

Sandy, fifteen, was a member of an average-level English class. She was shy in class. Although she had volunteered to enter into the program, she clearly had withheld her approval until she had been in the class for a number of weeks. Initially, she rarely offered an opinion freely. For the first three weeks her responses to my and her classmates queries were monosyllabic. Her reasons for being eligible to enter the course were clearly written in her May 1985 writing sample: she had written a three-sentence essay.

It came as a considerable surprise to me, however, that there seemed little relationship between her abilities and her attitude. In her initial writing interview she said that she likes to write sometimes: "I like to write to friends. and I really like to write story's on little kids. I really don't know why maybe cuz I really like kids and I can get along with them."

Apparently, Sandy really could "write about kids." Her regular classroom teacher showed me at the beginning of the program one of Sandy's stories about kids. It was a clever, four-page story. My first impression was that it was almost too clever for a fourteen-year-old basic writer. The story had the sound of a child's story written by a sophisticated adult. Whether or not it was inspired by one of the books Sandy might have read to one of her many younger siblings, is a question I cannot answer. Her teacher assured me that the work was completed in class. It may have not been original, nor was it directly copied. As did her teacher, I attributed its success to Sandy's ability--rightly or wrongly. It was after reading this story that I understood that there really was a possible relationship between Sandy's attitude and abilities. She was, indeed, able to write stories to please herself and her readers (including the teacher.) She had received an A on the story and had confirmed her knowledge that her story about a little boy and a monster was good. She said that she liked it because it was "exciting and fun to read." Interestingly, Sandy states that she "sorta keeps a journal. But it is a story journal." She knew already her strengths as a writer of stories and held on to that despite her admission that she doesn't always get the grades she deserves. She says that "some papers I think are really good and all I get is a b- or a c+ or even lower." Her transactional writing

gave no indication of her skill as a story teller.   Like most of the
other participants, she also enjoyed writing letters to friends.

In my initial discussion with Sandy's English teacher, we both thought
that Sandy would greatly benefit from the concentration on poetic writing
my program stressed. Her teacher thought that she would "take off" in
this special class.

On the first day of class, I asked Sandy and her fellow students to
fill out the writing interview and then asked them to follow my directions
for the writing sample. Sandy took just one or two minutes to think of a
subject (she chose the same individual, Mrs. Laffond, to write about that
she had chosen ten months before, although she did not remember writing the
other piece at all.) Sandy took just fifteen minutes to complete her
writing sample. She wrote no rough draft. This writing sample is longer
than her first one. It has twice as many sentences as the first (from
three to a total of six sentences), however, there is still no attempt to
organize her discourse into paragraphs. She has made a greater attempt to
explain the statements she had made in the original: "Mrs. Laffond made
unusually strong impression on me cause she was nice and understanding"
became "She helped me when ever I needed it. She was the Kind of person
that I could go for help about a probelm that I have. I could talk to her
with no trouble at all."   In her original sample Sandy explains that Mrs.
Laffond "taught me things like chess and all the stuff about it." In the
second sample not only is the chess mentioned, but hikes have been added
to her list of reasons to be grateful. She explains further about what
Mrs. Laffond showed them on the hikes (flowers, berries, plants).

In the twenty weeks since Sandy first took the formal basic skills test she has an increased awareness that she needs to support her statements with more detail. However, she has still little sense of the form that extended statement is to take, or how to support her original statement. There is no sense of reader. Sandy sees her task here as responding to a simple, direct question from someone who shares the same context.   She seems even in March unable to concern herself with an audience (in this case, clearly a teacher-as-evaluator reader); there seems little awareness that the reader has not shared her experience--she shows no signs of "de-centering" as she is writing.

The context she explores in both early writing samples is her indebtedness to Mrs. Laffond. She explores the first context asked to be explored by the task. There is little sense of her trying to explore the second context--the personality, appearance, or character of Mrs. Laffond herself.

Thus we can see that there have been some changes in her transactional writing ability in the twenty weeks spanning the first two writing samples. She has extended the discourse and made further attempts to classify the type of person Mrs. Laffond was.   In the holistic grading by the three independent graders, Sandy received a "1" across the board for her first essay, while receiving a "2" across the board for the second essay. Sandy had moved from the lowest score possible, to the next lowest (out of a possible highest score of 4). Although Sandy has improved, her second score would still not qualify her to pass the basic skills test.

Figure 1 indicates what transactional changes have transpired over the ten-week period of the study:

March	May
chooses a positive subject she had previously written about	chooses a subject both new to her and one that negatively affected her
does not structure her essay	structures her essay in appropriate paragraphs (with one exception)
gives no physical description	begins with physical description of subject
little awareness of audience	some awareness of audience; a self-conscious awareness that she needs to explain her reactions to the subject
no rough draft; all work is in pen with no crossouts	rough draft; a few crossouts with one minor change between rough and final draft (the addition of a concluding sentence)
explores one context: her indebtedness to Mrs. Laffond	explores two contexts: the subject and her reaction to the subject
little personal involvement; subject may have been "sorta special" but support is not enthusiastic or detailed	strong emotional involvement explaining why she dislikes the subject she chose to discuss
offers no concluding remarks	concludes with an explanation of why she reacted so strongly against the sub ject she chose to write about

Figure 1. Sandy: Index of transactional differences.

Considering the positive changes listed in this chart, it is surprising to me that Sandy might still not pass the basic skills test. Her scores from the three independent readers were 2, 2, and

3. A total of five points from two readers is necessary to pass the
test. So depending on which two readers read her test, she could
either pass or once again fail the test. The readers, after having
completed evaluating all the writing samples, remarked as a group on
the "unpleasantness" of this final essay of Sandy's. This
unpleasantness may have made a difference in her score, for when
looking at the individual scores of the specific dimensions (Appendix
A), it is clear that she had improved in every category with the
exception of physical context cues. Interestingly enough, Sandy was
the only one to choose someone who had made an intensely negative
impression on her.

Sandy's final writing sample discusses her friend Sheila, whom
she tells us is "female....very short, and very fat." Sheila is a
girl whom Sandy detests. Sandy explores her unpleasant
characteristics, prefacing her discussion by this sentence that drove
the readers crazy: "I personally can't stand this person, basically,
because she, herself, drives me crazy."   The readers were equally put
off by her contradictory statement: "I don't know of anyone that
likes this person as a true friend. She may have three true friends
that i know of."   Ultimately, the essay is a diatribe against someone
who "is stuck up...gets around with any boy, or guy she can get her
hands on... always wants her way...pouts." Sandy spends a
considerable time developing the unpleasantness of Sheila while
clarifying her own unambivalent attitudes toward her. When I first
read this final writing sample, I did not have the same reaction as
the independent readers. It was my impression during the ten weeks in
which I got to know Sandy fairly well, that she did not like very many

people. Her most common response was a negative one to people and situations. This character sketch struck me as particularly revealing of Sandy's personality, and so for that reason, exceptionally sincere in her excited attempt to characterize her "friend."

It is apparent from the final writing sample that Sandy has some punctuation problems (she fails to punctuate possessives or contractions correctly) and fails to capitalize the first person pronoun (this, however, is a stylistic fad--Sandy persistently chose to use the more obvious lower case "I" in her work because she "liked the way it looked." Her best friend in the class persisted in this behavior as well). Although she attempts to give some description of her subject, her choice of adjectives is limited. Although she does give reasons why Sheila is so unpleasant, she does not give us any specific instances of her snobbishness or conceit. Clearly, Sandy is not yet a skilled writer of transactional pieces. Nonetheless, she shows an increasing awareness of what writing a transactional essay requires: she now has a defined organization, a specific focus on both contexts of the character sketch--her subject and her reaction to her--and enough elaboration to help us understand those two contexts more completely.

The question at this point is to what extent did the curriculum itself help Sandy gain increased control over audience, purpose, and organization, and to what extent did it fail to help her?

Analysis of Sandy's Curriculum Work

Reviewing Sandy's ten-week production of alternate autobiographical and imaginative writings, I found Sandy's own assessment of her abilities astute. She was, as she thought, better at developing stories than at transactional pieces. However, considering the short-term storage space that is required by each suggests that this is not surprising. For when Sandy had a narrative story line, or a time line, to follow, she could develop her imagination and powers of observation with greater skill than she could in a short essay. When Sandy was asked what one needs to do well in order to be a good writer, she responded "to have a good imagination. That's what I use. " But her "good imagination" was not as effective in the autobiographical pieces. In fact, the piece which she found most difficult was the character sketch based on a photograph of her cousin. When she handed in the final draft she wrote in response to the question "What do you like most about this piece of writing?" : "That I finished it finally." She disliked it "cuz it gave me difficulties." She found it exceedingly difficult to write about someone she knew.

Sandy's first piece, an autobiographical account of the day her grandparents were leaving after a short visit with her family, shows her responding to my questions about the photograph in a dutiful way. To each of my questions she wrote a two or three sentence response. Her rough draft shows her putting all the pieces together (excluding nothing) in a form roughly reflecting the order in which her "starts" were written. The piece of discourse never actually becomes an autobiographical account; we do not really see Sandy involved in an

experience. Sandy's discussion remains tied to the photograph in front
of her. Part of the difficulty lies in the fact that the photograph
she had chosen to write about did not fulfill all my criteria (it was
to show them in an important personal experience or a typical
action). But I can see why she chose it: the picture of her and her
brothers and sisters standing on the front steps in their pajamas
amused her, as her final paragraph indicates:

> If someone was to look at this picture they would see six children
> in their pajamas all smiling except the little boy. They would probably
> laugh because they all look funny standing in their pajamas.

It is this amused, whimsical response of Sandy's that reappears
consistently in her "starts" and in her poetic writing products. However,
in this essay she does little with this sensibility. She dutifully plods
through a discussion of her grandparents' departure. Interestingly,
however, Sandy does make a critical judgement about the final organization
of this essay. She excludes a section which shifted the focus of the
piece from the children on the step to the grandparents who are not in the
picture. This decision was crucial, it seems to me, for two reasons.
First of all, in the writing samples I had seen, this was the first time
Sandy had enough material upon which to make such a decision about
structure. By using the total of four starts, each of which was longer
than her total essay the previous spring (three sentences), she had enough
discussion to begin to see what belonged and what didn't belong in it.
She had chosen to exclude something. Secondly, it was after this decision
that she made increasingly more decisions on her own. Her imaginative
pieces, the short story and the haikus were not based on any of the
"starts" I had structured in class. Rather, Sandy decided on her own
subjects to write about. She states that the writing of the "starts"

didn't hinder her in any way, because "No. I just did it on my own." And yet, without the starts, she did not have the material about which to make any decisions.

In the second writing assignment--an imaginative autobiographical account--Sandy, as did everyone else in her class, chose to write about a disheveled, middle-aged man sitting alone at a table in a barroom and chain smoking. The situation inspired dramatic writing about a subject they all knew little about, but could imagine with intensity. In her original start (there was a total of three starts, each of a different person in a provocative, although static, position) she describes him in a brief nine sentences as a bum who has just gambled away everything on the horse races and is now lost: "no family, no money, and no were to go." She successfully develops this summary of his problem into a more convincing statement by Frank himself, as he writes in a letter to his friend Charlie. By describing in specific detail that fateful day of gambling when he lost his job and his money, Sandy has developed the short summary into a thirty-sentenced first-person story. It isn't until the last three lines, however, that she seems to begin to understand the emotions that her character must be experiencing in such a desperate situation: "So I told him that I would take the job. Thinking to myself that maybe this job will help me get my life back together. Just maybe." Although her sympathy comes late and is not developed adequately, it is the first time that Sandy has shown any potential for understanding the emotions of the characters she describes or creates. This is not the case in the next character sketch she completed about her cousin, Heather.

This first nonfiction character sketch is about the same length as her final writing sample. It anticipates, as well, the form that final writing sample took. Sandy begins with a physical description of what she sees. She follows that with a general assessment of the kind of person her cousin is. However, she avoids the complexity of her cousin and focusses on one of her more negative traits--her tactlessness in public. Although the finished piece is almost as long as her final writing sample, it is not as complete a transactional piece. Whereas in the final sample she returns to the task at hand, concluding with the statement that "she is stuck up and i don't want to be around some one who is like that," this early piece ends abruptly with a clear sense of relief that the task is done: "That would be an example of how big her mouth really is."

Contrast this labored exposition with the next assignment--an imaginative character sketch. Although she never finished this piece (she had misplaced it during the time that she was laid up with a broken foot, and found it only at the end of the study), it shows a liveliness that the sketches do not:

> Her name is Julie. She is 10 years old. She has dark black hair as black as the sky on a stormy night. Julie has Baby blue eyes as blue as the sky gets on a beautiful summer day.
> Julie likes to read, swim, go to the movies, being with friends, and watching the stars at night. She has one brother Tommy. He is 3 years old. Sometimes Julie thinks that tommy is a real pain. But sometimes she thinks he is really sweet.
> She also has a dog frankie and a gold fish sammy. Julie likes them both but sometimes Frankie gets in her way when she is outside watching the stars at night. And Sammy never gets in her way because he stays on her desk in his fish bowl.
> When Julie is alone she likes to think how things would be if she was older and on her own. If she could handle it or not. If she would be mature enough for the big world or if she would flub it up.
> When Julie is with her friends she likes to have fun and make fun.

From the beginning of this piece one can see that Sandy feels free to be more expansive in her descriptions. She clearly now feels the necessity to help the reader visualize her main character, and she is becoming more successful in her attempts. She uses similes here for the first time in an attempt to qualify her character's description and communicate this to her reader. If the reader can get beyond the clichéd quality of those descriptions, one can see that she uses the sky as a motif, tying together the first three paragraphs, where she "likes watching the stars at night." and where Frankie gets in her way "when she is outside watching the stars at night."

The third paragraph is one of the few places in her writing during the ten weeks where she shows a sense of humor and irony. This sense of play is interesting; it suggests that Sandy has enough confidence to begin to control the writing process, rather than being controlled by it. What was just a suggestion of humor in her first piece (where she thinks an observer would be amused by the smiling children in their pajamas--and the one little boy who is in his pajamas but not smiling) has become a more defined part of the piece.

The next to last paragraph suggests that Julie might be the beginning of a portrait for a short story--and that that is a possibility already in Sandy's mind. For she doesn't really conclude the sketch, rather she suggests that this Julie still exists for her and is encountering interesting experiences of her own with her friends and pets.

The final short story that Sandy wrote was something of a surprise. She did not like any of the possible short story conflicts she had developed in the three starts. Instead, she went home and came up with her own story about a young girl and her mother. The situation seemed

just what Sandy liked to handle--a young girl's experiences--and one where she had already exhibited some control and self-confidence. When she brought in the first two pages of her rough draft, I could see that she had been influenced by the starts at least in one major way—her descriptions of her main character Jody are exceedingly detailed in the first paragraph. In describing the Jody's dress, she includes even the "zipper in the back so she could get in it." However, it became clear as she developed the story further that this was detail which, in the context of the story, was both meaningless and misleading. We talked about the problem, but she stuck by her decision to include this information. The rest of the story is long, detailed, and quite unconvincing. Although she chooses a potentially amusing build-up to the accident (Jody's repetitive need to use the toilet) the sequence of actions is dull. As the story continues, Sandy occasionally breaks up the story line to give her reader more inappropriate detail ("We finally came to her room, which was 717.") But, on the whole, the story plods through the first-person struggles of the mother to make certain that Jody will survive intact from a severe car accident.

And yet, the story does take up a great deal of space. Sandy has tried to avoid summarizing a plot (as she had done in a start for the second paper); she has tried to tell the story from the point-of-view of a distressed mother, filling in details of the mother's feelings as well as her actions. Sandy comments that the most frustrating part of the story was trying to end it. She states "I would write and it would go on for ever." One can sense that this is the major problem. Sandy was involved more in the description of the pretty little girl and her "cute" need to keep going to the bathroom on their long trip, than she was in

whether or not the mother or her daughter survive the car accident. (It is interesting to note here that a number of the students writing in Sandy's class at this time wrote in either their rough drafts or their final stories about car accidents. Just the day before the assignment was given, they had all been involved in a driving and alcohol awareness problem. The bloodied bodies of the victims shown in slides in the auditorium dominated their thoughts and images for that whole week.)

Ultimately, Sandy produced a short story she was proud of. She was not bothered by inappropriate details or dull elaborations of the mother's slow recovery and her daughter's deliverance from near death in a coma (which she suffers through twice). Sandy even used a typewriter to give her completed, four-paged paper a polished look. I can say that she spent a great deal of time developing the story, making it more believable. For this writing task, her imagination may not have been at its amusing best; however, her confidence allowed her to develop a conflict in considerable detail. She struggled with the climax and its resolution, realizing that a short story has to have a satisfactory conclusion, even if she doesn't yet apply the same rules to a transactional piece of discourse.

The final poetic assignment of the curriculum, writing haikus, shows Sandy's developing self-confidence. Students were shown a series of slides which captured nature in a special moment. Three of the slides showed animals in their natural habitat. Two of the slides showed natural images: a sunset and a fast-flowing river. The starts consisted of students listing any appropriate words that come to mind. Sandy's response to a slide of a Belgian tiger drinking from a shaded pool of water was typical of most of her responses to the slides. She listed the

following: cooling down, refreshing, pretty, dangerous, wild, big, water, sunny, alone, black, white, King. Her resulting haiku was left uncompleted: "dangerous white king/here cooling down all alone." Again, when they were asked to complete five haikus for a final assignment, she rejected those she had attempted to write in class and chose her own to develop. Although some of her resulting haikus are more successful than others, they all show Sandy developing some personal vision of her own, while staying within the rules for writing haiku. The haiku least successful is one which she particularly liked: "white, black, fluffy kitten/ soft, playful and cuddly, playing in the grass". The word choice is uninspired and the image trite. Perhaps less trite, but unintentionally amusing is this following haiku: "Big, brown dirty bear/running through the forest/free as a bumble bee." The simile here is singularly inappropriate. Sandy is more successful, however, in three other haikus:

> Bright red, orange, yellow light
> flickering in the dark night
> on and off it goes

> Broken down old house
> wind whistling through the cracks
> on a winter night.

> Squeeky, rusty bike
> wobbling down the dirt road
> on a summer day

Each of these suggests that Sandy is developing a vision of her own which she can capture in written discourse. Although the individual word choice is still clichéd, the overall image is not. In the final haiku, the image she creates is especially clear and fresh despite the use of "squeeky", "rusty", and "wobbling."

What, however, impressed me most about this final writing assignment is the fact that Sandy chose to develop her own images to capture on paper. Her increasing self-confidence and independence allowed her to stay with this task until she was satisfied with her results, even if that meant discarding all the starts she had begun in class.

Looking once again at Sandy's post-test writing sample, we see that evidence of Sandy's change in attitude and confidence is considerable. She chooses a controversial figure in her life and develops her discussion of her with considerable enthusiasm and detail. Sandy shows here the awareness that she needs to explore a subject more thoroughly than she had before, and an ability to extend her discourse in an attempt to explore it. Once again, the adjectives she chooses are not fresh enough to be effective; however, she stays with the figure of Sheila long enough to give us a strong sense of who she is, why she is disliked, and who the writer is that dislikes her so. Her sincerity is clearly acknowledged by the three evaluators who gave her two fours and one three on the holistic scoring for personal involvement. They also gave her improved scores on her organizational skills, up from two 2's and one 1, to two 3's and one 2. Sandy, who showed the least general holistic score improvement of the nine subjects, has shown the kind of improvement that would answer all four research questions.

Linda

Of the nine subjects involved in the study, Linda was considered the weakest writer by her regular English teacher. Her teacher's general assessment of her ability was that she was "slow" and simply did not have the intellectual ability at this point to be much of a writer. "She simply didn't have it." She was fifteen and a member of a middle-phased English class. Her English grades were low; and, not surprisingly, her interest in the subject was also low. Both her subject teacher and I were surprised by her eagerness to participate in the program.

Linda showed little real understanding of her writing abilities and weaknesses and considerable concern with the realities of writing within a grading system. In her initial questionnaire, she wrote that her major concern when writing a paper is "if the teacher is gonna like it." Her final statement, "I don't know my weakest or strongest points," indicates her lack of understanding of the writing process or her own writing abilities. She seemed to be exceptionally unaware of her own composing processes. What I did find surprising was that she does think that writing is fun, however, she prefers to write letters to friends more than writing stories. She notes that she "didn't like to write in grammer school," but "when i did i did a prety good job." She concludes with the statement, "i think i could become a better writter with a little work," indicating a positive sense of her ability to improve on what she already knows. She has not been discouraged. She knows that she can write letters to friends with success and knows that she likes to write about "things i've done, summer vacations and stuff like that."

During the course of the study, Linda worked diligently on each assignment. She had every intention of improving her writing ability. However, she found a number of the assignments frustrating (most notably the imaginative character sketch) and spent more time than her peers in establishing what she finally wanted to write about. Her recurring responses to a number of her own "starts" was "this is stupid" after reading it aloud to the class. She noted fairly consistently on her final drafts that the "starts" had not really helped her to write. She had had to "go back and do it on her own." To what extent Linda really did benefit from the writing of the starts will be an interesting question to explore. It does seem to me in looking over her progress, that, although she may not have directly used the materials in the starts for some of her final papers, she was applying the skills those starts had fostered. How aware she was of this skill acquisition and application is another question. Generally speaking, Linda was self-conscious and unsure of her abilities until she wrote her final short story of which she was proud and eager to share.

On the first day of class, I asked Linda to fill out the writing interview and then asked her to complete the writing sample. Like Sandy, Linda took just a minute or two to think of a subject (and she too chose the same grammar school teacher, her sixth grade teacher, that she had written about ten months before in the original writing sample. And, like Sandy, she had no memory of ever having written the original sample.) She took just fifteen minutes to complete her writing sample. She wrote no rough draft. Her handwriting is uneven, varying in the angle of the strokes.

In looking at the difference between the two writing samples separated by twenty weeks, I was again struck by the similarity of this performance to Sandy's. The second sample is twice as long. There is some further elaboration in the second piece of general statements, "She helped me alot on math" became "Because I had a lot of trouble in math class with dividing and she was the one who took the time so that I could finally understand what i was doing." She also adds more explanation of her indebtedness to Ms. Tomasini (whose name she does not mention in the second piece, but does in the first): "She gave me some books to take home to do with my parents if i had any trouble." However, despite Linda's greater effort to extend her discussion, this writing sample was scored even lower than her original writing sample. After twenty weeks in ninth-grade English her score had dropped from a 2-1-1 rating by the three independent scorers to a 1-1-1 rating. Linda had the lowest pre-test writing sample score of all nine subjects. Certainly she confirmed her teacher's observation that she was the weakest writer of the group.

Looking at the pre-test essay one can see that Linda has interpreted the task as requiring a simple response. There is no sense of the form the response should take, nor is there a sense of reader. (If this had been asked for in a letter form to a good friend, the audience might have encouraged Linda to extend her discussion further.) However, Linda does show some greater sense in this second sample that she has to support and clarify her statements. But the support and clarification explore only one context--her indebtedness to her teacher. She gives us little or no sense of the woman herself; the second context is left undeveloped.

The change in Linda's ability to write a transactional piece during the ten-week study was dramatic. The holistic grading of this third writing sample jumped to three scores of 2 or better (2, 3, and 3). From the lowest possible score she has moved to passing grades. In the following index of transactional differences, one can see where the improvement came:

March	May
includes no title	chooses an appropriate, if predictable title
does not structure discussion	structures essay in appropriate paragraphs
gives no physical description of the subject	includes a physical description
no awareness of audience	constant sense of audience in her conscious explanation of her relationship with her aunt
explores just one context: her reaction to the subject	explores two contexts: the subject and reaction to her
some personal involvement but approaches subject matter carelessly	strong emotional involvement in appreciating her aunt. Use of exclamation marks exaggerated, however, shows enthusiasm; approaches subject matter with confidence
no rough draft--only one crossout	rough draft: some fundamental changes between rough and final, including decision to exchange one supporting incident for another some editorial changes as well: correcting misspellings and other editorial problems
sloppy handwriting: little concern over appearance of the paper in general	excellent handwriting: concerted effort to improve paper's appearance

Figure 2. Linda: Index of transactional differences.

It is easy to see that Linda has made considerable progress during the ten weeks of the study. Her improvement was across the board. In the individual measurements of transactional writing ability, she improved dramatically in every single category (see Appendix A.) It is not surprising to see that she also gained confidence along with those skills: in her attitudinal response sheet she went consistently from feeling insecure about her writing (responding "uncertain" when first given the statement "I'm no good at writing." and then responding "disagree" when given the same statement after ten weeks) to feeling fairly secure about her ability. Like, Sandy, Linda now demonstrates an understanding of what writing a transactional essay consists of. She now has a clear organizational strategy that allows her to focus on both contexts she was asked to explore--her aunt and her relationship to her. She elaborates enough for us to understand both contexts to some extent. And she has come to this final essay after conscious deliberation, as we can see in her rough draft. For Linda the ten-week curriculum has resulted in distinct behavioral changes. To what extent can we attribute these changes to the curriculum itself?

Analysis of Linda' Curriculum Work

For her first autobiographical assignment, Linda chose to write about a recent experience: the death of her only pet, almost as old as she was. Because the event was so recent she had no difficulty in extending her first expressive writing starts. Following the controlled starts she added two major sections to her original free start: a description of the dog and a concluding statement about the extent of her

sense of loss. The first change is an important one: she realizes that she needs to give her reader the same image that she has of the dog in order for the reader to fully appreciate what she has to say. The second change anticipates what will happen on the final writing sample taken in May: Linda realizes that the final section of her rough draft "We aren't gonna get another dog till summer because both mom and dad work and no one is home during the day to train it," is not as appropriate as "We all really miss her. And it was hard to except, but we wanted the best for her." Whether or not she could actually state why she thinks it is better is unanswerable; nonetheless, she has a sense that the closure of the first is not as effective as the second. This is very much like what happens in her concluding essay, when she sees that her first ending actually develops another subject and so she eliminates the paragraph altogether, choosing a more appropriate conclusion. In this first writing assignment, the expressive starts gave Linda enough material from which to pick and choose in editorial decision making. She had, as well, chosen an excellent photograph to respond to. The death of her dog was an emotional event that she wanted intensely to write about. When she read her rough draft to the class, she was so moved by the experience that she started to cry before she could finish it. Given such strong emotions, ecphoric arousal was automatic and sustained.

The second writing task, writing an imaginative autobiography, was not completed as successfully as the first, perhaps because of the difference in personal involvement between the two tasks. Her first sketch has the strength of recent emotions and feelings to make it a convincing statement. The second hasn't this strength; however, death and a sense

of loss are still the motivating forces behind these next starts and rough
drafts.

The start which becomes eventually the basis for her final paper is
based on the painting of a melancholy, middle-aged woman sitting turned on
her piano stool and looking out from the painting as if looking at a
camera. Linda imagines her having everything she wants "Except for the
women (woman) who taught her how to play piano and always performed with
her. It was her mother. Her mother died last week and she really feels
lost without her." The incremental and rather dramatic build-up to the
statement "It was her mother" came as a surprise to me, given Linda's weak
writing skills. She ran into trouble, however, when she moves out of the
time of the painting and telescopes the action of the mother and her
daughter during the next three years: "And she taught her daughter to
play just like her mother had taught her. And within about 3 years they
were performing together." At my suggestion, Linda reframed her
autobiographical incident, making it a single entry into an imaginary
diary. This successfully got Linda writing within a possible time
sequence; but it did not improve the quality of the imagined experience.
In fact, the revised diary format conveyed how insincerely the whole
experience was felt: "Well diary its starting to get late and I have to
talk to mom before I go to bed. Talk to ya soon!" I suggested that she
fill in more details about how the young woman felt during that time in
order to make the experience more convincing, but the suggestion resulted
in just a few more sentences just as unconvincing as the others. The
ending in the final draft is just as artificial.

In this second writing assignment, Linda begins a behavior that increases in frequency through the study: she uses exclamation marks to emphasize her statements. This could be the result of increasing self-confidence in her own writing. Or, it could be an insincere and facile way to put energy into only superficially felt writing. It could also be the result of both of these changes; she becomes both more confident and less involved. Looking at her final writing sample, the exclamation marks there appear to indicate enthusiasm and sincerity coupled with self-confidence. To what extent this is true of her curriculum work is an interesting question. The response sheet which she handed in with this second assignment indicates that she thought that the writing assignment was "kind of easy to write about" (perhaps because she had now greater self-confidence after the success of her first paper) but that the actual paper was only "ok. i like regular writing better," thereby indicating that writing a personal essay was easier and she didn't really like what she came up with for this second assignment. For this writing assignment, her use of exclamation marks seems to reveal both self-confidence and artificial enthusiasm.

The next writing assignment, a nonfiction character sketch, presented Linda with some of the same difficulties it did Sandy. Linda found this assignment "sorta hard so i really didn't like doing it." The "starts" she writes "didn't really help me at all." Her starts in general read much like her second, pre-test writing sample. They describe in only general terms who the person is and what their mutual history is. When I asked Linda to take one of these starts and develop it by responding to my questions, she came up with considerably more detail (in this case, mainly negative additions: "she has a very fake smile, she said so her

self....Some people say she's pretty some say she's a snot...some say shes a wicked prep...she's very short and stuck on her self.) When she took home her combined material on Nikki, she came back with a rough draft that showed her physically describing Nikki more, but excluding much of the important material she had established about her personality and their mutual history. She did not like her rough draft. When I asked why she had excluded so much of the material, she replied that she didn't like all the negative stuff that she ended up with, and she just didn't like it. She went home disappointed and frustrated. However, she came in the next day with a totally new rough draft about her little sister Jessica--by far a much more positive sketch. With the exception of a few suggestions by me to make the sketch more detailed (in particular, the room that they share together), the rough draft and final draft are identical. However, both those drafts exclude what was probably the most sincere comment in the expressive start: "shes usauly a little spoiled brat cuz she's the baby of the family and she has this way of turning everything around so that its my fault. But usually mom and dad don't buy it!" Linda's editorial decisions to exclude much of the early material indicates, it seems to me, a decentering by her or a distancing of herself from the subject as she begins to see more of what her reader might see. The sacrifice in this process is the sincerest responses by the writer; however, the gain is in the increasing critical intelligence that is being brought to bear on the act of writing. Perhaps at this early stage this kind of sacrifice is a necessary beginning to more coherent and public writing, which is, after all, what transactional writing is all about.

In the fourth writing assignment, the imaginative character sketch, Linda changes her evaluation of the starts. She decides that they really did help her: "It did help because without them my roughdraft came out awfull." Looking back at those starts, it is difficult to see how they helped her. Apparently the original idea for the sketch came from a picture of a young hunter trying to hold on to the antlers of a deer fleeing from him in the water. He is in a canoe with his dog swimming near by. However, the "Dave" that comes out of her imagination has little relation to this original image. She creates an almost comic figure, endows him with a large family, and makes his shortness (both of temper and stature) his dominating trait. There are few changes between her rough and final drafts. Ultimately, the sketch just begins the discussion of a potentially interesting character. She concludes the final draft with an exclamation mark--an assertive touch not seen in the rough draft.

After these last two less successful papers, Linda surprised me by developing what was for her an extended short story. The starts leading up to the story itself are varied; however, they indicate that Linda, at this point, had no clear idea of what writing a short story entailed. She successfully wrote starts that could lead to a short story, however the short story rough draft beginnings (she wrote two) were plot summaries, not the beginnings of short stories. When I brought this to Linda's attention she was disappointed, but clearly not discouraged. She considered taking one of her rough drafts and developing it, but rejected them both: the first, about a night spent watching the sun set on top of a mountain, and the second about a deer being felled by a falling tree. (She laughed at this last beginning, saying "This is really stupid.")

Linda took her frustration home with her once again. When she returned to class the next day she came excited about a new idea. She had the first two pages of a story about a young girl who travels to Hawaii for her sister's wedding. However, she felt that she had a major difficulty: she wanted her heroine to sail to Hawaii on a passenger liner, a means of travel which presented a number of problems, the major one being that she didn't really want to focus on the trip, but rather on the wedding itself. This is when Linda decided to have her heroine fly—even though Linda herself doesn't like to fly. At this point, Linda made a number of decisions alone: her story would be told in the first person; she would have her narrator overcome her fear of flying; and she would focus on the feelings of her heroine and not the impending marriage of her older sister. The influence of the starts is subtly felt in this decision making. Her idea for a trip to Hawaii seems to have come from one of the first starts. She writes both that Hawaiian start and the other starts in the first person. The starts have also helped her eliminate some possible plots which she feels she couldn't develop adequately either because they were "stupid" (the deer being hit by a tree and the daughter overdosing her father), or because they were out of her own experience (the city sketch, for instance).

LInda's final choice of setting (primarily in the heroine's own house), major character (a first-person narrator, a girl about her own age), and conflict (becoming prepared for her sister's wedding) are appropriate material for her. Her enthusiastic writing of the story was sincerely felt, even if she did use twenty-nine exclamation marks in the course of telling it. (By this point we had talked about the appropriate use of exclamation marks and the danger of over-using them—obviously,

without any resulting behavioral change.) In her own evaluation of the story, she states that she "liked it alot."

Linda's story "Angela's Wish Come True!" begins in an environment in which she was comfortable--it feels like the same room she described sharing with her sister. . Her narrator is in bed on a Saturday morning, her "only day to sleep in." She includes a number of details after her first conversation with her sister which help to define that three-dimensional space: "I was lying in bed listening to my Corey Hart tape and reading my seventeen magazine."   There are later moments in the story when the narrator's response to her mother's decision to go shopping and the thrill of becoming a bridesmaid are, convincingly, the responses of a fifteen year-old. The extended telephone dialogue Linda chose on her own to convey the personality and relationship of the two sisters.   On the whole, the most successful part of the short story occurs in the opening scene, with the discovery of the wedding, her role in it, her fear of flying, and her mother's decision to go shopping.   The possible climactic scenes (the actual flight and the wedding in Hawaii) are left undeveloped. Linda was not bothered by this weakness. She was enormously pleased with her story--enough to learn how to punctuate the conversations correctly on her own (with a few exceptions, of course).

When Linda was asked what gave her the most difficulty in producing the short story, she responded: "Doing past tense and present tense." This was a real problem for her in the rough draft. She shifted often between past, present, and future. This occurred, quite predictably, when she had to change the scene of the action. After some individual tutoring, however, this problem was overcome.

Linda's short story was her most successful piece written during the ten weeks. In this story, she became involved in her first-person narrator's experience. She developed a simple plot through the use of dialogue and first person monologues. As long as she stayed in the familiar territory of a teenager's bedroom she could imagine how a teenager might naturally respond. It is, by far, the most extended piece of writing. Of course, this can be expected given that the sequential time frame of the short story encourages further development. Nonetheless, this was the piece of which Linda was most proud; she read it happily aloud to the class three times.

Linda's final writing experience gave her some difficulty, and, significantly, contains only one exclamation mark. The writing of haikus, she noted, was "kinda hard after awhile!" Giving her the most difficulty was trying to "make sense." Giving her the most pleasure was "having to really count sylibles." Ironically, Linda never really counted syllables correctly. Not one of her haikus conforms to the appropriate number of syllables. Although the form and its limitations were clearly explained to Linda, she did not rework her original haikus to conform to expectations. She may not have taken the task seriously—certainly she spent little time on the haikus completed in class. However, like Sandy, Linda took the task home with her and completed two haikus on her own. The first haiku: "Windyday trees are blowing/The children are outside playing/Then comes the rain everything is quiet." With a 7/8/9 count of syllables, Linda is far off the syllabic standard. However, the poem does succeed in the other haiku goals: it is a subject of a particular event caught and presented objectively and it is in a present tense. Although the mood is not mystical, it does suggest a special moment. The same

criticism applies to the second haiku: "Flowers in the Garden/Orange, yellow, purple, red./posing for a picture." These haikus, completed independently show some sensitivity to an art form far removed from the life of a fifteen-year-old girl; the fact that she chose to do rethink them on her own, much as Sandy had done, suggests that Linda has gained both self-confidence and independence during these ten weeks (even if her powers of addition have not improved.)

Thus, it is not surprising that Linda has shown remarkable improvement in her post-test writing sample. She writes with enthusiasm, detail, and self-confidence. She has been given enough expressive work from which to make decisions about form and appropriateness. She is able in this final writing sample to exclude a complete paragraph that, appropriately, shifted the focus of her essay. She is not yet comfortable enough with the form to make it seem more than formulaic. Nonetheless, the writing of the essay, "My Aunt Bettyann.," was not done just according to forumla. The score of the independent raters of 3, 3, and 4 in personal involvement attest to her sincerity. Linda has gained the knowledge to write with specificity and form, confident of her abilities to do so.

Larry

Larry, a shy fifteen-year-old, was one of just two boys in the program. He was, in a sense, "all boy," as his essays and stories indicate. He was interested primarily in sports and had professed to me in private that he hoped to become a sports writer when he grew up. At school he was actively involved in the sports program and a leader of his class. He was a polite, respectful, and reserved participant who came prepared to class every day, having completed all homework assignments. The only exception to this consistent performance was in the final writing assignment when he reacted against having to write poetry. This, however, was the only time when his self-image as "jock" interfered with his writing production.

Larry wrote one of the better writing samples of the nine students in the March pre-test. He was a moderately confident writer, certain, as he writes in his pre-study interview, to get a good grade on a paper if he put a lot of effort into it. He admitted to liking to write, but rarely writing outside of school. He enjoyed seeing his efforts put into writing about his own experiences in football. But even more than sports essays, he preferred to write short stories. He felt at the onset of the program that he could become a good writer if he strengthened his strongest point, description, and improved his weakest points, punctuation and paragraphing. He joined the class with considerable enthusiasm— determined to become a better writer.

According to the three independent raters' evaluations his determination paid off. He did show considerable improvement at the conclusion of the ten weeks. He would have been assured of passing the basic skills test with the average score of 3 (all raters gave him a 3).

Looking back at Larry's first writing sample, the original basic skills test, one can see a fledgling writer who really has no idea how to structure an essay. Like Sandy and Linda, Larry responds to the writing task as he would to a direct question requiring a simple answer. His first sentence (no title given) indicates his assumption of a shared context based on a direct question: "My Fourth grade teacher." He continues in the next four lines to substantiate his appreciation of his teacher by explaining what she did for him and his classmates. But in four lines little more is explained than the barest of details.

Larry's next writing sample, taken twenty academic weeks after the first, shows that Larry has expanded considerably what he understands to be the task at hand. Although he, like Sandy and Linda, chose to write about the same important individual from grammar school, it is apparent that he is now familiar with the classic format of a transactional essay-- introduction, body, and conclusion. He knows now that he has to treat the directive essay question differently; he cannot assume a shared context with the reader, and so he must define the topic of the paper and then proceed to clarify and substantiate his observations. In comparison to his peers, he effectively takes enough time to begin to explore his relationship with Mrs. Valiton (he received scores of 3,3,and 2, for extended discourse.) That he seems sincere is attested to by the raters who gave him the only cross-the-board 4 rating for personal involvement seen in all eighteen papers evaluated on individual measurements.

It is obvious that Larry has made considerable progress in those twenty weeks. He has learned the conventions of the essay: the context is not shared, necessarily, by the reader; the form is clearly defined; the support is detailed. And despite this new concern for form, he has remained sincerely involved in his subject matter.

The final, post-test writing sample shows Larry building on this knowledge and effectively improving his general holistic test scores from the 2, 2, 3 of the pre-test to a 3, 3, 3 in the post test. Although the improvement is not as dramatic as has been seen in Sandy and Linda's work, it is significant, nonetheless, as indicated in the following "Index of transactional differences:"

March	May
structure of essay dominates discussion	structure more a vehicle discussion of subject, David
explores one major context: what Mrs. Valiton did for him	explores two contexts: David and his indebtedness to him
discovers major theme (she doesn't forget us) in the last line	major idea dominates essay from the beginning
little extension of discussion	discussion of subject doubled in length
no rough draft	rough draft with significant changes between rough and final
writes in simple sentences	sentence structure occasionally complex
writes in pencil: no crossouts or erasures	writes in pencil with evidence of erasures

Figure 3. Larry: Index of transactional differences.

It is most interesting to see how Larry has retained his sense of the
form, while making it less obvious. In this latest essay, he takes far
greater interest in developing the subject matter (the character, David
Rancourt in this instance). One can see Larry doing even more effectively
what Sandy and Linda both did: developing the second context, the subject
matter, with more intensity and thoroughness than they had ever done
before. In Steve's case, it is as if he has absorbed the conventional
form of the essay sufficiently so that it does not preoccupy him; thus he
is able to give more time (more short storage space) to developing the
personality of the character himself.

In this essay, Larry has not used the artificial, one sentence
introduction of his pre-test: "The person who made a big influence on me
in Grammar school was my 4th grade teacher." Rather, he has included in
one comprehensive paragraph the topic of his essay (David and his
influence) along with the identification and classification of the
subject. David continues to dominate the rest of the essay as well. The
detailing of David's leadership and victories is so successfully completed
that the reader can understand Larry's concluding statement: "David
Rancourt's athletic ability and schoolwork has influenced me to play
football and try for better grade's." Larry's rough draft reveals that he
did rethink a number of details when he wrote the final draft: he put in
the paragraphs and he developed David's independence in Florida, adding
that he is also the president of the top fraternity at FSU. He also
changed his concluding sentence from the simple causal statement, "Because
of all of this, I play football today." to the more complex and
summarizing statement: "David Rancourt's athletic ability and schoolwork
has influenced me to play football and try for better grade's." In this

instance, Larry's essay is extended enough for him to make these critical decisions. In the extended discourse category for the specific dimensions, Larry was rated a 4 by all three readers, whereas in the pretest he was given two 3's and one 2.

It is particularly apparent in Larry's final writing sample that there is a direct relationship between the extension of discourse and significant editorial decision making. Given enough material from which to make decisions about order and inclusion, Larry became a more confident reviser.

Two other specific dimensions, classification cues and physical context cues, improved almost as dramatically as the extended discourse measure, and are clearly related to that extended discourse measure. The extension of Larry's discourse came from his successful attempt to classify and develop the context of his subject. The question once again to ask at this point is: to what extent did the curriculum itself influence this development?

Analysis of Larry's Curriculum Work

Before looking at Larry's particular writing products, I would like to make two general observations about his writing behavior during the ten weeks. First of all, Larry dutifully followed all assignments meticulously. Unlike Sandy and Linda who exercised their prerogative to begin afresh at home with a new subject (so long as it fell within the requirements of the assignment), Larry's work stemmed directly from his classwork. Each of his final products began with a visual icon either brought into the class by Larry, or selected and shown in class by me. Secondly, Larry responded immediately to any suggestions for improvement

made by me or his classmates. In fact, he depended on suggestions from others for extending his discourse. However, once the suggestions were made, they were incorporated with his own brand of humor and sensitivity. He never became as independent as his fellow writers; however, he was just as pleased with the results of his labor and our suggestions as were his peers with their more independently arrived-at products.

Larry's first autobiographical piece—to relate an important incident in his life of which he had brought in a photograph—focused on his victorious experience in junior high football. His first expressive response to the photograph reads like his March writing sample: it is a straightforward statement identifying the photograph, explaining the situation, and then adding on a few more bits of information before a quick concluding statement: "Those memories will stick with me." After responding to five separate queries, and developing five more starts he selected pieces of the starts to flesh out the original response, while also eliminating some of the original essay that seemed inappropriate (The mention of co-captainship in the first paragraph seemed out of place to him). The middle paragraph was an important addition to his original response; in this paragraph he mentions for the first time that the victory was a hard one—they had to work hard for the coach in order to succeed. His final paragraph begins with a sentence, "As a person first seeing this picture i'd say that they looked like an average team," that needs further extension—he implies that they were not what they looked like. They were hardly an average team. However, he does not sufficiently explain what he means, choosing instead to include a totally new line derived from one of his starts: "About 65 years from now I can see myself stumble across this same picture I'd say to myself "those were

great times." What is most obvious in this first piece is Larry's
willingness to rework and redesign his writing based on the starts that he
has written. It is important to note too here that Larry does not limit
himself to just recopying the starts. He uses the starts to write other
starts (he wrote his last paragraph from one of the original starts).
This is what the exercise is intended to do: to stimulate ecphoric
arousal repeatedly, so that with each re-remembering new ideas, emotions,
and imaginings can be discovered.

Larry found that writing the starts "helped me because it's just like
notes to work with." That Larry had already established a pattern of
working with notes to arrive at new combinations is clear in his initial
writing interview. When asked how he proceeds to write an essay for a
teacher (the question did not limit the response to the English class),
he reveals: "I go and start it right away by taking short notes and the
main Ideas I would like to follow." This may be his pattern when writing
a book report or a history essay. However, it is clear from both his 8th
grade and March writing samples that this is not his procedure when
writing a transactional essay. What he appears to do is to make an essay
out of his short notes and ideas, and so the essay moves through the
subject space in an exploratory and nondeliberate manner, never to be
reassessed or re-examined. The starts alter this pattern. For while the
starts encourage the exploratory process, they are clearly "beginnings"
not to be confused with a finished piece. Although Larry's final essay
is not that much longer than his first expressive response to the
photograph, it is a considered combination and extension of that simple
beginning. He concludes after writing this first essay: "It was

different from our usual writing. I like using starts, it helps me write easier."

In Larry's second piece of writing, the imaginative autobiography, the first expressive piece of writing resulted in this brief sketch:

> He looks like a bum with not a cent to his name. The reason for this is that he's in a bar with no drink or food. It looks like a time during the depression. He looks like h's in his mid-seventies. He looks like someone just left him because there's another ciggarett going......He looks like he was in jail for a long time and just got out.

Larry considered this final start of five the most interesting to develop into an imagined autobiographical experience. First, however, he was asked to write in third person, what had happened to the bum on this particular day or what recent, powerful experience had preceeded moments (or days) before we see him.   A number of visual cues in the original slide gave Larry the context for his piece: the age of the figure, his seeming to belong to a depression generation, and the extra cigarette left burning in the ashtray. Ultimately, the sketch assumes this context: it is Chicago and the time of the great Depression. The hero, through adversity, finds himself first eating out of garbage cans, then getting an easy meal in jail, and, finally, being left desolate in a bar by his rich friend Jim. The sketch went through three rough drafts before its final two-page version. Larry liked most about his final piece that "You can put yourself in the picture's place."   Although he is never completely convincing putting himself in the place of a bum from the depression, Larry still put a great deal of himself in the process of trying to become one.

The nonfiction character sketch which followed the Depression monologue was one of Larry's most successful pieces. Of the four photographs he brought from home, he chose a picture of Dwight Gooden, a pitcher for the New York Mets, to write about. He wrote his first expressive response about Gooden, summarizing his skills as a ball player, and enumerating his awards and accomplishments. The "starts" elicited a number of more personal observations and experiences, such as the time Larry saw him on television and the spectacular quality of his "blistering fastball." In looking at the final draft, we can see that once again Larry built on the starts, using them as a means of developing his discussion. This draft illustrates how he reworked and reorganized his starts into an extended character sketch. The major weakness of the essay is in the one line conclusion. Again, Larry was aware that a conclusion was called for; however, he just tacked on a simple generalizing statement instead of developing one. That generalization, "In all Dwight Gooden can be considered the best pitcher in baseball today" began in a start asking what other people say about him. Larry had written: "The critics and newspapermen, magazine writers and the general public say that Dwight Gooden is the greatest pitcher of all-time." Why he changed the ending from this final, dramatic statement to the other is an interesting question. Perhaps he felt that he was making too great a claim for Gooden. Nonetheless, for whatever reason he changed the line, it is significant that he changed it. He was working with a critical eye, making editorial decisions about his own writing.

The imaginative character sketch which followed this assignment shows Larry developing a sensitive portrait about a young boy caught between the opposing value system of his parents. The sketch began in a

start stimulated by a slide of a young boy in hunting clothes in a canoe and holding on the the antlers of a swimming deer. A young dog is swimming alongside the boy's canoe. He writes:

> This picture is of a boy who's saving a deer from the water. He's looking at a dog that might try to bite the deer. He isn't far from shore. The dog looks like a hunting dog. His cloths look like they were made from deerskin. But he doesn't have a gun. This is different because he looks like he didn't shoot it. He looks afraid of the dog.

Misunderstanding the assignment for that night, Larry returned to class the next day with a plot summary for a story in which Dan and his dog Spike find a deer after days of fruitless hunting. Then Spike runs after the deer and so Dan:

> ....ran furiously after Spike and the deer. Spike chased him for miles. He chased it into a lake. Dan looked for a boat for about 10 minutes when Dan suddenly came across one. He though to himself "what luck". He paddled forever it seemed like when he saw Spike and the deer. He paddled over to them and tried to pull the deer in. He pulled for about a half hour. He shot him earlier so he was already dead. He finally got him in. There house was right on water about 2 miles downstream. They then skinned him and had meat for the winter.

This amusing plot summary for a short story shows Larry making up the story as he goes along--the clear giveaway being the line "He shot him earlier so he was already dead." Faced with the knowledge that he was not to write a short story, but rather develop a character who might possibly inhabit a short story, Larry creates a far more complex and interesting character out of the Dan in this primitive beginning. His complex Dan is a modern "schoolboy" (meaning someone who spends most of his time studying) who has wanted to go hunting for a long time, but is

faced with a father who says that, "Brains don't do hunting, they do homework." The father is a lawyer and a golfer who has forgotten the thrill of hunting. Dan's mother, on the otherhand, wants Dan to "loosen up and go have some fun. Dan agrees with her fully. But Dan is intimidated by his father's strict, unlimited power. He wouldn't think of going against his fathers word." Dan concludes his sketch with Dan having only "one hope in life, to go hunting once in his life...."

From the unconvincing boy who goes hunting and gets his deer, Larry has developed someone quite different and far more interesting. He obviously took time to rethink this Dan who is chasing the deer, making him more modern and more complex. Larry has sufficiently put himself into the imagination of his character to imagine what his father tells him: "Brains don't do hunting, they do homework." When I asked Larry if this comment might be one he had heard from his own father, he responded that, no, he had just thought it up himself.

When Larry handed in this piece, he wrote that what he liked most about the piece of writing was "using a picture to guide you" while the most difficult task he had faced in the writing was "describing Dan." At what point the complex Dan of his final sketch emerged from the starts is something of a mystery. Larry believes that the writing of the starts "gave me a full idea of who Dan is." It is clear, however, that the full idea developed slowly and only after repeated exposure to what he had already written.

The subject of Larry's short story is another male, only he is older and far more unfortunate than Dan. The inspiration for the story came from a slide shown to Larry depicting two coal workers, blackened by a day in the mines. From the screen, they stare helplessly out into the

eyes of the viewer. Larry chose this emotion-laden slide as the basis

for his short story, despite the fact that his peers were impressed more

by another start far more descriptive and evocative. That other start

was in response to a slide of a rising moon on a hillside:

> It was an unbelievable night
>
> It was a clear October evening. The sun was about to set. The
> trees are bare and the frost covers the long green grass. A foggy
> film of clouds disrupt the sun's final glare. The sunset is a
> orangey glow on the fog-filled evening. The owl's hooted peacefully
> while the crickets churped furiously. You could sense a chilly
> night upon you as the sun made it's last apperence. This is a
> perfect setting for this joyous Halloween evening. The younger boys
> and girls were dressed as traditional ghosts, and witches. Since
> the night was mainly for kids I stayed home.

After such an effective build-up of atmosphere, I was quite

surprised by Larry's last sentence. Certainly, he did not feel that he

could go anywhere with this start. He chose, instead, to work with the

coal digger, a subject where, unfortunately, he does not show these

descriptive powers at all.

Larry's first attempt to develop Bill, begins with the idea of "bad

luck." In this earlier version, Bill's bad luck is derived from domestic

problems: "He has been married twice. Both times Bill and his wives had

kids, 4 apice to be exact. They got the kids both times so he has to pay

child support. Bill has been fired recently. " Bill becomes a grave

digger, earning five dollars a ditch per night. When Bill "gets home at

night , he throws his dirty, smelly, grungy clothes out on the line. He

can't even afford to get his clothes washed." In the next paragraph Bill

wins three million in the Megabucks game, pays off his wife, gets a condo

in Orlando, sells real estate and enjoys his profits.

Larry's final version of the story (it went through a number of rewrites) depicts Bill as a "guy that has had a string of bad luck recently." He eliminates a number of the more amusing details in the first version (the grungy clothes and double households) and focuses on his motif: Bill's string of bad luck. Larry really develops this idea of "string" and the reader is given a number of examples of his incredibly poor luck. He has taken one of these examples (Bill's having to move to find another place to live) from another one of the earlier starts, in which he has a family evicted from their home in a blizzard and having to walk to an uncle's home for shelter. Larry continues to develop Bill's bad luck to a climax where he wins the Megabucks. However, the climax itself initially received no more attention than the other related incidents. At my suggestion, Larry tried to develop the scene where he finds the Megabucks ticket. The results of his own imagination, the climactic scene is much better. Larry hits upon the idea of tying Bill's winning numbers to Bill's own bad luck and recent history, thereby more effectively tying in the scene with the string of bad luck. Larry concludes the story with his own ironic touch--Bill gambles away his money in a year; the IRS takes most of his belongings and he is last seen just as destitute as he was at the beginning of the story.

This final story went through many rewrites and rethinking so that by the end of the process, Larry was tired. When asked what he had found most difficult to do, he replied, "All the copies I had to write and rewrite over and over." However, his final short story made a very strong impression on his classmates when he read it to them; he was clearly proud of the short story he had struggled so hard to create. He wrote on his response sheet that he enjoyed using the picture as his start. For

Larry, this was a consistent response throughout the study. He enjoyed
the visual stimulation and was constant in using it as the basis for his
writing.

This short story is the last significant piece of writing Larry
completed. Although he participated in class and began to write one or
two haikus, he didn't give it much attention. He finally handed in two
haikus with a response sheet that revealed his attitudinal blocks. When
asked what gave him the most difficulty in producing the product, he
wrote: "Thinking like a poet. I disliked it, I'm not good at writing
poetry." The starts, he writes, helped him to "remember the picture
fully"; he does not say that the starts helped him write a haiku. I
found this response quite interesting. The starts were effective in
helping Larry reconstruct the image that he had seen; however, he was
unwilling to transfer that image into formal language. He completed two
haikus, liking neither. He did not bother to copy over in final draft
form an acceptable haiku: "The sun's ray's beat down/The heat is
unbearable/A perfect beach day." For Larry, this quick venture into
poetry was neither fruitful nor educational; it was, however, also an
exception. His performance in all other stages of the curriculum was
dedicated and self-gratifying.

Looking once again at Larry's final writing sample we see evidence
that his work paid off. To the writing of the transactional essay he has
brought new behavior: he is able to choose a subject and explore it
thoroughly by using classification and physical context cues; he is able
to extend his discussion for a greater length of time (that is, he can
stay longer with the task at hand); he is willing to rethink the piece,
thereby making significant changes between the rough and final draft; he

has absorbed the form of the essay so that it does not dominate his thinking--rather the subject he envisions predominates.

Results from the Case-Study Analyses

The writings of Sandy, Linda, and Larry were examined in order to determine the changes which occurred in the ten weeks of writing. Writing samples taken the first March meeting at the beginning of the study, and the final May meeting at the conclusion of the study formed the basis for measuring the changes in their transactional writing ability. The following discussion focusses on the common changes in these students' writing, resulting from their participation in what was designed to be an "organic" writing curriclum.

The two transactional writing samples were identical in nature. However, the way in which they approached them differed considerably: all three individuals approached the second essay with significantly more assurance about their own skills than they had approached the first. They revealed a greater understanding of their responsibility to the reader by developing a fuller context for their ideas. They explored both contexts of the subject with greater skill and thoroughness, providing classification and modification cues to enrich their discussion. As the result of their growing concern for the reader and increased interest in the subject matter, their later transactional writing sample showed dramatic improvement in extending the discourse. To summarize: they took more time and space to complete the task.

One of the most significant changes in the ten week period was in their ability to organize their extended discourse. All developed an ability to structure their discussion within the standard, transactional

form, incorporating paragraphs into an introduction, body, and conclusion format.

They all executed the task differently: in the pre-test sample they wrote their essay in fifteen minutes, choosing not to write a rough draft or revise their work. There was no indication of any proofreading. In the post-test the students executed the task by including a rough draft from which they made some revisions for the final draft. There is, as well, evidence of proofreading.

Significantly, throughout the greater elaboration, organization, and execution of the task, they demonstrated increased personal involvement with the task. Their writing became more coherent and public while becoming even more personal and vital. In a sense, the "self" that James Britton warned could be lost in moving from expressive writing to transactional writing was found by Sandy, Linda, and Larry.

There have been a number of changes in the writing behavior of these three ninth grade writers. The degree of change in each of the dimensions varied from student to student; in some areas the improvement may have been modest; in other areas, dramatic. When I originally selected these three ninth graders for the case study data analysis, I chose them because they illustrated the varying degrees of improvement resulting from exposure to the curriculum. All nine participants experienced significant improvement in their ability to write a transactional paper. For Sandy and Larry, the change was considerable; for Linda the change was dramatic.

C H A P T E R   V

GENERAL RESULTS

Scoring-Evaluation

The evaluation of the curriculum used in this chapter depends on
writing samples for all nine participants. Pre- and post project writing
samples were taken. The writing sample asked for was a piece of writing
similar to the original basic skills test these students took. They were
asked to contribute a piece of writing to a school newspaper, describing
someone who had made a strong effect on them. (In the original sample for
eighth-graders before the cases were selected, the task was narrowed down
to describing someone in grammar school who had made a strong effect on
them.) No suggestions or help was given in either the pre- or post test.
Ten weeks of this writing curriculum had intervened between the two writing
samples.

Evaluation of Transactional Writing Samples

The pre-project transactional writing samples were combined with the
post-project writing samples for the purpose of evaluation and scoring.
Included as well were the original eighth-grade basic writing skills essay
to be compared with the pre and post-project writing samples under the
general holistic scoring evaluation. (Note that these papers were not
evaluated for the seven specific dimensions.) Each paper was coded with a

four-digit number so that the evaluators would not be able to identify the subject, nor to differentiate a pre-project sample from a post-project sample. Thus a total of twenty-seven papers were coded and evaluated.

Three independent readers, all with a minimum of eight years of experience in teaching writing to ninth-grade, basic writers were asked to participate in evaluating these samples. The reading was completed in one session, because of the small sample of subjects.

Two different evaluative procedures were followed in order to evaluate and analyze the amount and kind of growth that took place:

The first procedure was to give a holistic, general impression scoring reading to each of the eighteen papers (for this measure, the experimenter included for further comparison as well the original basic skills test taken the previous spring. Readers were given a training session with papers from other ninth grade writers to assure inter-rater reliability. All three teachers were familiar with the process of holistic scoring and thus needed no introduction to the procedure; they came quickly to a valid consensus on the scoring of the practice papers. (I had stipulated at the outset that to be considered valid the three raters' scores for a particular composition could differ by no more than one point.) Each of the readers received the compositions in a different random order, and they were not allowed to see each other's scores while the rating session was in progress. These precautions were taken to minimize the danger that bias would be introduced inadvertently into the scoring procedure.

The second procedure was to ask readers to evaluate the seven specific criteria under Individual Measurements of Transactional Writing. Those seven measurements included: extended discourse, classification cues, physical context cues, modification, logical sequence, organizational

skills, and personal involvement. In order to avoid the "halo effect"
papers were read through for one measurement at a time. Papers were rated
on a standard, four-point holistic scale, with one (1) being the lowest and
four (4) being the highest.

The scores were then tabulated for each of the tests. Thus, a total
of nine paired T-Tests were run on the collected data.

Findings of the Holistic, General Impression Scoring

The results indicate that a significant improvement in transactional
writing ability occurred during the ten-week period. The overall Holistic
scores indicate that there was considerable improvement during the twenty
weeks between the student's eighth grade transactional writing sample and
the pre-study writing sample collected after twenty weeks into a standard,
ninth-grade writing curriculum. But most importantly for this study, the
scores indicate that improvement during the ten weeks of the experimental
study was greater in half the number of weeks: (from a .55 S.D. improvement
in the first twenty weeks, to a .63 S.D. improvement in just ten weeks of
the study.) In the paired t-tests run on these writing samples, both showed
significance at the .01 level. (See Table #1)

Pre-pre Test Mean Score	Pre-Test Mean Score	S.D.	Ave. Dif.	S.E.	S.D.	P.
1.45	2.00	.55	.632	.162	3.90	.001

Pre-Test Mean Score	Post-Test Mean Score	S.D.	Ave. Dif.	S.E.	S.D.	P.
2.00	2.63	.63	.705	.161	4.379	.001

Table 1.   Findings of the General Impression Scoring.

Findings of the Specific Dimensions Scoring

The tests indicate that there was improvement during the ten-week period in all categories; however, the statistically significant gains were found in five out of the total seven dimensions. The two categories in which no significant gains were found were in the physical context cues and logical sequence cues categories. (See Table #2.) There are a number of possible reasons why these two categories did not improve--these speculations will form part of the discussion of the results.

Dimension	Pre-Test Mean Score	Post-Test Mean Score	Ave. Dif	S.E.	S.D.	P
Extended Discourse	2.3	3.26	.964	.1795	5.370	.001
Classification Cues	1.85	2.85	.997	.1259	7.919	.001
Physical Context Cues	2.15	2.22	.264	.2922	.264	--
Modification Cues	1.66	2.44	.892	.1668	5.347	.001
Logical Sequence Cues	2.04	2.26	.223	.1375	1.625	--
Organizational Skills	2.37	3.00	.629	.1948	3.228	.01
Personal Involvement	2.81	3.33	.558	.2407	2.314	.05

Table 2. Findings of the specific dimensions scoring.

Discussion

Look once again at the particular nature of the writing task: It was an autobiographical task, requiring that the writers first search their experience for someone who had an impact on them. This was the first context they had to explore. The second context was the personality of the person they chose. In looking at the least successful attempts of these ninth graders, it is clear that they almost automatically began with the first context--their specific relationship to the individual. They almost always began with a general statement of their relationship to that person. ("Val Mitchell was a good friend of mine.") They then explained why that statement was true in a few sentences, thus completing their essay without necessarily exploring the second context--the personality of the individual. Finally this general statement was communicated to an audience who did not necessarily share this experience, the audience being the teacher or an anonymous school population.

In summarizing, one could say that immature, basic writers do not distinguish between the teacher as audience or the school community as audience; they see the task as requiring a simple response from their own experience with that person. They do not have the sense of developing the individual for someone who has not shared the context.

For these basic writers, this type of essay is a complex task which they simply do not know how to attack. The short term storage demands of this form of writing where one has to juggle not just one context, but two are considerable. For the basic writer the tendency is to develop only one context, and partially at that. The question now is: does the curriculum

I taught change the nature of the task, thus making it easier for these basic writers to explore both contexts of the writing task.

The following discussion analyzes the specific behavioral changes (as measured by the seven specific dimensions) among the nine subjects over the ten week period of the study.

Classification Cues

Classification cues indicate the writers' awareness that they are writing for both thmeselves and an audience. By using classification cues, they show increasing flexibility in shifting from their personally remembered and organized experience to the audience's understanding of that experience. A character sketch asks that the writers categorize a complex series of experience and phenomenna in terms of something else. The use of predicate nominatives (eg."He was a hero to me") indicate an attempt at classification. The use of phrases like "for instance" or "for example" also indicate classification is occurring.

This dimension showed the greatest improvement in the ten weeks. The average mean score on the pre-test was 1.85; the post-test was a full point higher at 2.85. Students had gone from a little less than "some evidence of this type of thinking" to "a consistent awareness that this type of intellectual process is necessary and so used consistently if not always successfully." Clearly, these writers understood the necessity of presenting first a generalization of their experience so that others might be able to identify or understand their feelings and then the necessity of unpacking that generalization, stating why or under what specific conditions that generalization was true.

Extended Discourse

Extended discourse, which is a general evaluation asking if the writer is able to focus on a particular topic and develop it adequately, is clearly reflecting the effects of increasing skill in a number of the dimensions, including classification. Students in the extended discourse category went from a 2.3 mean score to a 3.26 mean score—again rising almost a full point higher from "some evidence" to "a consistent awareness of this type of thinking." If student writers choose to elaborate on generalizations, thereby unpacking them, their writings will be extended and developed. The dramatic improvement in this dimensions demonstrates as well increasingly effective management of short term storage space to keep a subject active and developing. The short term storage space required for this task had not changed, but how the students kept that short storage active and ephorically aroused had indeed changed. We can see that the students' idea of what was a satisfactory "answer" to the same writing task had expanded significantly. They clearly decided to spend more time with the task, thus developing examples and proof of what they asserted to be true.

Modification Cues

The category of modification cues showed significant changes in pre and post transactional writing samples. The modification cues included any type of modifier—adverbial or adjectival and serve to further focus the classification cues. As the writers attempted to recreate appearance or behavior for the reader they had to clarify further the image they were developing. Students in this category went from a 1.66 pre-test mean score toa 2.44 post-test mean score. Again, the gain showed students moving from

little or no evidence of the use of that type of thinking to "some evidence" of this type of thinking.

This category includes the physical description of the character, as opposed to the physical description of the context or world that the character inhabits. Clearly the writers wanted their audience to be able to visualize whom they were talking about even if, as we can see by the poor showing in the physical context cues dimension, they failed to develop the context that individual might be seen in.

Organizational Skills

Students showed a significant improvement in their organizational skills. Their pre-test mean was 2.4, thereby a high indication that there were attempts to organize their work. The post-test mean was 3.0, thereby indicating that they were now consistently aware that they needed to organize their work, and were, by and large, successful at doing so.

Organizational skills were not taught to the class in general. However, they were a concern once students had completed their rough drafts. It was at this point that I helped them on an individual basis to organize their work. My suggestions were limited to editorial problems, and in some cases for those who felt confused at first by the proces, questions about the appropriate sequence for the starts. I did not suggest ways to rearrange specific material, discussing only in more general terms, possible sequences from which they could choose. The organization was taught inductively taking what they had already completed in "starts" and then deciding what to do with them. For a number of these students, it was the first time they had ever decided to discard any of their writing.

Personal Involvement

Although this measurement involved a more subjective response from the individual reader, the three readers remained within one point of each other for each of the eighteen papers. The students showed a significant improvement in their involvement in the post-test papers, moving from a pre-test mean of 2.81 to a post-test mean of 3.33.

The pre-test mean of 2.81 is the highest pre-test mean of all seven categories. This clearly indicates that the students were highly motivated and interested in writing to begin with, and that their motivation was higher than their actual writing skills. This proportion remained constant. The significantly increased post-test measure, at 3.33, is the highest measure of all seven, indicating that the students are still highly motivated, but still working with less effective skills. However, that gap between interest and ability has been significantly lessened.

Logical Sequence Cues

The logical sequence cues are words which imply a cause-effect relationship. This was one of the two measures which failed to show any significant improvement, going from a 2.04 pre-test mean to a 2.26 post-test mean. These results are somewhat surprising given the nature of the writing task. The way in which the character sketch assignment is framed (writing a portrait of someone who had a significant effect on your life), requires the writer to base the whole sketch on a significant causal connection: "She was important to me because...." One would think that as the writer explores the two contexts of the writing task (their own personal experience with the subject, and the personality of the subject herself) the necessary causal links would be accentuated. However, that

does not seem to have been the case. The writers did occasionally use logical sequence cues, thus showing some evidence of this type of thinking. However, they did not consistently use logical sequence cues. In a number of the students' papers a logical sequence was the underlying assumption of the whole piece, but was never overtly stated or was referred to only briefly.

Physical Context Cues

The physical context cues indicate that the writer is trying to give the physical context of the character's world. In this case, the character sketch based on personal experience would lead to an actual lived-through context being developed. The indicators are either, nouns that referred to a geographical location, or an object in a physical setting. The physical context cues showed the least improvement of all seven categories. This category went from a 2.15 pre-test mean to a 2.22 post-test mean. The improvement was not significant.

It is interesting to consider why this category showed no significant improvement. One could assume that this dimension was simply one place where no improvement was possible until students reached a certain level of literary sophistication. However, in retrospect, it seems almost predictable that this category would seldom show significant change, given the nature of the writing task. The writing task asks that two contexts be explored—the personal attitude of the writer and the character of the person who is being discussed. The basic writer, faced with these two necessary contexts, will focus on these two contexts in this order—only a superior writer, in control of the task, would be likely to develop the

second context further than necessary, that is develop the physical
environment (or stage) of this meaningful relationship.

That is not to say that the basic writer cannot give physical context
cues. However, in a writing task that in its simplest form requires that
the writer explore human feelings and emotions, the physical context cues
are less likely to be developed. Physical context cues are used most
naturally in a piece of narrative or descriptive writing, not a character
sketch.

Conclusions

There have been significant changes in the writing behavior of this
small sample of ninth grade students. One can say in general, that there
has been significant overall improvement in the students' writing ability.
To what extent is this change significant in terms of the four research
questions which stimulated the study. It is appropriate at this point to
look individually at these four research questions:

(1) Do visual icons, when used as a pre-writing stimulus, enable
ninth grade students to extend further and elaborate on a piece of
discourse? According to my original conjectures, the visual stimuli should
help the writer stay engaged longer in the writing process. This
stimulated "ecphoric arousal" would be reflected in increasing fluency
and elaboration.

It is clear that these students have become more "fluent." The
extended discourse dimension shows a statistically significant
improvement. These basic writers are spending more time unpacking their
experiences. The retrieval cues (Tulvings' "present descriptions of a past
description") are effective in keeping the memory system active and

searching. The significant result of this more effective search of memory is increased elaboration, reflected in the two dimensions, classification cues and modification cues. Both of these dimensions showed statistically significant improvement.

These results indicate that the visual icon enabled a number of these students to develop more fully a piece of discourse at the initial stage of the writing process in a number of ways, depending on whether or not the icon was used for the autobiographical or imaginative pieces. In the autobiographical pieces, students returned repeatedly to ther individual photographs for ecphoric arousal. They had their photographs in front of them, and without exception, referred to them consistently throughout the process. Because these icons were of individual not group importance, I posed the general question to the group at large to encourage continued contact with the icon. In the imaginative writing assignments, however, the pictorial stimuli functioned differently: because it was public and shared, the stimuli served as a means of group arousal, acting as a group catalyst. Although the products derived from these initial experiences were not necessarily developed or extended into a finished piece of discourse, they served as a warm-up and possible inspiration for another piece. In a number of cases, the expressive starts were selectively combined to make a completed work; in other cases the expressive starts were the basis for reworking and developing a rough draft; in other cases the expressive starts gave the writer the confidence and interest to strike out on his or her own, arriving at a product quite distinct from the expressive beginnings. One can conclude that, in general, the expressive writings effectively extended the length of the discourse, thereby giving the student writers far more written material in front of them from which

to make editorial and artistic decisions. The fact that the extended discourse dimension showed the second highest significant gain (only classification cues showed greater improvement), attests to the effectiveness of the visual stimulation.

(2) <u>Does expressive writing, when used as a pre-writing device for autobiographical and imaginative writing tasks, lead to involved writing?</u> It was my original hypothesis that expressive writing would lower the writer's anxiety level, thereby increasing the writer's interest in exploring the topic and in completing a sincere expression in written discourse.

It would appear to be the case. The measurement of personal involvement showed a statistically significant increase on the post-test. These ninth-grade writers tackled the writing assignment with enough confidence to explore the subject and recreate the experience for the reader. The expressive starts encouraged them to open and expand their responses. Their successful production of the poetic pieces (and in particular the short story) was the vital force in giving them the confidence to say discover what they wanted to say on paper. It was vital, as well, in giving them the confidence to return to a rough draft to make certain that it said all that they wanted it to say.

(3) <u>Do the transactional writing abilities of ninth-grade, basic writers improve by writing in expressive and poetic modes?</u> The ten-week currriculum did not focus on transactional writing, but rather poetic writing and autobiographical writing; the results of this study indicate that poetic writing can have a strong, positive affect on transactional writing abilities. The statistically significant gains in extended

discourse (measuring fluency) classification, and modification cues and

organizational skills all reflect increasing skill in transactional

writing.

There can be a number of explanations for these results: it may be

that transactional and poetic modes actually share many underlying

processes, but that they are more easily developed through experience in

writing in the poetic mode; or that the poetic mode, because it is more

personal and more emotionally involving than the transactional mode

develops skills easily transferred to more abstract forms of discourse; or

that poetic writing has given these basic writers the confidence to

successfully take on the challenges of the more abstract transactional

piece of writing. The results, for what ever complicated reasons, point to

the fact that there is a distinct correlation between teaching imaginative

modes of writing and improving transactional writing.

(4) <u>Do ninth-grade writers undergo any significant change in attitude</u>

<u>toward writing as a result of following what has been designed to be an</u>

<u>"organic" writing curriculum?</u> Based on two specific questions from a more

general writing attitude questionnaire. When asked if they "enjoy

writing," six of the students went from being uncertain if they liked it

or not to being certain that they liked it. The other three had all

responded initially that they did enjoy it a great deal--their enthusiasm

had not altered in the ten weeks. Their attitude toward their own ability

to write also changed during the course of the study. Of the nine

students, six of them went from being uncertain of their ability to write

to being certain that they were able to write, and write well. The other

three students were still uncertain of their ability.   Although there are

a number of factors which could affect their subjective attitudes, these

students gained more confidence in their ability to write and seemed to

"like" writing more.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSIONS

As indicated in the first chapter of this report, the present investigation grew out of a concern that writing as it is taught in the typical English classroom does not reflect what modern researchers understand writing to be: a complex, cognitive task. Nor does the typical high school writing curriculum reflect that different modes of writing require different cognitive skills—and some modes are easier to master than others. Research in cognitive studies gave rise to my hypothesis that there are ways of structuring pre-writing tasks (by using visual icons to stimulate memory and imagination) to enable students to master more abstract modes of discourse. That same research indicates that poetic writing, so rarely a component of writing curricula, can give students the self-confidence and skill to master more abstract writing tasks. A writing curriculum should incorporate all forms of writing.

Using two methods of data analysis, general results and comparative case studies, this study examined the effects of an organic curriculum on the transactional writing ability of nine ninth graders. The inquiry was guided by four research questions: (1) Do visual icons, when used as a pre-writing stimulation, enable ninth grade students to elaborate on and extend further a piece of discourse? (2) Does expressive writing, when used as a pre-writing device for autobiographical and imaginative writing tasks, lead to honest, involved writing? (3) Do the transactional writing abilities of ninth-grade, basic writers improve by writing in expressive and poetic modes? (4) Do ninth-grade writers undergo any

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significant change in attitude toward writing as a result of following
what has been designed as an "organic" writing curriculum? A summary of
the project's major findings and a discussion of their implications for
teaching and further research are presented below.

General Conclusions

When I was a senior in high school, my chemistry teacher used to
repeat at least once a week in his class, "Did I ever tell you about the
blind carpenter who picked up his hammer and saw?" At first hearing the
pun was amusing. However, after constant repetition we began to groan
with pretended disdain when we first heard the "Did I ever tell you" and
would lovingly finish the phrase "picked up his hammer and saw" with him,
almost yelling out the final "saw." Now, over twenty years later, I can
use that phrase to recapture those moments in his wonderful classroom.

I can remember his carefully developed lessons punctuated with humor
and very bad puns. Just the phrase "Did I ever tell you" unlocks the
memories of that vitally interesting and desperately difficult year in his
chemistry class. He taught us first the basic building blocks of the
chemistry world; we learned the periodic tables before we tried to solve
chemical formulas. His lessons were incremental, building on one another--
he made certain that if we did our lessons as assigned, we would develop
the knowledge necessary to accomplish the next one. His teaching
approach was deliberate, cautious; at the start of the year he assumed
our total ignorance of his field. And he was correct. We were ignorant
and it was his responsibility to make certain that he created the optimum
conditions for our enlightenment.

In a field as distinct as chemistry, it is natural to assume such a stance; he had a chemistry text that began with the fundamentals and developed our understanding gradually. However, for the teacher in a writing classroom it is not so easy. After all, the basic building blocks of a paper have already been established--one has already learned the periodic tables and has been speaking them for years. It is especially difficult for someone fluent in language to break that knowledge down into sequential patterns of increasing difficulty. At the same time that I was mastering the new language of chemistry, I was facing overwhelming challenges in my advanced English classroom. The appropriate term for the conditions I faced in that classroom was "cognitive overload." Assignments were given, not constructed. As complex a task as writing a research paper was assigned but never taught. Either you could do the task or you couldn't. It was the "sink or swim" philosophy of education. You would learn how to write because you had to, not because you were taught to do so.

I bring up these past histories of my own for an obvious purpose. As English teachers, we need to rethink our role in the writing classroom. We must understand that developing conditions that produce "cognitive overload" is something to be avoided, and that means planning for success for everyone in the writing classroom, even for those who do not know how to swim.

Flowers and Hayes have observed that at only about the age of fourteen do children "rise to occasional conceptual planning." Thus, in terms of conceptual development, most ninth graders are at the stage where they need to learn their periodic tables--not be asked to complete equations. At the end of their eighth grade, asking the students involved

in my study to write a character sketch was the equivalent of asking them to complete an equation without mastery of the table. It was obvious from the resulting pre-pre-test writing sample that most of these students did not understand the nature of the task, let alone how to accomplish it. The test posed a problem, but asked them to solve it at a higher developmental level than they had attained. They had no sense of audience, purpose, or conceptual design. And, to complicate the situation further, even among these nine ninth graders there were differences in abilities which needed to be taken into consideration. All had failed the basic skills test, and so were lumped together as "failures", nonetheless, there were differences in their developmental levels. Twenty weeks into a standard ninth-grade English curriculum, Sandy, Linda, and Larry still approached the pre-test and post-test with varying skills and conceptual development. Larry's pre-test showed that he had some idea of the form his discussion was supposed to take, giving his reader some detail within the standard introduction-body-conclusion format. Linda and Sandy had no understanding of this type of academic writing, giving the reader little more than a simple identification of the person they were asked to describe.

Given such disparity of intellectual understanding in the typical writing classroom, it is vital that we design a curriculum which accounts for these individual differences. At the heart of the writing process is the individual. And it is for that individual that we must design writing activities which involve them in problem-solving at their own developmental level from the outset.

Consider once again Robbie Case's model of individual intellectual development: heirarchical integration occurs as new operations related to a specific stage of development are first mastered and then heirarchically

integrated into a different form and function. But remember that heirarchical integration is dependent on the growth of short term storage space. Case cautions that while practice and experience can affect the speed and amount of information processing capacity, they are both dependent on biological maturation. The maturation of the cortex will regulate or set a limit on the types of integration possible. "Practice, experience, and cortical maturation all affect the short term storage space" (p. 394). Giving students practice in problem-solving, according to Case, can affect the development of the short-term storage space; while practice does not increase in total processing capacity, the system functions more efficiently because of previous heirarchical integration.

Although writing teachers cannot control biological maturation, they can control the type of practice and experience they give their students. Case emphasizes the importance of "task simplification." By breaking down a complex structure into its subcomponents, teachers can simplify a task, making it more likely that the problem solving will be successful. The simplification of a task is sometimes a difficult process, for the teacher must be able to analyze the desired adult structure and the child's ability and attempt to bridge the gap betwen them (Case, p. 394).

The curriculum which I asked my nine ninth graders to follow, was designed for successful problem solving. Looking at the desired final product prompted the questions that were the basis for the "starts." My questions and their short answers (their expressive writing) became the basis for a more complex piece of discourse which was self-contained, organized, and public. It was my intention to design for mental growth, keeping in mind Moffett's theory of development: mental growth "consists of two simultaneous progressions--toward differentiation and toward

integration, thus upward movement depends on a downward thrust into details, discriminations, and subclasses.

Judging from the considerable change in the writing behavior of these nine students, we can conclude that there has been significant mental growth. Much of the responsibility for that growth came from a curriculum which emphasized the importance of pre-writing to help students differentiate between and elaborate on their own experiences and imagination. We know that at the base of the writing act is human memory, which depends on stimulation for activation. The pre-writing "starts" acted as recurring stimulation for these hesitant writers. Thinking back to Endel Tulving's model of human memory, we know that the process of ecphory (the activation and conversion of information stored in the memory system) plays a crucial role in any stage of the writing process. The basic writer does not have the skill to activate the system long enough or reactivate the system enough times to effectively execute a writing task. The basic writer simply does not have the ability, skill, or short term memory capacity to work long enough with a writing task. Writers such as the nine students I worked with will not take enough time to explore what Sondra Perl calls the third backward movement in writing--"felt sense." Basic writers are limited in the amount of "retrospective restructuring" they are able or willing to do. That is, they are limited in the process of attending, calling up a felt sense, and writing out of that place. This limitation is most severe when they are writing in more abstract modes, like the transactional writing emphasized in our high schools today. Short stories and autobiographical narratives, because they have narrative lines and personal experience as their basis, are modes in which "retrospective restructuring" is easier and more natural. It is in these

modes that students can gain two major skills necessary for successful writing:

(1) They foster confidence to "gain access to themselves through written words," to quote Mina Shaughnessy. Instead of finishing a distasteful writing task with as much dispatch as possible because they know they will fail, students have the courage to find out what they believe and feel. Writers have the confidence to endure the painful process of discovery, which has its rememberer returning repeatedly to the subject at hand.

In this study, writer self-confidence manifests itself, as well, in the nine writers' greater willingness to explore the two contexts of the writing process: the subject context, and the personal context (the consciousness at the heart of the individuals' interaction with the world).

(2) They develop a pattern of "retrospective structuring" that comes from writing the expressive writing starts and then having to rework and reorganize them into a whole piece of discourse. These nine writers have been forced to return to already written pieces of discourse in order to once again activate the episodic and semantic memory store. For most of them, the return to already written pieces of discourse meant significant rethinking of the pieces in particular and the whole task in general. In their transactional writings, the "retrospective restructuring" pattern manifested itself in their writing of the rough draft and reworking it to make a number of significant changes for the final draft.

Implications for Research

The findings of this research project were limited by the nature of the basic skills test itself. That is, because that test measures the ability of the ninth grader to write a transactional essay based on a character sketch, the types of assignments and writing samples were focused on this limited form of transactional writing. When one considers, however, the complete scope of transactional writing, the number of research questions arising from this broader base is important:

1. What would be the effects of expressive writing on other forms of transactional essays? Are there visual icons or stimuli which could encourage expressive writing for other specific and more abstract forms of transactional writing? (For example, the argumentative essay.)

2. What would be the effects of expressive writing that led to only one form of poetic writing: the short story. Among the students in this study, the short story was the most enthusiastically anticipated and executed assignment of the curriculum. Was this, in truth, the primary confidence builder?

3. What would be the effects of including this curriculum format (visual icon and expressive starts) in other subjects in the curriculum, like history or psychology?

4. How can one incorporate this curriculum format to encourage closer and more accurate understanding in the study of literature? Are there ways in which the expressive starts may be used consistently and incrementally to help poorer readers understand and possibly anticipate plot and character development in a piece of literature? Although the students in this study were not poor readers for the most part, they were

still in need of improved reading skills. Can the "starts" be engineered to help them anticipate more vividly the course of a short story, novel, or play, thereby making them more involved in the progress of the plot?

5. Because this study was a short ten weeks in duration, the long term effects of the curriculum have not been measured. One could ask whether or not the changes seen in just ten weeks, as dramatic as they have been, are changes that will affect these nine students for the next three years of high school. That is, have there been fundamental changes in their writing confidence and ability that will enable them to be more successful as they continue writing in high school?

6. Another important question to raise about long-term improvement is: if little or no poetic writing is taught in the classrooms these students enter next fall, will their ability to successfully tackle a transactional writing task diminish? That is, how long or continuously should poetic writing be coupled with transactional writing for these students to see continued progress in their transactional writing abilities.?

Implications for Teaching

When I began this research project, my motivating factors were intuition and experience in the teaching of writing. As an experienced high school teacher, I saw that some writing assignments were more successful and rewarding for my students than others. I saw that there was considerable joy and pride in my students when they finished composing a short story--relief when they finished an essay. My intuition told me that joy and pride were the magic ingredients to the successful completion of any writing task. My concern at the time was: Given that transactional

writing is the most valued form of writing in the academic world, how can the English teacher make transactional writing easier to master for the basic writer? I saw the problem as multi-faceted: first, I wanted to identify the processes involved in composing, establish an order of increasing cognitive complexity, and finally frame a curriculum that acknowledges this development. The success of the resulting curriculum implies that a change is necessary in our conservative English classrooms. The change may take, to some extent, the form of romantic curricula from the sixties and seventies--and, in light of the research presented here, such a transition is both desirable and necessary. The form that I believe such alterations should take is outlined in the following suggestions:

(1) The nature of the writing that is assigned in our English classroom must be altered. Personal and imaginative writing should be valued for their vital role in cognitive development. Even if an educational system and its administrators value most the transactional essay, they must see that teaching it directly is not the most effective way to foster those desired skills. Language learning is multi-faceted: skills learned in one mode do transfer to other modes, while confidence learned in an easier mode is a necessary pre-requisite for learning a more difficult and abstract mode. Presently, most forms of imaginative writing are either not taught at all in the high school, or are relegated to a single, elective course called "creative writing." The value of creative writing must be reconsidered: it is not a "frill"; it is a necessary and rewarding mode of writing. The balance of our assigned writing tasks is skewed to promote writing for teachers and informational writing at its

worst. There is little that is organic or natural in the writing activities we ask of our students.

(2) Not only the nature of the writing tasks, but the way in which the task is taught and framed, must be altered for the basic writer. We need to understand that basic writers when given the traditional essay to write without adequate or appropriate preparation are faced with an impossible situation: they have neither the heirarchical understanding of the form that writing is to take, nor the short term memory space to adequately handle its complex demands. Faced with the enormity of the task, student writers will take the simplest, fastest, and easiest way out- -if they choose to complete the task at all. As teachers, we can break down the task into manageable segments and then offer the structure to create a whole out of those parts. In the process of segmenting the assignment, we can create a situation where these poor writers must necessarily restructure their writing retrospectively. As teachers, we can facilitate enough text production so that these students can make important editorial and organizational decisions.

I want to emphasize here that when English teachers alter the frame of the writing assignment, they are truly teaching "process" writing. Writing that begins with a one or two sentenced question, followed by a rough draft, which is then copied verbatum or with no significant alterations is <u>not</u> process writing. As Arthur Applebee contends in <u>Contexts for Learning to Write: Studies of Secondary School Instruction</u>, teachers are sincere in their desire to improve student writing and understanding, but are unable to establish the instructional support or "scaffolding" to do so. That instructional scaffolding is partly found in what they choose not to teach: the primarily time-ordered

or descriptive modes of writing. Creative or imaginative writing is a
fundamental part of that scaffolding.

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APPENDIXES

Case studies: Writing Samples and Written Work

Sandy:

May 1985 writing sample:

Mrs. Laffond made unusually strong impression on me cause she was nice and understanding. She taught me things like chess and all the stuff about it. And she can understand you when you are down.

February 1986 writing sample (pre-test writing sample):

During grammer school my 6th grade teacher was sorta special to me because she taught me things that I didn't know about and took our class on trips, Hikes. During the Hike she would point out some flowers and some berries and plants that we could eat. She also taught me how to play chess. She helped me when ever I needed it. She was the Kind of person that I could go for help about a probelm that I have. I could talk to her with no trouble at all.
                              The End
May 1986 writing sample (post-test writing sample):

This person is a female. Her name is Sheila. She has blackish brown hair, and brown eyes. She is very short, and very fat. She is in ninth grade.
I personally can't stand this person, basically, because she, herself, drives me crazy. She acts like all the guys like her and that she is god's gift to this earth. I don't know of anyone that likes this person as a true friend. She may have three true friends that i know of.
She also acts of if she knows everything. She is the kind of person, or girl that "Gets around." What i mean by that is that she gets around with any boy, or guy she can get her hands on. She is also stuck up. She always wants her way. And when she doesn't get it she pouts, or she does something she knows is wrong to do.
But she does it anyway, just to prove that she can get away with it.
Thats probably why it don't like her, because everything has to go her way, and she is stuck up and i don't want to be around some one who is like that.
                              The end
                              _____

Sandy's "starts" for the first autobiographical writing task.

The following starts were in response to a photograph she had brought in

picturing herself and her brothers and sisters (all in their pajamas) standing

on the steps of their house. The grandparents referred to are not in the

photograph.

Start #1: A free response was asked for. Students had their photograph in

front of them and were asked to write about it.

It was the morning that my grandparents were leaving. We all had to get our picture taken together even if we didn't want to. from the left is me, Robyn john holding my little brother matt and jen.

that morning we all got up early to see my grandparents leave. We had school that day so we all had to go in late except Matt. None of us minded at all. This picture was taken in my house about 7 or 8 years ago I really don't remember when. But I can remember that day. My Grandparents come at least once a year usually more and for at least a week. Sometimes we go up there. They live in Pennsylvania. In this picture we lived in Shelburnefalls on Green street. We still live in Shelburne.

Start #2: Written in response to the question: What would someone see looking at the photograph for the first time and not knowing you or your family?

They will probably see 5 people dressed in there p.j.s three girls and 2 boys. They are all smiling except one boy. They all look close in age except the little boy.

Start #3: Written in response to the question: You are eighty years old and rummaging around in your attic when you stumble on this old picture. What would be your response?

I would laugh and try to recall that day if I could. And try to think of my brothers and sisters and wonder what they are doing, where they are if they were not dead and to try to remember my grandparents and my parents.

Start #4: Written in response to the question: What would your life be like if this had not taken place?

I would really miss my Brothers and sisters. But they are all older than me except matt. I guess really I would be bored and wouldn't know what to do who to fight with who to play with. I guess.

Rough draft: (Written after one night to think about what they had already written.) Write an autobiographical account of an important experience or moment in your life.

It was the morning my grandparents were leaving for home. We all had to get our picture taken together even if we didn't want to. From the left is me, Robyn, John, holding matt. and Jen. It was taking in my house when I was about 8 or 7.

(2) That morning we all got up early to help my grandparents pack and get ready to leave. We had school that day except Matt but none of us cared. We would Just Go in a little late.

When my grandparents come they usually stay for a week, but not this time they stayed for only 5 days. I guess they had to get home and do something. They usually come 4 times a year. My Grandfather really doesn't like to drive from Pennsylvania to Massachusetts so they don't come that often

If I din't have my brohters and sisters I really would be bored and wouldn't know who to fight with, play with or even talkd to. so I'm glad I have my brothers and sisters.

If someone was to look at this picture they would see 6 children in their pajamas all smiling except the little boy. They would probably laugh because they all look funny

Final draft (completed the next day in class):

The Family

It was the morning of my grandparents were leaving for home. We all had to get our picture taken even if we didn't want to. From the left is me, Robin, John, holding Matt, and Jen. It was taken in my house when I was seven or eight. They are all smiling except for the little boy.

That morning we all got up early to help my Grandparents pack and get Ready to leave. We had school that day except Matt but none of us cared. We would just have to go in a little late. When my grandparents come they usually stay for a week but not this time they stayed for only 5 days. I guess they had something to do at home.

If someone was to look at, this picture they would see six children in their pajamas all smiling except the little boy. They would probably laugh because they all look funny standing in their pajamas.

Writing assignment #2: Imaginative Autobiography

For the pre-writing in this assignment, students were shown a series of photographs involving an individual in a static pose. The students were to describe them and decide who they were--the task was not broken down for them. They had to develop the character on their own.

His name is Jake
he looks like a painter who is very serious about his work. he lives on 25 avenue st. it is a very fancy street where most Rich people live. He is 51 years old. he works right at home in his garage. His hobbies are Writing, and singing. He's not married. He has 1 brother and 2 sistes. They are all Rich. His parents are both dead. They died when he was 21. His 1 brother is older then he is he's 56. his sisters are younger than he is they are 37, 40.

her name is Sheila.
she Plays the Piano. She looks like she plays slow songs soft songs. She leads a very lonely life. She doesn't get out that much. She has shoulder length Brown hair Brown eyes. looks to be at least 32. her hobbies are playing the piano, reading, and going to church. She plays the piano mostly at the church she goes to.   She lives in an appartment. it's pretty Big. She's not married. and no family. Her family all died in a plane accident.

his name is frank. he looks like a bum who strolled of the street in to a bar. He found cigarettes of the street and picked them up to smoke. He is very nervous because he just gambeled all the money he had on the horse races and he lost so now he is think of what he is going to do. He has no family, no money, and no were to go. So now he's going to think of what to do.

He hardly has any hair only on the sides. looks very dirty like he hasen't taken a bath for 4 weeks.

After sharing aloud their starts, they were then asked to write a first-person autobiographical account of an important event in this imaginary character's life. (They were to choose one of the characters shown in the slide on the previous day, or develop a character of their own imagination and chooseing.) The following is a transcription of Sandy's final draft (her rough draft was almost identical, except for the added salutation and closing.)

August 19, 1985

Dear Charlie,

Its me frank again. Today was a really bad Day. I went to work like usual. ANd after work I put my stuff away and my boss hands me my pay check cuz its was friday but then he said to me "FRANK YOUR FIRED." I asked him why and he said that I always come in late and I am always drunk. So I took my pay check all 300.00 of it and went to the horse races. First I only gambled 200.00 and I lost so I was going to see if I could win with the 100.00 left. But I didn't. I lost all the money I had. I didn't have any money left so I culdn't take a cab or even a bus to my appointment so I had to walk 2 miles. Before I went home I stoped out side a bar and found 2 cigeretts on the ground, only smoked part of the way. So I picked them up and walked into the barroom. I couldn't order anything cuz I didn't money. So I just sat down in a booth in the corner to think my thoughts over. First I had to think of what I was going to do. I had no money. My rent was do, which was 150.00 no friends, no family, and especially no job which means no money. I think I sat there for hours cuz someone said to me "Hey buddy its closing time." I got up and headed for my appartment. When I got there I went to bed thinking this was a nightmare and everything will be better in the morning. When I woke up the next morning I fund out it wasn't a night mare it was real life. I looked through the paper which my landlord let me borrow to find a job. Well fortunetly there was a job. I called the number in the paper and the guy on the phone asked me a few questions and he said that I have the job running errands for him when ever he needs me too. So I told him that I would take the job. Thinking to myself that maybe this job will help me get my life back together. Just maybe.

Sincerely
Frankie

Assignment #3: The students were asked to bring in three or four photgraphs of

people they knew or admired. Then, for each of the photographs they were asked write any sort of response.

Start #1:

.   Her name is Heather. She's my cousine. The is one of her school pictures taken this year. She is 12 years old.
        She has black short hair. Blue eyes. And she wears glasses. She is one of my closest relitives. She is the kind of person who is not aftaid of telling anyone what she feels.

Start #2:

        Her name is Jill. She is 2 years old. She has blond hair blue eyes. During the week my mom babysits her. Because both her parents work.
        She lives in Shelburne Falls. My mom has been watching her ever since she was 5 months old. I think I really don't know . It could have been more or less. She is a only child . She is big for her age and she acts it to.

Start #3:

        My brothers name is John. he is 16 1/2. he has dirty blonde hair. Blue eyes. he is in 11 grade and goes to Mohawk. he is second to the oldest in my family. He is my oldest Brother.

Reworking and attempting to develop start #1:

        Her nameis Heather She has very short but thick Black hair. She has tinted glossy blue eyes. She wears glasses that look to big for her eyes. She is 5'3 I think.   She has 2 earings in each ear. She has a weird smile it looks sorta crooked.
        Other people say that she is a spoiled brat. That she is too tall. and that she has a very very big mouth. Some say she is shy, and very polite and nice. `
        She says whats ever on her mind and she doesn't care if anyone hears it. She likes to swim, babysit, read.

Second rough draft of previous start:

        The girl in the picture is my cousin. Her name is Heather. She is 12 years old. She has very short black hair and glossy bluetinted eyes. She wears glass that look to big for her eyes. She has a smile that looks crooked when you look at her or a picture of her. She is the kind of person who says whats ever on her mind. She doesn't care if anyone hears what she says about them or anyone else. She has a very loud mouth.

Attempts to develop the second rough draft:

        She is in a shopping mall in a store trying on pants and the person in the other dressing room is also trying on pants. Her mom and I were waiting for her to come out. When she did the person next to her did to. Heather turns around to see the person next to her with tight pants on and she yells out "Mom, Look at how tight her pants are. I wonder if she can

breathe."

   She's really loud and got a big mouth.

Final draft:

HEATHER
   The girl in the picture is my cousin. Her name is Heather. She is
12 years old, she has very short black hair, and glossy blue tinted eyes.
She wears glasses that look to big for her eyes. She has a smile that
looks crooked when you look at her or a picture of her.
   She is the kind of person who says whats ever on her mind. She
doesn't care if anyone hears what she says about them or anyone else. She
has a very big and loud mouth.
   If she was in a shopping mall in a store trying on pants. And some
girl in the other dressing room is also trying on pants. And they both
came out at the same time but the girl next to her has on tight pants she
would say to me or her mom "look at how tight her pants are, I wonder if
she can bend over or even breath." She would say it right out loud and
everyone in the store would hear her and look at her. That would be an
example of how big her mouth really is.

 Assignment #3: Imaginative Character Sketch

The following starts are the beginning of what was, ultimately, an uncompleted

imaginative character sketch. These slides all showed one or more characters

involved in a dynamic situation of some sort.

Start #1: (In response to a slide of a five or six-year-old black boy sitting

alone in a darkened church at the end of a pew.)

   The little boy sitting on the bench is Joey he is 6 years old he is
sitiing in a church waiting for everyone to cme so they can start. he is
also waiting for his mother and 2 brothers. his father doesn't like to go
to church plus he has to work. it is a Saturday morning. he is the only
one that came early that day. he wanted to get a good seat for everyone.

Start #2: (In response to a slide of two young women waiting on a sidewalk in
a large city.)

   The girl in the road is Sarah she is waiting for a bus. She is
standing with her friend. She is going to go to New york to visit her
Grandmother for 3 days. She has been waiting for a bus for over 10
minutes and is getting tired of waiting.

Start #3: (In response to a slide showing a midlle-aged woman and an
adolescent with their arms on each others shoulders under a kitchen light. They
are looking at each other intently.)

June and Mary haven't seen each other for years. Mary drove out from Florida to see June in main. June had no idea that she was coming so it was a total surprise to see Mary again.

June was very happy to see Mary again. After 4 years without talking or writing. it was a very happy day for June.

She wants to keep in touch with her more often. with Mary. She is showing happyness but then is also sad. But she doesn't want Mary to know what had happened.

Start #4: (In response to a slide showing a young boy in a canoe holding on the the rack of antlers of a swimming deer. His dog is swimming in the water next to the deer.)

Jake was in his boat fishing on Saturday morning. he told his dog Mac to stay ashore because he would bark and scare the fish away. When he was far enough away from shore he saw Mac chasing a deer in the water so he began to Paddle towards the deer and the dog—when he was in reaching distance he reached for the deer and told Mac to go to shore and stay there till he got the deer to shore also.

Start #5: In response to the same slide as #4. Describe what you see. What is the boy wearing?

he is wearing his fishing outfit. The one he always were fishing he says it is good luck for him.

Start #6: In response to the same slide as #4. Is this a typical situation for this young boy?

he usually goes fishing every Sunday and sometimes after school when he doesn't have any homework.

Rough draft: The writer was asked to choose one of the starts (or something else if they so chose) and develop it into an imaginative character sketch of the individual. (It was to be in third person.) We see here, that Sandy either misunderstood, or preferred to write in first person. She chose the first start.

Dear Journal:
Here I am again. Today wasn't such a bad day. The only thing bad about today was that Amy Hay had to go to church and sit with my dumb brothers while my parents sit across from u. My one brother Tommy fell asleep and was snoring when the minester was making a long speach and he heard him and everyone was looking at him. I had to wake him up and he felt embarresed when it was over my brother tommy got in trouble. and so we couldn't go out to eat after church. and I hate him for it. Well not actualy.

Second rough draft: The writer, realizing that she had written in first person, decided to change the paper altogether.

Her name is Julie. She is 10 years old. She has dark black hair as black as the sky on a stormy night. Julie has Baby blue eyes as blue as the sky gets on a beautiful summer day.

Julie likes to read, swim, go to the movies, being with friends, and watching the stars at night. She has one brother Tommy. He is 3 years old. Sometimes Julie thinks that tommy is a real pain. But sometimes she thinks he is really sweet.

She also has a dog frankie and a gold fish sammy. Julie likes them both but sometimes Frankie gets in her way when she is outside watching the stars at night. And Sammy never gets in her (way) because he stays on her desk in his fish bowl.

When Julie is alone she likes to think how things would be if she was older and on her own. If she could handle it or not. If she would be mature enough for the big world or if she would flub it up.

When Julie is with her friends she likes to have fun and make fun.

Final draft: never completed.

Assignment #4: Short story

This assignment was begun by showing a series of slides which might inspire a

setting for a short story or a suggestion for the source of conflict.

Start #1: In response to a romantic slide of an enourmous red moon rising over

the hill with a bare tree and branches silhouetted against it. They were

given this first sentence should they choose to use it: "It was an

unbelievable night..."

It was an unbelivable night. We just went through one of the most horrible storms. The wind was blowing really bad. The rain flooded most of the downtown streets. No one could go anywhere. After what seemed like days it was over. And the sun came out and was just going down. So we knew it was over.

Start #2: In response to a lone tree on a hillside.
This tree has been there for 12 years now. It never has any leaves or blossems on it. It is very old and scraggly. It is one of the most peaceful spots to go when you want to be alone.

Start #3: In response to another natural scene:

it was the sun going down after a bad rain storm. It came out just as the storm was over. It was really big and bright red and orange. It was one of the most beautiful sun sets ever, after a storm.

Start #4: In response to a farm scene with a group of people standing and expectantly looking out over fields of hay.

as I stand and watch the sun go down I hear the sound of water dripping from trees and birds singing. Down below me I can see but not hear children playing.

Start #5: In response to a picture of a tropical island beach, lush with

growth.

It had all kinds of plants and animals that we have never seen
before. It had no people on it but still it was noisy with the sounds of
animals and the sound of a waterfall splashing at the bottom of the water
fell.

Start #6: In response to a slide of a city tenement building with two women

looking out a distant window.

as I was walking down an alley between two appartment buildings I
saw 2 people watching me as I walk. I didn't know if I should say Hi or
not so I kept walking along as they watch me.
The building was old, and scraggly looking. It looks as though it
has been there for ages. It was all brick and had a fire escape that was
black. and the windows were long, and had no curtains.

The following rough draft was the first page of a possible short story. They

were to develop a scene or physical setting based either on one of the slides

or their own experience.

It was one of my favorite spots to be when i want to be alone. It
was underneath the oak tree up on the hill by my house. The oak tree is
white and very little leaves on it. When it comes summer the oak tree has
just as many leaves on it as it has in the winter and fall.
When the sun comes up in the morning i like to go up there to watch
it.
If you look at the tree at a surtain spot, you can see all different
colors, when the sun shines on the dew in the tree.
The reason i think this is one of my favorite spots is because it is
so peacefull. and to me, it is away from the whole world, up on the hill
all by its self.

These following starts were the next completed homework assignments: they were
to create three possible conflicts for the development of a short story from
any of the previous starts:

Start #1:
I was standing in the woods and I heard this cracking noise and as I
look around I saw nothing. But as I looked up I saw a tree falling And
headed for me so I began to run out of the woods to safety.

Start #2:
As I was walking with my Grandfather on Sat. morning at 5:00 we saw
the sun rise and as I looked at it it blinded me and i triped over some
rocks and sticks and broke my leg.

Start #3:

     After I did my chores i went outside to look for my dog Scruffy.
When I was tired of looking for him I heard mom calling for me. I told her
I was near the fence. When she finally got there she told me that she had
found scruffy. But some big wild animal had killed him. So I told mother
I just wanted to be alone. So i told my mother that after super if she
wasn't busy if I could talk to her about Scruffy.

Rough and final draft: Because Sandy's short story is so long, and because the
changes between the rough draft and the final draft were mainly editorial, I
have included only the final draft of the paper. The one major change in the
work will be discussed at the end of the piece.

     Jody was only nine at the time of the accident. She had dark brown
hair, and light brown eyes. She was medium height, and about 60 pounds.
She was wearing black shiny new shoes right from the store, and white
tights. She had a dark blue dress that went just past her knees. It had
white trim on the arms and around the bottom. And it had three buttons in
the front, but they were fake. It had a zipper in the back so she could
get in it. Her hair was pulled back on the sides with barrettes to hold
it in place.
     Jody and I (Im her mom) were on our way to her sister wendi's
wedding, in Georgetown Missippi. It was about two and a half hour drive
from our house in Martinville. As we were driving down the highway,
which we had been on only ten minutes, Jody asked me if we could stop
someplace so she could go to the bathroom. I told her that I read a sign
that read restaurant half mile. I asked her if she could hold it. She
said "yes".
     When we got to the restaurant she went to the bathroom and I sat
down at a booth to order some cokes for us. When she came out, the cokes
were there and we drank them, and then went to the car to get going. When
we were on the highway for about an hour, Jody had to go to the bthroom
again. There were no restaurants around for about three miles, so I
pulled over at a rest area with toilets.
     After she finally came out, I told her that we were not going to
stop unless it was an emergency. She said ok. and we were on our way for
the third time.
     After awhile, Jody asked when we were going to get there. I told
her that I did not know, that it was not much longer. When a sign came up
it read, Georgetown Mississippi 31 miles. Then out of my mirror I could
see flashing lights, then I heard the siren and I started to pull over to
let the ambulance through. Then I went back on the highway. As I was
putting on my left signel, a grey truck was speeding and it was out of
control and it hit our white mustang. The speed of the truck and the
force made the car flip several times and crash on another car. And then
stop.
     After I finally woke up, all I heard was bells and people talking.
It wasn't till after I opened my eyes that I realized that I was in a
hospital. I could not move. It felt like a force was holding me down.
And I also could not talk. After what seemed like years, but it was only
3 days after the accident, that I could finallly talk. But I still could
not move my arms, head, or my legs.
     When the doctor came in my room I asked him where Jody was, and if

she was o.k.   The doctor tried to explain to me but not to upset me too
much. He said that Jody was in a coma and that from the x-rays that she
may have brain damage. After he was finished I went in a hysterics and
screamed. And tried to muve to get up to see her. I told the doctor that
she needed me to be with her. He told me that I needed to rest, to calm
down. That when I could move my toes, I could go see her. But he also
said that it might take alot of time till I could move them. I told him
that I would try as hard as I could.

       After another two days in the hospital, I could finally move my
toes, and I could also bend my legs to a sitting position. The nurse came
in with a wheel chair for me to ride in to go see Jody. As the nurse was
pushing me down the hall, we finally came to her romm, which was 717.
When the nurse wheeled me in her room, I just froze. I wanted to scream,
cry, and just hold Jody and make it all go away. But I knew that I
shouldn't, so I just sat there holding her hand, and talking to her.
Telling her that it would be ok. That she was going to get through this.
After an hour, the nurse came in and told me that I had to go. I told
her just a few more minutes. And she said ok and walked out. As I was
talking to her, Jody's hand squized my hand. And slowly she opened her
eyes. When she did this I pushed the nurses button and the nurse came in
and called the doctor. The doctor came and checked Jody over and told the
nurse to take me back to my room.

       The doctor came in my room, after about 15 minutes and told me that
they still had to run some tests, and that from what they have now she is
fine. Then he told me that the next day i could go home.

       That night I layed wide awake, thinking of what was going to
happen. I was excited in a way, but I did not know if I should have
been.   I was going home the next day, but Judy was going to still be in
the hospital. I must have drifted off to sleep, because when I opened my
eyes I saw the sun shinning through my window, and I heard the sound of
birds cheerping. The doctor came in my room and checke me over for the
last time. And to tell me that as soon as I get dressed I could go home.
I asked him how Jody was. And he said that after the test they took, Jody
did not have brain damage. But late last night she had went back in a
coma, I did not know what to feel, because first she came out of a coma
and did not have brain damage, and now she is back in a coma. So I just
started to cry, and asked the doctor if I could see her. He
told me that as soon as I signed the papers to go home, that I could see
her. Then I got dressed (by the way, the police got our suitcases that
were in the car) and went to the nurses station to sign the papers. Then
I went to see Jody. When I went to see her, the doctor was in there and
he was checking her over so he asked me if I could please wait outside in
the hall till he was dond. So I went out in the hall to wait. I asked
the doctor when he came out, if there was anything else wrong Jody. He
said that Jody had just come out of a coma, and when I walked in the room,
she had just gotten to sleeep. Then he said she was going to be fine.

       Then I started to cry, till the doctor let me go in to see her. As
I was holding her hand, she must have felt my hand or something because
just then she opened her eyes and said "HI MOM".

Assignment #5
       I have included here Lisa's final haikus only, as the rough draft she

completed at home is identical to the final draft. (The first haiku has one

word crossed out which is illegible in the rough draft.)

Bright red, orange, yellow light
    flickering in the dark night
on and off it goes

Big, brown dirty bear
    running through the forest
free as a bumble bee

Broken down old house
    wind whistling through the cracks
on a winter night.

Squeeky, rusty bike
    wobbling down the dirt road
on a summer day

White, black fluffy kitten
    soft, playful and cuddly
playing in the grass

Sample Curriculum Products: Linda's Work

Linda:
May 1985 writing sample:

> I remember my 6th grade teacher Ms. Tomasini. She was my favorite teacher in elementery school. She helped me alot on math. I never understood fractions until her.

March 1986 writing sample (pre-test writing sample):

> During gramme school my 6th grade teacher was important to me. Because I had a lot of trouble in math class with dividing and she was the one who took the time so that i could finally understand what i was doing. And if it wasn't for her i would have had a lot of trouble when i came to Mohawk. She gave me some books to take home to do with my parents if i had any trouble.

May 1986 writing sample (post-test writing sample):

> My Aunt Bettyann.
> I really admire my aunt Bettyann out of all the people in my family (besides my parents.)
> She's about 5ft 5 and about a size 8. She has brown hair with afew streaks of gray   it is permed and sorta in a bob. She's 37 but she looks 35 like my mom!
> She's married to my uncle Peter, and they adopted two cute kids, David who is 8 years old and Katelyn who is 1 1/2 years old. They live in a nice house in Westfield.
> Now the reason that I admire her so much is because she does for me and I really appreciate it. I don't take advantage of her at all though.
> She always invites me down to stay for the weekend or on vacations because I am friends with all of the kids my age in their neighborhood and they always ask her when I am comming down!
> And I have a friend who lives in Agawam and her parents both work. So my Aunt drove us all around and brought us everywhere.
> That's why I really admire her!

Linda's "starts" for the first autobiographical writing task

The following starts were in response to a photograph she had brought in picturing her dog Mocha.

Start #1: A free response was asked for. Students had their photograph in

front of them and were asked to write about the photograph.

> Mocha was the only pet that i ever had i got her a little befor my 1st birthday. We grew up to gether   she would sleep on my bed at night and it was like she could sence when i was sad or upset or not feelings well   she would come sit next to me.
> Two weeks ago yesterday we had to put Mocha to sleep because she had

a cancer tumor on her side. Right when we noticed it we brought her to
the vet. He said it was just a growth and it doesn't seem to bother
her   But he said that he didn't really want to operate cuz she was so
old. About three weeks after that it got huge and it was a blood pocket
and she was in alot of pain so we had to put her to sleep. It was really
a hard desision but we wanted to do what was best for her.

Start #2: Written in response to the question: what would someone see looking

at the photograph for the first time and not knowing you or your dog?

      They would see a cute little black dog named Mocha in our back yard
about 8 years ago.

Start #3: Written in response to the question: "You are eighty years old and

rummaging around in your attic when you stumble on this old picture. What

would be your response?

      I would probly think about my child hood growing up with Mocha. All
the   way up to the day that she had to be put to sleep.

Start #4: Written in response to the question: What would your life be like
if this had not taken place?

      I would really miss how much i really loved her so after she was
gone. Now i miss her a lot.

Rough draft: (Written after one night to think about what they had already

written.) Write an autobiographical account of an important experience or

moment in your life.

      Mocha was the only pet that i ever had. I got her a little befor my
first birthday. We grew up together. She was a medium size dog, she was
black with some white on her chest and brown around the white.
      She would sleep on my bed alot at night and she would cudde on
nights there was a thunder and lightning storm. It was like she could
almost sence when i was scared, upset, or sick because she would come sit
next to me.
      Two weeks ago yesterday we had to put Mocha to sleep, because she
had a cancer tumor on her side. Right when we noticed it we took her to
the vet. He said it was just a growth and it didn't seem to bother her,
he said he didn't really want to operate on her because she was so old.
      About two weeks after that it got huge and it was a blood pocket so
we had to put her to sleep. It was really a hard decision to make but we
wanted to do what was best for her.
      We aren't gonna get another dog till summe because both mom and dad
work and no one is home during the day to train it.

Final draft:

Mocha

Mocha was the only pet that I ever had. I got her a little after my first birthday. We grew up together. she was a medium size dog, she was black with some white on her chest and some brown around the white.

She would sleep on my bed alot at night and on nights there were thunder and lightning storms she would cuddle. It was like she could almost sense when I was scared, upset, or sick because she would come and sit next to me.

Two weeks ago yesterday we had to put Mocha to sleep, because she had a cancer tumor on her side. Right when we noticed we took her to the vet. He said it was just a growth and it didn't seem to bother her, he said he didn't really want to operate because she was so old.

About two weeks after that it got huge (Like the size of a grapefruit). It was a blood pocket. We had to put her to sleep because if she went on to the medication she would have to drink tons of water and she would have to go to the bathroom like every 5 minutes. And it would have gotten very serious because of her age. So it was the best thing to do for her so she wouldn't suffer.

We all really miss her. And it was hard to except, but we wanted the best for her.

Writing assignment #2: Imaginative Autobiography

For the pre-writing in this assignment, students were shown a series of

photographs involving an individual in a static pose. The students were to

describe them and decide who they were. The task was not broken down for each

slide, rather, they had to develop the character on their own.

Start #1:

This guys name is George he's almost 95. he used to be a famous artist. He still paints in his spare time wich he has a lot of. He can't eat anything but soup because he only has one tooth left in his mouth and its on the top.

He reads alot. Watches some T.V., but not much.

Start #2:

This lady looks kind of board with playing the piano. Her name is Harryiot she's 35 she has a husband and 2 kids a girl and a boy. She has been playing paino since she was 6 years old. Her mother taught her how to play. and they performed together a lot. untill.

Start #3:

His name is Henry. He's a very lonely man. every one considers him

a bum in the town where he lives. His wife died 10 years ago because of
a long sickness and his children are grown up and married and live far
away and don't really care if they see him or not. To day happens to be
his birthday and no one is around to say Happy Birthday to him. So that
makes him feel even worse.

After sharing aloud their starts, they were then asked to write a first-

person autobiographical account of an important event in this imaginary

character's life.   This is Linda's rough draft based on a Norman Rockwell

painting of a middle-class family on its way to church.

We were on our way to church one Sunday morning. My little brother
josh was in front. i was walking in the middle. John my older brother
was walking next to me   mom was walking with dad in back of us to be sure
that we behaved on our way. I didn't really want to go to church to day
because i don't even understand what the priest is saying half the time
but i figured i shouldn't make a fuss so mom and dad wouldn't get up set
with me.

Linda was not satisfied with this first-person piece and reworked one of

the other starts she had begun earlier, based on an impressionistic painting of

a woman sitting at her piano.

This lady looks very upset sitting at her piano. She is just
sitting there thinking how lucky she is, she has a husband and 2 kids.
She's rich and has everything she would ever want. Except for the women
who taught her how to play piano and always performed with her. It was
her mother. Her mother died last week and she really feels lost without
her. Whos gonna perform with her? She thinks she may never be able to
even look at another piano for the rest of her life. But then she thought
why feel sorry for my self? And she taught her daughter to play just like
her mother had taught her. And within about 3 years they were performing
together. Now she could think and say that her mother must be very proud
of her!

Linda reworked her first person rough draft into a journal entry that

tried to capture the moment her main character lost her mother.

April 27, 1967

Dear diary,
    I remember that day was the worst day in my life. I was sitting
down at my piano. I was practicing like I always do and I got a phone
call from my father, he said Jennifer I have to talk to you. But we
can't talk over the phone about it. Come down to the hospital.
    So I got in to my car and started off to the hospital. When I

finally got there my dad gave me a big hug and said, "Honey your mother
died," Right away I started to cry. I guess I knew it was comming. But
I wasn't ready for it.

   Well I went home and sat at my piano but I couldn't play. Because
every time I play I think of what happened with my mom. So i decided to
come write to you about it. Well diary its starting to get late and I
have to talk to mom before I go to bed. Talk to ya soon!

<div align="center">Jennifer</div>

Final draft:

Dear Diary   April 27, 1967
  I remember that day was the worst day of my life. It was April, 27th
1966. A whole year ago to day that my mother died. I still can remember
the day very well. I was playing my piano and the phone rang. I went to
answer it. It was dad. He said, Jennifer I have to talk to you, but not
over the phone so come down to the hospital right away! Well I hung up
the phone and hopped into my car and went to meet dad.
   When I finally got there he was crying. So right away I knew
something was wrong. He said Jennifer, honey, your mom did this morning.
We were both sitting there crying. I guess I knew it was coming, but i
wasn't ready for it. Now I am finally over it i can think about it and
not cry. Every time I start to think about it I go and play piano because
mom and I alway used to play together. Well i am getting tired i should
get to bed. I'll try to write tommorrow!

<div align="center">Jennifer</div>

Assignment #3: Autobiographical Character Sketch

  The students were asked to bring in three or four photographs

of people they knew or admired. Then, for each of the photographs they were

asked to write any sort of response.

Start #1:
   This is Nikki Thebeualt, she lives in East Kingston N.H. She moved
there when we were in 3rd grade and we haven't seen each other since then
we always write and send pictures.
   I finaly saw her Sunday after 7 years. it was great i couldn't
believe it. She's sorta stuck on her self but we still got along just as
well as we did in Nursery school. We made plans for me to go up this
summer for a week or so.

Start #2:
   Her name is Jessica she's my little sister she's 9 years old. Shes
usauly a little spoiled brat cuz she's the baby of the family and she has
this way of turning everything around so that its my fault. But usually
mom and dad don't buy it ! When i was her age we looked exactly the same
but i wore my hair different and i have brown eyes not blue! She can be a
real pain but i don't know what i would do with out her!!!

Start #3:

Her name is Gretchen i think she's about 8 now. They used to live across the street from us but they moved to CA. Gretchen is very good at Gymnastics, swimming, and dancing   They came up to visit us 2 years ago   we want to go out to see them this summer or next.

Start #4:

Nikki

She's 5 feet even   she has brown hair   it's all one length. She has brown eyes. She has perfect teeth because she's worn braces for 3 years.

in this picture she has a very fake smile, she said so her self.

Some people say she's pretty some say she's a snot   some say shes a wicked prep. Some say shes nice some say shes not.

Attempts to develop start #4 in class, after being asked questions by her

classmates:

she goes shopping with her mom alot. She goes out with friends alot, she goes on vacation alot. She babysits sometimes. She always talks on the phone.

her boy friend drove her home and her mother and father found out he was 18 instead of 16.

That she's very short and stuck on her self.

Rough draft #1:

Nikki

Nikki is about 5 feet even   she has brown hair thats all one lenghth. Almond shaped brown eyes.

She's pretty. And she knows it to. Lots of people say she's really stuck on her self. She is kinda but i dont see her all the time. She moved away 7 years ago and I havent seen here since then, but we alway write and send pictures to each other. Then Sunday...

Rough draft #2:

Jessica

Jessica is my little sister, shes 9 years old. She has blonde hair, pretty blue eyes and shes very skinny.

Jessica is very good at gymnastics and jazz. She's been taking dancing since she was three years old.

Jessica and I share aroom. Its fairly big, but it is filled with all her toys like cabbage Patch Kids, Carebears etc. you name it, it's there.

Jessi is the baby of the family so she gets spoiled. But i can't complain cuz i usauly get what i want to!

She alway complains to mom and dad that i always have my radio blasting. Even though she complains i don't know what i would do with out her.

Final draft:

Jessica

Jessica is my little sister, she's nine years old. She has blonde hair blue eyes, and she's skinny.

Jessica is very good at gymnasticcs and jazz. She's been taking them since she was three years old.

Jessica and I share a room. it's fairly big, but her side is cluttered with all her toys, like Cabbage Patch Kids, Carebears ets., you name it, it's there.

She always complains because of all of my posters. My walls on my side are almost completely covered with Rob Lowe, Corel, Hart, Tommy Howell, ect. And her side is all Teddybear pictures maybe one or two posters and thats all.

She always complains to mom and dad that I have my radio to loud. Even though she complains I don't know what I would do without her!

Assignment #4: Imaginative character sketch

The following starts are the beginning of what was to be an imaginative character sketch based on slides showing one or more characters involved in a dynamic situation of some sort.

Start #1: (In response to a slide of a five or six-year-old black boy sitting alone in a darkened church at the end of a pew.)

This little boy just got into church before his parents he's saving some seats for them. He looks so lonely sitting there on the pew with no one around him.

Start #2: (In response to a slide of two young women waiting on a sidewalk in a large city.)

It was a buzy day in New York Sheila was just on her way home from work there are peeple just swarming the streets becouse its rush hour. Sheila looks kind of up set becaus she got in a fight with her boss and now she has to be surrounded by tons of peeple and she wants to be left alone

Start #3: (In response to a slide showing a middle-aged woman and an adolescent with their arms on each others shoulders under a kitchen light. They are looking at each other intently.)

This teenager is very up set because she thinks her mom is upset with her and she doesn't know what to do so her and her mom were talking and her mom gave her a hug and she felt wanted again.

She is happy after her and her mother talk to each other. She hopes that she can be as good of mother to her kids as her mom is to her. Shes in the procces of being happy again.

Start #4: (In response to a slide showing a young boy in a canoe holding on to the rack of antlers of a swimming deer. His dog is swimmin in the water next to the deer.)

  Johnny and his dog Bowzer were out fishing and Johnny saw a deer that got into the water to deep and couldn't reach to bottom of the lake so Johnny and Bowzer tried to save the deer from drowning to death in the lake.

  He's dressed pretty bummy like he's planning on getting wet and muddy. Becaus to me they look like old cloths.

  Johnny has never had to try and save anything so today was his first experiance.

Rough draft:
<div style="text-align:center;">Dave</div>

  Dave has black hair, big buggy-blue eyes. Hes very short   he looks like one of the munchkins on the Wizard of Oz

  He's about 25 years old. He has a pretty good attitude but he sometimes gets a little short temperd.

  He always helps his friends and family, He has lots of friends mostly from when he went to collage.

  Dave has a big family, His dad, mom, sisters, Sahra, Mary and Mandy he has 2 brothers Christopher and Sean. So all together there are 8 people in his family. And he's the smallest out of all of them. And he's the oldest one to.

Second rough draft:
<div style="text-align:center;">° Dave</div>

  Dave has black hair, big buggy-blue eyes. Hes very short   he looks like one of the Munchkins on the Wizard of Oz.

  Hes 25 years old, he is pretty good natured. But sometimes he gets a little short tempered like when he has to babysit for his little brothers and sisters. He doesn't have any pacience what so ever.

  He always helps his friends and family. He has lots of friends mostly from college.

  Dave has a very big family there is his Dad, his Mom, sisters, Sahra, Mary, and Mandy, he has two brothers Christopher, and Sean. So all to gether there are eight people in his family and he is the shortest of them all!

Final rough draft: The same as appears in the second draft with the following exceptions:

  She switched the fourth and second paragraphs, dropping the

 exclamation point at the end of the sentence.

  She corrected the spelling of "pacience."

Assignment #5: Short Story

This assignment was begun by showing a series of slides which might

inspire a setting for a short story or a suggestion for the source of conflict.

Start #1:In response to a romantic slide of a red moon rising over a hill with

a bare tree and branches silhouetted against it) They were given this first

sentence should they choose to use it: "It was an unbelievable night..."

> It was an unbelivable night, we went to the top of the mountain and
> watched the sunset! It was so buetiful and peacefull, just watching the
> sun sink behind the mountains.

Start #2: (In response to a lone tree on a hillside)

> The tree is old about 100 years old and bare of its leafs it looks kind of
> boaring

Start #3: (In response to another natural scene)

> Its huge and its bright and is a perfect circle.

Start #4: (In response to a slide of a tropical island beach, lush with

growth)
> Me and my best friend went to Hawii and we took a boat out to the
> ocean one day cuz we were board and we came across a deserted island. At
> least we thought it was deserted. Until out of no were comes Tarzan
> swinging from a vine and almost runs us over.

Start #5: (In respnse to a slide of a city tenement building with two women
        looking out a distant window)

> One hot summer day i went to the poor part of the city and i saw 2
> women just sitting in the window trying to get some air, they can't afford
> an air conditioner like most people.
> I really felt sorry for them they don't have any where to go
> swimming all they have is the window
> this is a really rundown apartment block. its been here for about
> 20 years, and it should be condemed, but its not. it looks kind of dismal
> with no certains

Rough draft starts: the following rough draft "starts" were the first step in

the writing of a possible short story. They were to develop possible

situations to write about based on some of the slides they had been shown.

Start #1:
> Katie and i were walking through the woods one sunny summe

        We came to a part of the forest were everything looked light purpule
and we looked up and saw that there was a tree falling.

Possible ways to resolve this conflict:

        We are gonna run so that we don't get hit by the tree.
        Run and help the hurt deer who's under were the trees gonna fall.

Start #2:
        i was about 4 years old and Grandp and i went for a walk in the
field behind the house were he used to live when he was little it was so
pretty at sunset theysky was bright pink and purple. i can still remember
the way it looked and how Grandpa told me that he always came here when he
wanted to be away from everything.

Start #3: (In response to a picture of a woman consoling her daughter)

        Sally was very sad because her dad just died, He was very sick and
Sally had to take care of him while her mom went to take care of him while
her mom went to the store and she was supposed to wake him up every 15
min. to give him medicine and she forgot so now shes blaming herself for
her dads death and her Mom is trying to tell her it wasn't her fault and
not to worry   the 2 of them will be just fine without her dad. and
pretty soon everything will be back to normal

An alternate solution to the conflict:

        She gave him to much medicine and got him even sicker but he didn't die.

Rough drafts: (Linda began two possible rough drafts)

#1:
        It was an unbelievible night. We went to the top of the Mountain
and watched the sun set! It was so beautiful and peaceful just watching
the sun sin behind the mountains.
        At the top of the Mountain there was an old tree. It was about 100
years old and bear of its leaves even in the summer. In away it was sorta
dull looking tree but it was all so sunique.
        During the sun set the sun was a perfect circle. It was big and
Bright.
        When you sit up there watching the sunset all you can hear are
birds. You can smell flowers (but mostly weeds) and the smell of dew on
the grass and trees.

#2:
        Katie and I were walking in the woods, one summer day. We walked
and walked for miles.
        We finaly came to a part of the forest were every thing looked
purple. It was from the angle of the sun hitting the trees. We heard
this loud snap sound and looked up and saw that there was a tree that was
starting to fall.
        And under the tree was a hurt deer. So Katie and I had to try and
save the deer.

Final draft: (A rough draft of this story preceded this final paper, but with the exception of correcting some grammatical problems, the rough draft is identical to this final draft)

The phone rang on a Saturday morning at 7:00. And Saturday is my only day to sleep in.

Anyway it was my sister Karry. She lives in Hawaii. She said, "Hey hows my favorite sister?" I said, "My god, Karry, it's 7:00 in the morning, and I am your only sister."

She said, "I am sorry Angela, but I thought you would like to know that John and I are getting married in three weeks!" I said, "Yeah sure Karry and what else is new?" She said, "Ang I am serious! And you Mom and dad are coming to the wedding."

"Well," I said, "I kind of figured that out!"

"Oh my god Angie stop being such a snot. You guys are gonna come to Hawaii for the wedding. And Ang I want you to be the flowergirl!"

"Very funny." I said, "I am not three years old ya know."

Karry said, " I am Only joking. I want you to be the brides Maid."

"Who me?" I said,

"Of course, you who else would I be talking to? "Will you do it?"

"Well yah sure!" I said. "I would love to!"

"Well go get mom and dad and tell them to get on the phone."

"Ok." I said "Hold on a minute."

"Hey mom, dad it's Karry on the phone, it's good news!"

I went back to my room. I could hear mom and dad going crazy!!

I was lying in bed listening to my Corey Hart tape and reading my seventeen magizine. Then all of a sudden it dawned on me that I was going to Hawaii in only three weeks!

I have always been jealous of Karry going to college in Hawii. She always came back home to California for her vacations, we never went down there!

Wow, I dont believe I am really going! Then all of a sudden I got this awfull feeling, when I found out we would be flying down! I am so afraid of flying. Well not flying just crashing!

Oh well if thats my only means of transportation to get to Hawaii I guess I'll have to forget about my fear of flying. So I should start now!

I got up and took my shower and got dressed did my hair put on my makeup and went downstairs for breakfast.

When I got down there it was like 9:15. Mom had on her coat and said, " Come on Angie we are going shopping for new summer clothes."

I said, "Mom I already have plenty." She said, "Well to bad we're going anyway."

Oh my god, I said to myself is this women feeling ok? She hates going shopping! And usauly I have to fight with her to get money to go shopping. So I took the once in a lifetime opertunity and went shopping.

When we got back it was 9:00 pm, and we had tons of bags of clothes!

Then I finally asked her, "Ma how long are you planning on staying down there?" "Oh I don't know 3 maybe 4 weeks!"

"Wow" i said, "this lady has really flipped!!!"

Thank god i had school vacation comming upin 3 weeks so i'll only miss 1 or 2 weeks.

Well two weeks went by pretty fast but the last week, was a killer! And believe it or not the day finally came, we were boarding the plane!

I couldn't believe that by 3:00 this after noon we would be in Hawaii.

I slept almost all the way. Well half of the way at least!!

Well the plane finally landed and Karry and John were at the airport to meet us, and we went back to Karry's house and visited and unpacked then we went to the wedding rehearsal. I think it went pretty good, but Karry thought it was awfull. Oh well!

Well the big day finally came! Karry and John were finally married! They were happy and I was happy because now my vacation finally started!

Assignment #6: Haiku

Start #1: In response to a slide of a cheetah and her two cubs:

 cute, skarry, spotted, grass, zoo, big, tiny

Resulting haiku: Mother and baby
                    wishing that they had some company
                    to make it threw the day!

Start #2: In response to a slide of a rushing river:

 gushing   cold   refreshing   pretty   sunny   rocky   grassy

Resulting haiku: Bubbleing, laughing
                    flowing fast over the rocks
                    Deep and never ending.

Start #3: In response to a slide of a Bengal tiger drinking from a shaded pond:

                    thirsty pretty linney peaceful exstinkt   jungle

Resulting haiku: Fast and sleek runner
                    goes like the wind on a winterday
                    Drinks from a cool pond.

Start #4: In response to a slide of a flowering japanese pink dogwood

     pink tall chiness   color   ocean contrast lake prett   peaceful

Resulting haiku: never completed

Two individual haikus Linda composed at home and submitted as final draft:

    Windyday trees are blowing
    The children are outside playing
    Then comes the rain everything is quiet.

    Flowers in the Garden
    Orange, yellow, purple, red.
    posing for a picture.

Sample Curriculum Products: Larry

May 1985 writing sample:

My Fourth grade teacher. She helped me with school work. If you didn't know how to do something she'd stay with you the whole time until you got it. On weekend's she'd take her own time to go watch my classmates and I play baseball. Her name was Mrs. Valiton

March 1986 writing sample (pre-test writing sample):

The person who made a big influence on me in Grammar school was my 4th grade teacher.

Her name was Mrs. Valiton. She was the best teacher in school because she was about the only teacher who liked kids. I liked her because she was an easy person to get along with. She understanded that we were young and took awhile to understand what she was teaching.

To this day she comes and watches us play football, basketball, and baseball at school. She sends me a Birthday card every year too. I think the reason I like her is that she doesn't forget us after we move on.

May 1986 writing sample (post-test writing sample):

David Rancourt was probably the person who most influenced me through my childhood. David was a football player for Mohawk when they went to the super bowl in 1980. He played like it was his last game, but it wasn't. He was a sophmore at the time when he made a big decision, to transfer to Deerfield Academy.

He did this because the year after the Super bowl, they only won a couple of games. DA won almost all of there games that year because of David's leadership. He was captain as a senior and he deserved it for his inspirational play. He then moved on to play JV football for Florida State. Even though he wasn't a varsity player, he wanted to be one. The opportunity never came so he studied Real Estate buisness. He got his licence last summer and can afford to live there year-round. He's also the president of the top fratenity at FSU. David Rancourt's athletic ability and schoolwork has influenced me to play football and try for better grade's.

Larry's starts for the first autobiographical writing task:

My picture is a picture of our 8th grade football teacm. It means alot to me because we went undefeated that year. I was a co-captain also. We have the best record for Junior High football history.

Our record was 6-0-1. We tied our last game of the season to our rivals, Fronteir. We were mad that we tied and not won because we worked hard all season for a 7-0 record. Those memories will stick with me forever.

2:

As a person first seeing this photograph, I see a bunch of young football players. They look happy for some reason. It's an average size team with not many 7th graders.

3:

We started out the season with alot of dis-organized players. We had 2 1/2 weeks to get a starting team together. We worked hard. Our coach worked us hard to see what our abilities were. It realy was a test to see who started, and who didn't start.

4:

I was walking stageringly down the to the attic stairs when I stumbled onto a box which was filled with old photos. I rummaged through them and the only one I would remember was my old 8th grade football picture. It stood out in my mind like yesterday.

5:

If I hadn't experienced my football in 8th grade, I probably would have been felt out of place with my friends I have now.

Rough draft:
  First paragraph:
The story I'm about to write is about a picture of my 8th Grade Football team. The reason it's so improtant to me is because we went undefeated that year. Also because we have the best record in Junior High Football history.

  Last paragraph:
As a person first seeing this picture i's say that they looked like an average team. About 65 years from now I can see myself stumble across this same picture I'd say to myself "those were great times."

Final draft:

The story i'm about to write is about a picture of my 8th Grade Football team. The reason it's so important to me is because we went undefeated that year. Also because we have the best record in Junior High Football history.
At the starting of our season we looked very dis-organized. Our coach worked us hard to see who would start and who wouldn't start. Things went fine and we cruised to the Junior Football title.
As a person first seeing this picture i'd say that they looked like an average team. About 65 years from now I can see myself stumble across this same picture. I'd say to myself "those were great times."

Assignment #2: Imaginative Autobiography

Final draft:
I was a bum on the streets of Chicago. When I wasn't picking food out of garbage cans, I was robbing rich people. One day I was ready to rob some rich where a cop saw me, I panicked and ran. The cop followed me.
When he caught up, he found many other peoples wallets on me. I got locked up for 30 days. I then jumped a cop while trying to escape. They locked me up for 2 more years. The cops thought during the depression a

bum could get an easy meal in jail. They made all the bums work for there
food and shelter. I then saw my friend Jim walk into one of the local
hangouts after I was released. I followed him in

When I first met Jim he was as bad off as I was. He was a bum and
we hung out together years ago. He looked different because he wore some
flashy cloth's. I talked for awhile and then I asked him where he got all
the money. He said that he robbed a bank.

I thought that he might give me a little handout. So I asked for
one and he laughed and left. He left me a ciggarette and left. I felt
like I was the only person on Earth. I felt rejected and left out. I just
sat there and finished the ciggarette that Jim gave me.

The End.

Writing Assignment #3: Nonfiction character sketch

Final draft:

Dwight Gooden is a pitcher for the New York Mets. He holds a
numerous amount of records. For the last 2 years he has terrorized the
opposition with his steaming fastball. Dwight has led the league in
strikeouts for the last 2 years. His team, the New York Mets should be
one of the top contenders in their league.

Dwight has struck out 544 batters in 2 years. He is the youngest
player in history to win 20 games. He has had 41 wins and only 13 losses
in 2 years. He was the youngest player to be elected to the 1984 All-Star
game. In 1985 he won the Cy Young award for the best pitcher in the
National league.

Instead of being tired at the near end of the game, his pitches get
faster. His curve ball has been clocked at 96 M.P.H.

Last year the Mets were playing the San Fransisco Giants. Dwight
had the best game of his carreer striking out 16 batters and gave up only
4 hits. The Mets won 6-0. I watched that game on T>V> and it was like I
was in the ballpark. He excited the crowd with his tricky curve ball, and
his blistering fast ball.

In all Dwight Gooden can be considered the best pitcher in baseball
today.

Assignment #4: Imaginative character sketch:

Dan is a strong, tall boy. He weard good respectible clothes. He's
a schoolboy that doesn't play any sports and he feels left out from the
other boys his age. If Dan was to pick a sport to participate in, he
would probably pick hunting. He used to go hunting with his father when
he was little. Dan has liked hunting ever since those times

His friends always say that he's not the hunting type. They all
hunt and he has always wanted to be like them. Dan's father doesn't want
him to hunt because he says that, "Brains don't do hunting, they do
homework." That's one of the reasons he feels left out. His father is a
lawyer now and the only sport taht he likes is golf. He wants Dan to grow
up to be a lawyer just like himself. His father has a totall different
attitude against sports than he did when he was younger.

Dan's mother is different from his father. She wants Dan to loosen

up and go have some fun. Dan agrees with her fully. She know's he wants to hunt and she encourages him to do so. But Dan is intimidated by his father's strict, unlimited power. He wouldn't think of going against his fathers word.

Even though Dan's dreams about hunting all the time, his father doesn't even let him talk about it and other fun things. Dan has only one hope in life, to go huntin once in his life....

The End

Assignment #5: Short Story

Bill is a guy that has had a string of bad luck recentely. He started off the week with his girlfriend leaving him Bill has to pay all of the rent money instead of just part of it. He has a successful job as a carpenter, but when he was somoking he caught one of the houses on fire and he was fired because of it.

He doesn't have any money to pay the rent so he got evicted from his apartment. He had to move to his parents' house and find a job. While one the way across the country to his paret's house, the UHAUL truck he was driving crashed, smashing all his valuables. Bill now has about $500 left after paying for the truck that he smashed up. Even though he has $500 he has to get half way across the country by foot. Bill is now tired, bored, and frustrated about all this and when he finally gets to his parent's house, he finds out that they've gone to Florida for two weeks. Bill can't get in the house or contact them, so he decided to find himself a goo job.

He can't find a job because it's summer and all the kids' have the jobs' already. Bill is staying at one of the cheap,dirty, two-dollar-a-night motels' until his parent's return. Bill then finds out that there's a job opening at the graveyard. So he thinks that he'll mow grass and get 5$ an hour, but as it turns' out he ends up digging ditches at $5 a ditch. He's in a desparate need of money so he takes it but he doesn't like the idea of digging ditches in the hot, sticky heat of the summer air. But as it turns out he has to put up with it.

That day after work, Bill was looking through his pockets' for some money when he finds a megabucks ticket. He's curious about if he won or not. He gets so excited that he might have won, he runs downtown to buy a newspaper. He quickly flips through the pages thinking of the money he might win. At this point, Bill is so anxious he rips paper, but he then finds out he won.

He had played his lucky and unlucky numbers. They were 5-13-25-26-32-36. The five is for how much money he made a ditch. The thirteen is the day he was fired, 25 is his birthday, 26 is how much money he has, 32 is his favorite number and 36 is his age. He reads them one by one checking them twice to 3 times apiece, then he faints right in the store. He won about 3 million dollars. Finally his bad luck has ended and he's about to start a new life. Bill is so happy that he finally has some money to spend So he buys a new cherry PORSXHE, and a fabulous condo in Florida.

But he spent most of his money gambling in Atlantic City. Even though he had all this money, he new that he's spend a lot. After one year he had spent all of it. He had no money for taxes. So he gambled more and lost big. He lost all the money. So the IRS took most of Bill's belongings, His bad luck had returned to him

Writing Assignment #6: Haiku

      It's very hot
      The tiger is quite thursty
      He's now refreshed

      It's a big tree
      The water flows behind
      The sand is quite clean

Rating Instructions: The rating categories are taken from Evaluating Writing by Lee Odell.

There will be a total of six categories for the rating of an individual paper. As you have already holistically scored each paper, the papers will be familiar to you--the categories will not. Let me explain:
The seven categories you see on the accompanying rating sheet are:
Extended discourse
Classification cues
Physical context cues
Modification cues
Logical sequence cues
Organizational skills
Personal Involvement

Each category will be measured in a holistic measurement from 1-4, each measure having the following value:

(LOW) 1	2	3	4 (HIGH)
No evidence of this concern	Some evidence (a few attempts to incorporate this type of thinking)	A consistent awareness that this type of intellectual process is necessary, and so used consistently, if not always successfully.	A skillful inclusion of this type of thinking in a consistent and convincing manner

Specific Categories:

1. Extended Discourse:
This is a general evaluation of a piece of writing. I am asking you: Is the writer able to develop a particular topic and develop it adequately? For a ninth grade student, this means how long can the student extend a discussion of a subject on paper. Does the student have a sense of the length the subject may require?

As an example of a rating of one, I give you the following:
"My first grade teacher because he helped me
to learn how to read.

(See the following for an example of papers deserving a rating of two, three, and four.)

2. Classification cues:

When we ask a student to write a character sketch, we are asking them to categorize a complex series of experiences and phenomenna. One way of knowing anything, especially something as complex as a human being, is to know it in terms of something else. We label something in order to try to understand it. The linguistic cues which show the writer trying to classify experience are:

a. The use of the predicate nominative: "He was a hero to me." Here we see that the predicate nominative labels the subject. (It can work as well in the reverse order; the predicate nominative labels the subject: "The hero was John.")

In each instance, one of the noun phrases suggests a more general class of which the other noun phrase is an instance or an example.

*Keep in mind that you can also classify phenommenon by stating what it is not: "He was not a hero to me."

b. The use of phrases like:
    for instance   for example
    an instance   an example

*These may be embedded in a sequential structure such as :
"Another reason why I like her, is because she gave us gum to chew."

3. Physical context cues:

As the writer develops a landscape for the reader to inhabit, she/he gives the physical context of the world as it was lived-through or imagined. In a character sketch, the physical context is the character and the world that character inhabits or influences.

There are two major linguistic cues which indicate that a physical context is being developed and narrowed down:

a. nouns that refer to a geographical location (i.e., the name of a city, school, or a geographic region)
"He was my first teacher when I lived in Massachusetts."

b. an object in a physical setting (i.e., a school, farm, or house)
In this instance, the character might be placed in typical surroundings.
"She could always be found underneath her old Chevrolet, trying once again to repair its aging body."

4. <u>Modification cues:</u> As the writer focuses on and defines character, the appearance and behavior of the character are developed by using <u>adjectives</u> and/or adverbs.

"Her nose was <u>broad and long</u>--a good way to smell out the trouble in the classroom."
or:

"He moved slowly when danger was near."

5. <u>Logical sequence cues:</u>

The last linguistic cues I am asking you to look for are cues which refer to a logical sequence. These are words which <u>imply</u> a cause-effect relationship.

For example:
| because | since | and so |
| therefore | consequently | thus |

The logical sequence cue might be in a sentence like the following:

"She was very important to me because she helped me overcome my fear of heights."

6. <u>Organizational skills:</u>

I am asking you to evaluate the writer's overall ability to organize a personal essay. Does he or she develop the character sketch in a coherent fashion, thus concerning him or herself with an introduction, body, and conclusion? Are there paragraphs?

7. <u>Personal Involvement:</u>

This is, I understand, to some extent a subjective measure. Nonetheless, I am asking you to evaluate the extent to which the writer has become involved with the task of writing the character sketch. Does the writer see the topic question as demanding a one or two sentence response, or has the writer tried to recreate a personal experience, come to terms with it, and finally evaluate it.

Holistic scores of pre-and post-tests for Sandy:

Paper: Pre-test (Sandy) Rater:	1	2	3	T	Ave
1. Extended Discourse:	2	2	2	6	2
2. Classification cues:	2	3	2	7	2.3
3. Physical context cues:	3	3	2	8	2.7
4. Modification cues:	2	1	1	4	1.3
5. Logical sequence cues:	2	2	2	6	2
6. Organizational skills:	2	2	1	5	1.7
7. Personal involvement:	2	3	2	7	2.3

Paper: Post-test (Sandy) Rater:	1	2	3	T	Ave
1. Ex. Dis:	3	3	3	9	3
2. Class. cues:	4	2	3	9	3
3. Phys. Con.cues:	2	1	1	4	1.3
4. Mod. cues:	3	2	3	8	2.7
5. Log. Seq. cues:	2	3	2	8	2.7
6. Org. skills:	3	2	3	8	2.7
7. Pers. Involvement:	4	3	4	1	3.7

Holistic Scores for Sandy's Writing Samples:

Paper: Rater:	1	2	3	T	Ave
Pre-pre test	1	1	1	3	1
Pre-test	2	2	2	6	2
Post-test	2	2	3	7	2.34

Specific Dimension Holistic scores of pre-and post-tests for Linda:

Paper: Pre-test (Linda) Rater:	1	2	3	T	Ave
1. Extended Discourse:	2	2	1	5	1.7
2. Classification cues:	1	1	1	3	1
3. Physical context cues:	2	2	1	5	1.7
4. Modification cues:	1	1	1	3	1
5. Logical sequence cues:	2	2	2	6	2
6. Organizational skills:	2	2	1	5	1.7
7. Personal involvement:	3	3	2	8	2.7

Paper: Post-test (Linda) Rater:	1	2	3	T	Ave
1. Ex. Dis:	3	3	3	9	3
2. Class. cues:	2	3	2	7	2.3
3. Phys. Con.cues:	2	3	3	8	2.7
4. Mod. cues:	3	1	3	7	2.3
5. Log. Seq. cues:	2	3	3	8	2.7
6. Org. skills:	3	2	3	8	2.7
7. Pers. Involvement:	3	3	4	10	3.3

General Holistic Scores for Linda's Writing Samples:

Paper: Rater:	1	2	3	T	Ave
Pre-pre test	2	1	1	4	1.3
Pre-test	1	1	1	1	1
Post-test	2	3	3	8	2.7

Specific Dimension Holistic scores of pre-and post-tests for Larry:

Paper: Pre-test (Larry) Rater:	1	2	3	T	Ave
1. Extended Discourse:	2	2	2	6	2
2. Classification cues:	2	3	2	7	2.3
3. Physical context cues:	3	3	2	8	2.7
4. Modification cues:	2	1	1	4	1.3
5. Logical sequence cues:	2	2	2	6	2
6. Organizational skills:	2	2	1	5	1.7
7. Personal involvement:	2	3	2	7	2.3

Paper: Post-test (Larry) Rater:	1	2	3	T	Ave
1. Ex. Dis:	3	3	3	9	3
2. Class. cues:	4	2	3	9	3
3. Phys. Con.cues:	2	1	1	4	1.3
4. Mod. cues:	3	2	3	8	2.7
5. Log. Seq. cues:	2	3	2	7	2.3
6. Org. skills:	3	2	3	8	2.7
7. Pers. Involvement:	4	3	4	10	3.7

General Holistic Scores for Larry's Writing Samples:

Paper: Rater:	1	2	3	T	Ave
Pre-pre test	2	2	1	5	1.7
Pre-test	2	2	3	7	2.3
Post-test	3	3	3	9	3

Writing Sample Assignment

The following writing assignment is a modified version of the basic skills writing test given to incoming high school freshmen.

> Mrs. Smith's class is planning on publishing a school-wide magazine featuring profiles of people the students know and care about. Mrs. Smith's class is asking every student to write about someone who has been special to them. You are being asked to participate in this school-wide project.   You are to describe a special person and explain why he or she is so special in a piece of writing which could be included in this school publication.

<u>WRITING INTERVIEW</u>

I am very interested in understanding what you think about writing. After all, you have had many years of writing experience. Would you answer the following questions as completely as you can? Think back to specific writing experiences you have had in the past few years, or consider the feelings and attitudes you experienced in writing this first "test" essay for me.

1. Do you like to write? Although this question may be answered with a simple "yes" or "no" or "sometimes", try to explain your response by including reasons why you feel as you do. You may refer to specific experiences, if you like.

Have you always had this attitude? Can you think back to a time when you felt differently? Explain, please.

2. Do you write anything other than what is required of you at school? Did

you ever keep a journal or a diary? Do you write letters or write for a job?

3. What do you like to write about? Can you describe your favorite piece of writing? Why do you like it so much?

4.Do you find some types of writing easier than others? (Keep in mind that there are many types of writing: you could write a letter, memo, essay, poem, short story, character sketch, play, or book report.)

5. What type of writing do you think you do best? (Remember, it may or may not be the <u>easiest</u> type of writing)

    Do you get the grades which you think you deserve? Please explain.

6. When a teacher asks you to hand in a finished paper by a certain day, how do you go about fulfilling that assignment. Do you have a procedure you follow?

7. What do you consider your biggest obstacle to beginning writing? (Perhaps you don't have one!)

8. How do you overcome this obstacle?

                                    o

9. What is your biggest concern as you are writing your paper? Are there any particular parts of the writing process itself which concern you?

    Do you make any changes in your writing after you first get it on paper? What sort of changes do you usually make?

10. Do you ever use a typewriter or a word processor when you write? Explain.

11. What does one need to do well in order to be a good writer?

12. Do you think that you are or can become a good writer? What would you say are your strongest and/or weakest points when it comes to writing?

13. Is there something which you would like to tell me about your writing experience or attitude which may not have been asked for in this questionnaire?