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A Multimodal Remedial Program For Teaching Skills Of Written Expression To Intermediate Grade Students.

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A MULTIMODAL REMEDIAL PROGRAM FOR TEACHING SKILLS
OF WRITTEN EXPRESSION TO INTERMEDIATE
GRADE STUDENTS

A Dissertation
Presented to
The Graduate Faculty of the
University of the Pacific

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

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UNIVERSITY OF THE PACIFIC

by

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December 1975

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A MULTIMODAL REMEDIAL PROGRAM FOR TEACHING SKILLS
OF WRITTEN EXPRESSION TO INTERMEDIATE GRADE STUDENTS

Abstract of the Dissertation

PURPOSE: The major purpose of the study was to investigate whether intermediate grade students who do unsatisfactory written assignments can learn to be more successful in written work as a result of a program which reteaches the skills of written expression. A secondary purpose of the study was to determine whether teachers with varied backgrounds could successfully use the prerecorded program with a minimum of in-service training.

PROCEDURES: Students from ten intermediate classrooms in three schools were selected for the study because of low scores on a screening instrument and/or the teacher's judgment that they had poor skills in written expression. Seventy-eight subjects were in the experimental group and thirty-five were in the control group. The experimental group received a pretest, a program of ten two-part lessons covering basic skills of written expression, and a posttest. The control group received the pretest and the posttest. The study was completed in six weeks.

Data for analysis were taken from two forms of The McDonald Test of Written Proficiency which were given as pretest and posttest. Ten different tasks which were tested were compared, using the Student t test for independent samples or the analysis of covariance statistical test.

CONCLUSIONS: The experimental group had significantly higher gains than the control group on five of the tasks. They wrote a greater number of T-units in a story, made fewer copying errors, copied more of the assigned textual material, completed more incomplete sentence forms, and remembered and wrote more facts from a short informational passage. There was no significant difference between the experimental and control groups on the quality of stories, the number of words per T-unit, the total number of words in a story, or the number of words added to incomplete sentence forms. One task, that of writing as many words as possible in one minute, was judged to be invalid. The program appeared to have been effective in helping students improve in skills of written expression.

There were no significant differences found in comparisons of the three participating schools on the tasks taught during the treatment program. It appears that teachers of different backgrounds can use the program successfully with a minimum of in-service training.

RECOMMENDATIONS: Further study is recommended for the program used in the study, as well as of other remedial programs in the field of written expression. It is also recommended that The McDonald Test of Written Proficiency be further tested and refined, and that other diagnostic techniques be developed. Other research studies in the field of written language are recommended, such as: a longitudinal study of children's writing, a comparison of skills of oral language and those of written language, and the relationship of cognitive development and written expression.

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Chapter 1

THE PROBLEM, LIMITATIONS, ASSUMPTIONS, DESIGN AND PROCEDURES

INTRODUCTION

~~"The three Rs"~~ may be the most common phrase used in reference to the education of children. Reading, 'Riting, and 'Rithmetic are part of the curriculum for every elementary school child and for many secondary school students. How well "the three Rs" are learned or not learned is, at least partially, reflected in the amount of professional literature devoted to techniques of remediation in each subject.

The relative number of articles on remediation of these three basic skill subjects is illustrated by the articles listed in Current Index to Journals in Education for a five-year period.¹

	<u>1970</u>	<u>1971</u>	<u>1972</u>	<u>1973</u>	<u>1974</u>
Remedial Reading	39	32	48	32	31
Remedial Arithmetic	2	1	3	4	8
Remedial Writing (Composition)	0	0	0	0	0

¹Current Index to Journals in Education (New York: Macmillan Information, Division of the Macmillan Company, 1970, 1971, 1972, and 1974).

Judging from the information shown here, a reader unfamiliar with elementary and secondary teaching might come to the following conclusions:

Reading is not being taught or not taught well to many students since the literature on the subject is extensive.

'Rithmetic is apparently taught more efficiently since there is much less literature on remedial techniques in this subject area.

'Riting is taught well to virtually everyone since there is no mention of remedial techniques in the literature for this subject.

The premise that writing is well taught to all or nearly all students is patently false, as educators know. This is borne out by Phyllis Brooks, who speaks of "teaching droves of students"² remedial writing at the University of California in Berkeley. Chaika suggests that what her students have to learn, again at the college level, is a completely new skill.³ McNeil and Fader make the following strong statement:

. . . In spite of the notable increase in intelligence and accomplishment which characterizes the average freshman, he still writes miserably when he enters the university. Because of his wholly inadequate preparation in composition, he must

² Phyllis Brooks, "Mimesis: Grammar and the Echoing Voice," College English, 35 (November, 1973), 161.

³ Elaine Chaika, "Who Can Be Taught?" College English, 35 (February, 1974), 575.

take an English course designed to teach him how to write at least well enough to survive four years of college.⁴

These are examples from a sizeable body of literature on remediation of skills of written expression at the college level.

However, no such similar body of literature exists about teaching remedial skills of written expression in elementary and secondary schools. ~~Does this mean that most elementary and secondary students have, at minimum, adequate skills? Apparently not since Ruth Strickland, a leader in the field of teaching elementary language arts, has stated that arrested development is more common in the area of written language than in any other aspect of the curriculum.~~⁵

Elementary school teachers have stated that nearly every class has students who either do not attempt written assignments or do not finish their written work. Most classes have some students with good skills in oral expression and poor skills in written expression. A few students will write a "story," but not a "report," and many will do poor work on essay examinations who do well on objective tests.

⁴Elton B. McNeil and Daniel N. Fader, English in Every Classroom, Final Report (Ann Arbor, Michigan: University of Michigan, 1967), p. 5.

⁵Ruth Strickland, The Language Arts in the Elementary School (3rd ed.) (Lexington, Massachusetts: D. C. Heath and Co., 1969), pp. 328-29.

The investigator has found a paucity of literature which discusses the possibility that the inability to express oneself in writing is a learning problem. Teachers with whom the subject has been discussed have offered reasons for the poor quality of written work done by their students. These students are often considered to be lazy or irresponsible; they are sometimes labeled immature, and at times teachers suggest that former teachers have allowed the students to develop poor working habits. The teachers do not seem to consider this lack of proficiency as an indication of a need for special instruction.

The child who does not do reading assignments, does not do them correctly, or does them poorly is considered to need remedial instruction,⁶ or evaluation for a learning disability.⁷ Many techniques of diagnosis and remedial or corrective instruction have been developed for the child with a reading problem. As a result, a skillful diagnosis can usually determine causal factors and/or instructional methods so that the child can be taught to read.⁸

⁶Robert Ruddell, Reading Language Instruction: Innovative Practices (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1974), p. 517.

⁷Doris Johnson and Helmer R. Myklebust, Learning Disabilities: Educational Principles and Practices (New York: Grune and Stratton, 1967), Chapter 2.

⁸Ruddell, op. cit., pp. 517-18.

It is possible that children who experience difficulty with written expression may have learning disabilities. Samuel Kirk and James J. McCarthy mention writing as one of the possible areas of learning disability. Their discussion indicates they mean both written expression and handwriting, but they recommend no specific instruments for diagnosis and discuss no specific teaching methods.⁹ Helmer Myklebust had the following to say about the literature available in 1965:

. . . Remarkably few studies on the development and disorders of written language have been reported, nor is it mentioned in recent publications on communicative disorders.¹⁰

The situation described by Myklebust does not appear to have changed appreciably.

Written expression involves the learning of a complex series of tasks. In addition to most of the skills of oral language and reading written expression involves the memory of specific symbology, a memory for the shapes and sizes of those symbols, and the translation of these memories into the specialized tasks of writing.¹¹

⁹Samuel Kirk and James J. McCarthy, "Learning Disabilities," The Encyclopedia of Education (5th ed.), ed. Lee C. Deighton (New York: The Macmillan Company and the Free Press, 1971), p. 443.

¹⁰Helmer R. Myklebust, The Picture Story Language Test, I (New York: Grune Stratton, 1965), p. 1.

¹¹Johnson and Myklebust, op. cit., p. 193.

The diagnosis of a severe disability in written expression is complex and must be done by highly-trained professionals. Johnson and Myklebust¹² suggest that there may be more than one etiology of the disability, and multiple behavioral symptoms may be manifested by children with this type of learning disability. Some of the symptoms may also be indicative of other learning disabilities, particularly in the other language skills.¹³

Determining the causal factors and making a precise diagnosis are both necessary for children with severe learning disabilities.¹⁴ For purposes of this study, it was assumed that such precise diagnosis is not needed for less severely disabled students who function reasonably well in regular classrooms.

Since determination of causal factors was not a purpose of the current study, children with certain severe problems were not included in the population to be studied. Since the teaching methods used were not those known to be appropriate for students with severe problems, those who had been diagnosed as having aphasia, agnosia, apraxia, or alexia were not included. Non-readers and children who had been diagnosed as dyslexic, dysgraphic, or

¹²Johnson and Myklebust, op. cit., pp. 193-195.

¹³Myklebust, op. cit., Chapter 1.

¹⁴Johnson and Myklebust, op. cit., Chapter 1.

educationally handicapped were also eliminated from the study sample. The teaching methods used for the study may not be suitable for students with those learning problems.

Techniques of diagnosis and instruction appear to be needed for the skills of written expression just as they are for reading. Few of the many children who are not having success in written work are symptomatic of the ~~severe problems discussed by Myklebust.~~¹⁵ The problem facing educators at the present time is the lack of diagnostic and instructional materials for those students whose handicaps are less severe.

An earlier investigation by the current investigator was conducted to investigate "the viability of one method of diagnosis and instruction for improvement of the skills of written expression."¹⁶ The results were promising, but restricted by the smallness of the sample and the fact that the investigator was also the teacher. The present study was an investigation to see if other teachers, with differing backgrounds and philosophies, would be able to use the materials of the primary investigation with their students and find that measurable progress had been made.

¹⁵Myklebust, op. cit., Part 1.

¹⁶Alene McDonald, "A Multimodal Program of Identification and Remediation for Intermediate Students with Learning Disabilities in the Area of Written Expression" (unpublished Master's thesis, University of the Pacific, 1973). Hereafter cited as "A Multimodal Program"

The focus of both studies was on students who exhibited the following behaviors:

1. Those who can read at second grade level or above although that is not necessarily a level to be considered normal.
2. Those who do not copy accurately from a written text.
3. Those who do not complete written assignments.
4. Those who make acceptable responses in oral lessons but make incorrect or incomplete responses in written lessons.
5. Those who have established a delaying routine of sharpening pencils, losing materials, or making trips to the wastebasket.
6. Those who work while the teacher is beside them, and stop working when the teacher goes away from them.

In the current study, those students who, according to teacher judgment, exhibit some or all of the characteristics which are listed were identified as having problems in the area of written expression. A screening instrument was also used, but teacher judgment was the more important criterion for inclusion in the sample. A program of lessons called "A System for the Multimodal Reteaching of the Skills of Written Expression by Use of Taped Instruction"¹⁷ was used in an attempt to improve the student's skills in written expression.

¹⁷The program will be referred to as the RSWE program. See Appendix B, p. 219.

THE PROBLEM

The Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine the extent to which students who do unsatisfactory written assignments can learn to be more successful in written work as a result of a tape-recorded program which reteaches them the skills of written expression.

Statement of the Problem

Do students who experience the RSWE program show greater gains in learning the skills of written expression than do control group students who are taught by ongoing classroom procedures?

Significance of the Study

The magnitude of the problem of lack of facility in written expression probably should not be assessed solely by the reports of teachers of English A in colleges and universities. Perhaps it cannot be adequately assessed to everyone's satisfaction at all, but the National Assessment of Educational Progress has surveyed the written ability of school students and young adults and made the results public in 1972. Jane Porter, writing the "Research Report" for Elementary English summarizes the report:

. . . The report showed that no group of 9-year-olds has mastered the basic conventions of writing, that only the best 13-year-olds had, and by age 17, better than 50 percent of the teenagers could put together simple sentences, use commas, and express simple ideas in general, imprecise language. The report also indicated that some adults--the best adult writers--had mastered the basic writing conventions, and were probably influenced by newswriting. The low quality adult writers wrote like middle-quality 13-year-old writers.¹⁸

If the deficiencies are as great as the assessment group has indicated, the problem must begin in the early grades of the elementary school. The inclusion of 9-year-olds in the study with an assignment "to write for 15 minutes about what they saw or imagined when shown a picture of a forest fire"¹⁹ indicates that the assessment group expected children of this age to have considerable skill in written expression.

The subjects of the present study were at least nine years old, the age at which Hunt says that children write comfortably.²⁰ The fact that the subjects meet the criteria listed earlier indicates that the students being studied do not fit Hunt's description and probably could not handle the assignment given during the assessment.

¹⁸ Jane Porter, "Research Report," Elementary English, 49 (October, 1973), 864.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Kellogg Hunt and others, An Instrument to Measure Syntactic Maturity (Tallahassee, Florida: University of Florida, 1968), p. 18.

It seems probable that they fit Strickland's description of having "seriously arrested development"²¹ in the skills of written expression.

This investigation was based on the premise that at least one method of teaching could improve performance in written expression for some of the students with problems in this area of the language arts. In view of the scope of ~~the problem and the paucity of literature in the field~~, the finding from this study should be of value to other investigators in the field.

HYPOTHESES

The hypotheses to be tested in the study were:

1. Middle grade students who can read but do unsatisfactory written work, who participate in the RSWE program, show greater gains in written expression than do control students taught by the ongoing classroom procedures.
2. Students taught by the RSWE lesson sequence show a greater increase in the number of words in their stories after a seven-week period than do the control students.
3. Students taught by the RSWE lesson sequence show a greater increase in the number of T-units in their stories than do the control students.

²¹Strickland, op. cit., pp. 328-29.

4. Students taught by the RSWE lesson sequence show a greater increase in the mean length of T-units than do the control students.
5. Students taught by the RSWE lesson sequence show a greater decrease in the number of copying errors than do the control students.
6. Students taught by the RSWE program show a greater increase in the number of the items to be copied than do control students.
7. Students taught by the RSWE lesson sequence show a greater increase in the number of sentences completed from incomplete sentence patterns than do the control group.
8. Students taught by the RSWE lesson sequence show a greater increase in the number of words added in the completion of incomplete sentence patterns than do control students.
9. Students taught by the RSWE program show a greater increase in the number of facts recalled and written after listening to a taped informational passage than do control students.
10. Students taught by the RSWE lesson sequence show a greater increase in the number of words written in one minute than do the control students.

DESIGN AND PROCEDURES

Research Design

The research design for the study was the pretest posttest control group design as described by Campbell and

Stanley.²² Implementation of the design was influenced by standards set by Braddock, Lloyd-Jones, and Shoer.²³

1. Base the investigation at least in part on the direct observation of actual writing, not entirely or mostly on such indirect measures as objective tests or questionnaires.
2. Study the writing either of a generous number of students (never actually specified; "generous" seemed to mean at least seventy or eighty) or of as few as twenty students who were very carefully selected or very carefully matched with another twenty.
3. Describe the procedures in a controlled experiment or the features of writing in a textual analysis in enough detail that it is very clear what was being studied.
4. Use procedures of statistical analysis which, though not necessarily complicated, are appropriate and consistent and do not obscure the raw data being analyzed.
5. Maintain as objective an investigation as possible by controlling and reporting the salient variables; that is, by keeping the investigator as "removed" from the study as possible, by preserving the anonymity of the students when evaluating or analyzing their writing, by describing the abilities of the pupils used, etc.

Procedures for Population and Sample Choice

The experimentally accessible population consisted of students in the intermediate grades in Manteca, California, and Pittsburg, California. Subjects were in schools where

²²Donald T. Campbell and Julius C. Stanley, "Experimental and Quasi-Experimental Designs for Research on Teaching," Handbook of Research on Teaching, ed. N. L. Gage (Chicago: Rand McNally and Co., 1963), Chapter 5.

²³Richard Braddock, Richard Lloyd-Jones, and Lowell Shoer, Research in Written Composition (Champaign, Illinois: National Council of Teachers of English, 1963), pp. 14-15.

principals and teachers volunteered to take part after being told about the plans for the study. Subjects were in eight classes from two schools in Manteca and two classes from one school in Pittsburg.

The choice of subjects was made on the basis of teacher judgment using the behaviors previously listed and from data obtained by administering the McDonald Test of Written Proficiency, Test 1.²⁴ ~~Teachers were asked to~~ eliminate students who did not read at second grade level or higher in regular reading activities, and those students diagnosed as being educationally handicapped.

Description of Treatment Procedures

The treatment for the experimental group consisted of a program of ten, two-part lessons. The lessons were designed to reteach skills of written expression originally introduced in the primary grades.²⁵ The skills were retaught in sequence of difficulty using a multimodal approach. Each lesson was on tape with a worksheet from which students copied. Lessons ranged in duration from seven to eighteen minutes, and could be done with minimal adult supervision.²⁶

²⁴See Appendix A, p. 204.

²⁵The skills taught and the sequence used are based on the teaching experience of the investigator.

²⁶See Chapter 3, pp. 132-133, for a description of the lessons and Appendix B for samples of lesson tape-scripts.

Seven weeks were allowed for completion of the program. The original plan was to allow one day for part A of each lesson, one day for part B of each lesson, and two extra weeks for interruptions which were not planned, but which must be expected. Two extra weeks were necessary because of large numbers of absences in Manteca during two weeks of the study period and other interruptions in Pittsburg.

Description of Measuring Instruments and Procedures

No satisfactory instrument for either diagnosis of disabilities in the skills of written expression or measurement of progress in these skills was found when the investigator was preparing for the earlier study of 1972. A test devised and used at that time has been called the McDonald Test of Written Proficiency. For the present study, two forms of the test were developed to be used as pretest and posttest.²⁷ Form 1 of the test had two items which were designed to serve as diagnostic clues about the student's ability to learn from the auditory modality. Form 2 of the test did not have items similar in nature because it was not designed to be a diagnostic instrument.

The last item of the testing instrument asked the student to write a story about a picture. The stories

²⁷See Appendix A, p. 204.

were used as a measure of the generalizability of the content of the lessons since none of the lessons covered that type of writing assignment.

Description of the Statistical Treatment of the Data

Statistical treatment included the following procedures:

1. The stories written as part of the pre- and post- tests were evaluated by four judges using the blind ranking system described by Braddock, Lloyd-Jones, and Shoer.²⁸ The data were analyzed by the Student t test for independent samples.
2. The stories were also evaluated by methods used by Hunt²⁹ including word counts, T-unit count and mean length of the T-units. The analysis of covariance was used to test the corresponding hypotheses.
3. Several individual items from the test were evaluated by making word counts and using the covariance analysis.

The .05 level of significance was adopted for this study as a reasonable compromise between the probabilities of Type I and Type II errors and their undesirable consequences.

²⁸Braddock, Lloyd-Jones, and Shoer, op. cit., p. 12.

²⁹Hunt and others, op. cit., p. 10.

LIMITATIONS AND ASSUMPTIONS

Limitations of the Study

It is recognized that the following limit the generalizability of the study:

1. A limited number of three cooperative schools in two school districts is not a randomized sample.
2. All teachers were selected by administrators so there was no randomization of teaching methods or teaching styles.
3. There was no control for student background or behavior other than the behavior being studied.
4. Criteria for student selection allow for rather wide variations in teacher judgment.
5. The inclusion in the sample of only intermediate grade students limits the usefulness of the results of the study to that age student, and cannot be generalized to older students.
6. The study was limited to evaluation of only one experimental teaching method.
7. The affective dimensions of the problems of written expression were not considered, although the investigator recognizes that affect is an important dimension of success in this field as in other school subjects.
8. Upper and lower limits of the screening instrument were established by arbitrary judgment of the investigator rather than from research.

Assumptions

The study was based on the following assumptions:

1. The factors which originally interfered with the attainment of writing skills are no longer operative for some middle grade students.
2. Among children for whom the causal factors continue to be operative, there may be some who have attained the maturity to overcome the conditions of causality.

3. Student products can be validly evaluated by qualified judges.
4. Students with poor skills in written expression who attend cooperating schools are similar to poor writers of many other school districts and therefore the results will have substantial value for generalizing.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

The following terms were used throughout the study. Unless otherwise noted, the terms have been defined by the investigator.

Copy--the act of accurately reproducing in handwriting the text of a written passage.

Written expression--the expression in writing of one's own ideas or impressions. This term may be interchanged with the terms written composition, written communication, and, occasionally "writing" in the literature on the subject.

Writing--the act of putting on paper the symbology of written language.

Visual copy--the printed paper from which the student is expected to reproduce or copy the text.

Tape--the magnetic tape used to record and play back pre-recorded lessons.

Reteaching--the presentation of a learning activity to which the student has been exposed at an earlier time. For purposes of the study, it is assumed that the subjects were unable to learn the task when it was originally presented.

T-unit--a minimal terminable unit of writing.³⁰ Sometimes called a thought unit, it has much the same meaning as sentence, as it consists of a main clause and those subordinate clauses or partial clauses which appear to extend the meaning of the main clause. It avoids the problems of the measurement of compound sentences, run on sentences, and other instances when the writer has not used the periods, capital letters, and other visual signals used in written work.

SUMMARY

Many children are unsuccessful in their attempts to express themselves in writing. The lack of ability in written expression is a handicap to the student in nearly every school subject area. This problem has been recognized and discussed for many years, but few authorities

³⁰Hunt and others, An Instrument to Measure Syntactic Maturity, p. 4.

have written about methods which attempt to help these students through a program of remediation such as is worked out for the unsuccessful reader.

This study was conducted to determine if a specific taped program of lessons on skills of written expression could teach some of these students to be more successful in their written assignments. The teaching method used was ~~one of reteaching the skills of written expression with~~ approximately the same sequence of presentation as used in teaching written expression in the primary grades.

The research design was one using a pretest posttest procedure with experimental and control groups from three elementary schools. The schools and teachers who took part were volunteers with random selection of which classes would be experimental and which would be control. The pretests and posttests were compared by determination of the statistical significance of a number of skills tested.

The investigation will be reported in detail in the remainder of the study. Selected literature related to the field of language arts with special emphasis on the teaching of written expression will be reviewed in Chapter 2. Chapter 2 will also include reviews of selected literature concerning remedial teaching, learning disabilities, multimodal teaching, and the use of tapes for teaching. Chapter 3 will include detailed descriptions of the procedures and methods of treatment used in the study.

The findings will be discussed in Chapter 4, and Chapter 5 will summarize the study and conclusions and discuss the instructional and research recommendations suggested by the results.

Chapter 2

A REVIEW OF SELECTED LITERATURE

INTRODUCTION

A review of the literature relating directly to the ~~topic being studied would indeed be brief.~~ The remediation of difficulties in written expression of intermediate children may have been studied regularly, but if so, the studies do not appear to have been published. Expanding the topic to include remediation of difficulties in written expression at any instructional level does give the investigator a body of research and scholarly opinion to review. However, many of the studies reviewed are concerned with teaching college students to write well enough to handle college assignments. The authors do not relate their studies backward in time to the instruction received in elementary school.

This paucity of specific research or of authoritative opinion leaves the investigator options of reviewing those areas of research which are tangentially related to the subject being studied. The process of writing and the instructional methodology of the treatment appear to be related to the following areas:

1. The Dilemma of Research and Measurement in Written Expression
2. The Language Arts Strands as They Relate to Written Expression
3. The Complexity of Written Expression
4. The Teaching of Written Expression
5. Techniques of Remedial and Multimodal Teaching

These topics as listed become the areas of review for this chapter.

THE DILEMMA OF RESEARCH AND MEASUREMENT IN WRITTEN EXPRESSION

Any investigator in the field of written expression works in a milieu of countless uncontrollable variables. Further, he knows that he has few, if any, definitive, objective measures available to him for the evaluation of the quality of written language.¹ Although there are objective measures of syntactic maturity, they are time-consuming to use.² The researcher finds that he is also confronted with the fact that writing performance is so variable that he is often not sure that the subjects would

¹Richard Braddock, Richard Lloyd-Jones, and Lowell Shoer, Research in Written Composition (Champaign, Illinois: National Council of Teachers of English, 1963), p. 55.

²Kellogg Hunt and others, An Instrument to Measure Syntactic Maturity, Preliminary Version (Tallahassee, Florida: Florida State University, 1968); Lester Golub and Carole Kidder, "Syntactic Density and the Computer," Elementary English, 50 (November-December, 1974), 1128-31.

not have made as much progress simply by being in school.³ Small wonder, then, that in a period of over two years, Pierson⁴ found only 107 studies of written composition compared with over 700 in reading and literature.

In describing the research which had been done in the field before the 1960s, Braddock, Lloyd-Jones, and Shoer reported that:

~~. . . research in composition, taken as a whole, may be compared to chemical research as it emerged from the period of alchemy: some terms are being defined usefully, a number of procedures are being refined, but the field as a whole is laced⁵ with dreams, prejudices, and make-shift operations.~~

A decade later, during the 1960s, after examining the reported research, Pierson wrote:

. . . Why then bother with research in composition, when it is tentative, inconclusive, and limited in scope? Maybe for the same reason that astrology had to precede astronomy. As in any scientific field solid facts accumulate slowly at first. Writing knowledge presently is at the stage of intuition and mythology.⁶

Progress seems to be moving very slowly. West, writing in The Encyclopedia of Education puts the problem in perspective but perhaps, adds to the dilemma, when he states:

³Walter Loban, Language Ability: Grades Seven, Eight, and Nine (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare: Office of Education, 1966), p. 90.

⁴Howard Pierson, Teaching Writing (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1972), p. 76.

⁵Braddock, Lloyd-Jones, and Shoer, op. cit., p. 5.

⁶Pierson, op. cit., p. 80.

. . . The study of written language remains at the beginning of the 1970s an unsettled field, full of controversy, unresolved questions, and various practices and philosophies.

Pierson's question, "Why bother with research in composition?"⁸ appears to need more than one answer. A statement by West, "Despite the lack of research base for teaching practice, there is little disagreement regarding the importance of written composition,"⁹ may suggest that research in basic teaching practices is needed. Another requisite may be that there is a need to discover what happens between the enthusiasm of first graders dictating and writing stories as described by Burrows et al.¹⁰ and the college students described by Klein,¹¹ who are unable to compose a sentence.

Corbin sums up the present state of knowledge on the topic and suggests several reasons for continuing research in the art of written expression:

⁷William W. West, "Teaching Composition," The Encyclopedia of Education, Vol. II, ed. Lee C. Deighton (New York: The Macmillan Company and The Free Press, 1971), p. 363.

⁸Pierson, op. cit., p. 80. ⁹West, op. cit., p. 364.

¹⁰Alvina Truet Burrows et al., They All Want to Write (New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1952), p. 2.

¹¹James Klein, "Self Composition," College English 35 (February, 1974), 584.

Much has been written and even more has been said about the way children supposedly learn to write. Actually a great deal less is known about the process than we like to believe. Most of what we do know that seems important has come not so much from "research" as from the common experiences and intuition of tens of thousands of teachers and writers, dating back to Chaucer.¹²

That there is a need for research in the field of written expression seems to be without question. How to (1) set up the research design, (2) control as many variables as possible, and (3) measure the results, are problems which confront the investigator. A discussion of each of these areas follows.

Designs for Educational Research

Campbell and Stanley¹³ have outlined several designs which are used for educational research. They categorize the designs as quasi-experimental and experimental. They have suggested that variables are difficult to control in the quasi-experimental designs, but there are times when their use is acceptable. The quasi-experimental designs are:

1. The one-shot case study.

This design should rarely be used because it offers the reader no comparisons with other data. The

¹²Richard Corbin, The Teaching of Writing in Our Schools (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1966), p. 23.

¹³Donald Campbell and Julian Stanley, "Experimental and Quasi-experimental Designs for Research on Teaching," Handbook of Research on Teaching, ed. N. L. Gage (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1963), pp. 177-197.

information it provides may be a minimum reference point from which to begin other analyses.

2. The one-group pretest-posttest design.

This design controls only the treatment variable and does nothing with other variables. The suggestion is made that this design be used only when nothing else can be done.

3. The static-group comparison design.

In this design, a group which has experienced a treatment is compared to a group which has not experienced a treatment. The purpose of the design is to establish if the treatment is effective, and it is the only variable controlled.

The authors have indicated that experimental designs should be used for educational research whenever possible. Experimental designs have the advantage of controlling more variables. This control allows the investigator to draw stronger conclusions about the effect being the result of the described treatment than if the quasi-experimental designs had been used. The experimental designs are:

1. The pretest-posttest control group design.

This design provides controls for variables affecting the population being studied, providing groups are equivalent and randomly selected. It is commonly used when only one treatment is being studied.

2. The Solomon four-group design.

With this design, the effect of the treatment is replicated in four ways. It is used to check on the main effects and the interaction of testing.

3. The posttest-only control group.

This design provides the most adequate assurance of lack of bias in the process of randomization.

It controls for the possibility of testing as either a main effect or an interaction, but does not measure these effects.

Control of Variables when Designing Research
in Written Expression

Campbell and Stanley¹⁴ described in detail the method in which each design controls or does not control variables which must be considered. They have recognized that the nature of educational research precludes control of all possible variables.

Braddock, Lloyd-Jones, and Shoer¹⁵ directed their attention to the many variables which are specifically related to research in written expression. They point out many of the variables which cannot be controlled or must be controlled by special procedures. These variables have been listed under four general categories which have been summarized as follows.

¹⁴Campbell and Stanley, loc. cit.

¹⁵Braddock, Lloyd-Jones, and Shoer, op. cit., pp. 6-14.

1. The writer variable is concerned with all of the differences which occur among writers. This variable also includes all of the environmental factors which affect the same writer during different writing episodes. This variable cannot be "controlled" but the design can control for it by making sure that the writer has more than one opportunity to write.
2. The assignment variable includes all of those variables which relate to topic, mode of discourse, time afforded for writing, and the examination situation. The authors discussed the disagreement among experts as to whether or not a choice of topics should be allowed. They stated that topics should always be considered carefully, but did not seem to feel that there was enough evidence to support either the one-topic or multi-topic stand. They further suggested that research is needed on both the allotments of time for assignments and choices of mode of discourse. When the assignment is an examination situation, it lends to control of such aspects as identical instructions, and climate control, among other variables.
3. The rater variable has to do with the tendency found among raters to vary in the ratings assigned to the same essay when rated on different occasions. Some control can be exercised on personal feelings,

the fatigue of the rater, anonymity of the writer, and by concealing whether the writer is in the experimental or control group.

4. The colleague variable is concerned with the tendency of different raters to vary from one another in their evaluation of the same essay. They should be asked to judge from a common set of criteria and also to judge quickly. The ratings of several judges working independently should be totaled and the composite score used for statistical procedure.

Measurement of Written Expression

The investigator who has followed the procedures listed above in order to control variables must then decide how to measure the results of the investigation. If quality is to be measured, it must be done by means of human judgment which is never totally objective and is often even less effective than a judgment based only on chance. Braddock, Lloyd-Jones, and Shoer, McColly, Diederich, and Coffman¹⁶ are among those who have discussed the problems of obtaining

¹⁶Braddock, Lloyd-Jones and Shoer, op. cit., pp. 6-14; William McColly, "What Does Educational Research Say about the Judging of Writing Ability?" The Journal of Educational Research, 64 (December, 1970), 150-52; P. B. Diederich, "How to Measure Growth in Writing Ability," English Journal, 55 (April, 1966), 435-37; William Coffman, "On the Reliability of Ratings of Essay Examinations in English," Research in the Teaching of English, 5 (Spring, 1971), 27.

reliable, objective judgments from judges. They point out that a judge rarely makes consistent judgments if asked to judge the same paper more than once and that interrater reliability correlations are often very low.

McColly, Diederich, and Braddock, Lloyd-Jones, and Shoer¹⁷ have also discussed the desirability of utilizing some type of ranking system which relies upon the mean scores of several judges. The latter authors¹⁸ have stated that valid and reliable ratings can be obtained with this method. Anderson¹⁹ has indicated that no valid rating system is possible and Pierson described the pooled ratings of judges as a "moot procedure."²⁰

One of the serious problems in conducting research in written expression has been the lack of measures of progress which are used frequently enough so that the findings of one investigation can be compared to those of other investigations. In recent years, progress has been made in the development of objective measures of syntactic maturity. The work of Kellogg Hunt²¹ has been of great importance in this field. Golub and Kidder said of Hunt's

¹⁷McColly, loc. cit.; Diederich, loc. cit.; Braddock, Lloyd-Jones, and Shoer, loc. cit.

¹⁸Ibid.

¹⁹C. C. Anderson, "The New STEP Essay Test as a Measure of Composition Ability," Educational and Psychological Measurement, 20 (Spring, 1960), 95.

²⁰Pierson, op. cit., p. 87.

²¹Hunt, An Instrument to Measure Syntactic Maturity, p. 87.

work, "Certainly without Hunt's impeccable studies of students' syntax, those of us who have been working on the problem of language development and syntactic density would still be back in the dark ages."²²

Using Hunt's work as a base, Golub²³ has developed a measure which can be converted into a normative score. This may help solve the problems which arise because of the lack of common tools of measurement. In the past, when investigators wanted to compare the results of several studies, they have been confronted with the fact that each investigator has used different measuring instruments. This has made comparison impossible in some cases, and only an approximation, in others.

The work of Hunt and Golub²⁴ has made possible the objective measure of syntactic maturity. They have not made the scoring of written work quick and easy. Golub and Kidder²⁵ estimated that a 500 word sample of one subject's work can be tabulated for Golub's Syntactic Density Score in thirty minutes, but they do not estimate the time needed when Kidder's computer program is used. Hunt²⁶ estimated that it takes about two minutes to mark the number of T-units

²²Golub and Kidder, op. cit., p. 1128.

²³Ibid., p. 1129. (The measurement instrument was developed by Golub. Kidder wrote the computer program.)

²⁴Hunt, op. cit.; Golub and Kidder, op. cit.

²⁵Ibid., p. 1130.

²⁶Hunt, op. cit., p. 47.

(see page 19 for definition) on his measurement instrument. Although he has stated that counting words does not take much time, he does not give an estimate of the total time needed in order to mark and count T-units and words.

Summary

These guidelines which have been outlined for research in written expression show how many variables must be considered. Although the field has been studied carefully, no one has yet devised ways to control all variables or to find adequate objective measures for quality. However, the progress being made in developing meaningful measures for maturity of written expression will probably lead to an increasing amount of research in the field. As this work is completed, scholars will be able to refine techniques to a degree not possible at this time.

THE LANGUAGE ARTS STRANDS AS THEY RELATE TO WRITTEN EXPRESSION

The four strands of the language arts: listening, speaking, reading, and writing, develop in a sequential and hierarchial pattern.²⁷ Because language is taken for granted, we tend to think only about abnormalities and ignore the fact that the acquisition of language is a remarkable achievement which is uniquely human.

²⁷ Helmer Myklebust, Development and Disorders of Written Language (New York: Grune and Stratton, 1965), p. 2.

This section of Chapter 2 will discuss some of the currently-held theories about the way in which language is acquired. This will be followed by a discussion of the four strands of language, and their interrelationship to one another. A more detailed account of the relationship between each of the strands of the language arts to the specific skills of the written language strand will follow with listening being considered first, then speaking, and concluding with reading.

The Acquisition of Language

One of the aspects of language about which there is general agreement is that man is a language-specific species. Krech²⁸ has discussed the fact that a human being has a unique group of cells in the neo-cortical area of the left hemisphere of the brain known as the Broca and Wernicke areas which have been shown to be associated with spoken language. He notes that no other species has this section of the brain nor can scientists evoke sounds from another species by stimulation of any neo-cortical cells.

After years of experimenting with rats, and comparing his work with that of other researchers, Krech has hypothesized that "for each species there exists a set of species-specific experiences that are maximally enriching

²⁸David Krech, "Don't Use the Kitchen-Sink Approach to Enrichment," Today's Education, 59 (October, 1970), 87.

and maximally efficient in developing its brain."²⁹ He further suggests that speech is the species-specific experience of the human being and that the key for brain development lies in the language arts.³⁰

Among the authorities from other disciplines who have come to view man as a language-specific species are Levi-Strauss, an anthropologist, and Chomsky, a linguist.³¹ ~~Through different research perspectives, they have studied~~ languages and the acquisition of speech. The anthropologists have studied language as it develops within specific cultures, and the similarities of the development of language within all cultures.³² Hansen³³ has indicated that linguists, in their study of the structures of language, have made significant contributions to the understanding of the language-specific quality of people.

Linguistic research, as summarized by Hansen,³⁴ has shown that (1) all languages have rules of syntax, (2) all use a sound system to form words and sentences, (3) all have noun phrases and verb phrases, and (4) all are used to

²⁹Krech, op. cit., p. 32. ³⁰Ibid.

³¹Claude Levi-Strauss, The Savage Mind (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1966), p. 1; Noam Chomsky, Language and Mind (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1972), p. 6.

³²Neil Postman and Charles Weingartner, Linguistics: A Revolution in Teaching (New York: Delacorte Press, 1966), pp. 20-26.

³³Halvor Hansen, "Language Acquisition and Development in the Child: A Teacher-Child Verbal Interaction," Elementary English, 51 (February, 1974), 277.

³⁴Ibid.

communicate ideas, emotions and thoughts. He has explained the modern linguistic theory of language acquisitions as follows:

. . . it is postulated that children have an innate or "preprogrammed" ability to create language. That is to say that children are born with a biological predisposition (specific innate capacity) to acquire language in addition to sociocultural influences.³⁵

He further states:

. . . Some linguists would go so far as to say there are innate hierarchial stages of linguistic acquisition. A child or other speaker-hearer of a language uses reinvented, rule-governed behavior (innate linguistic organization) not only to formulate admissible combinations of sentences, but also to understand (interpret) sentences which other speaker-hearers of the same language create.³⁶

Loban saw the acquisition of language from a different point of view as evidenced by his definition of language as

. . . the translating of experience into symbol systems is a basic and uniquely human activity; it is one which acknowledges that language is learned-- that it is an acquired cultural function rather than an instinctive behavior.³⁷

He further explained language development in terms of being a behavior necessary for survival and that language acquisition appears to be affected by "numerous factors, all varying simultaneously and in complex interrelationships."³⁸

Ruddell has stated that we know little about the "exact nature of how the miraculous phenomena of language

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Loban, op. cit., p. 3

³⁸ Ibid.

is developed."³⁹ In recognizing the theories discussed here by Hansen and Loban, he has suggested that both may make important contributions to our knowledge.

. . . If we assume that latent language structures are present and basic to the development of grammatical competence and language performance, it is also logical to assume that value for the child stems from consistent social reinforcement and sentence expansion opportunities in refining and extending child grammar as well as lexicon.⁴⁰

It would appear that Loban specifically denied the possibility of the theory described by Hansen, and at least tentatively accepted by Ruddell. Hansen, however, by acknowledging sociocultural influences on the innate structure of language, would appear to be in agreement with most of Ruddell's statement. All do agree that language is natural to the human experience.

The Interrelationship of the Language Arts

The term language arts refers to those areas of the curriculum which deal with verbal language.⁴¹ Hansen describes the term as referring to a "quarternary discipline,"⁴² since the skills of listening, speaking, reading, and written expression are included in the language arts.

³⁹Robert Ruddell, Reading-Language Instruction: Innovative Practice (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1974), p. 85.

⁴⁰Ibid. ⁴¹Myklebust, op. cit., p. 2.

⁴²Hansen, op. cit., p. 276.

The skills of language, for nearly all children, develop sequentially from listening to speaking to reading to writing.⁴³ Loban's longitudinal study emphasized that the language arts have a positive relation to one another and that, "Listening and speaking appear to be the foundations of proficiency in the other language areas."⁴⁴

Chambers and Lowry have discussed language from the point of view that each person has a specific vocabulary for each strand of the language arts. They have this to say about the interrelationship of the language arts:

Language-learning, to be effective must depend upon the development of subsequent vocabularies. From listening, vocabularies develop for speech, reading, and writing. One cannot effectively build toward language proficiency in one without the preceding vocabulary being firm.⁴⁵

As proficiency develops in each of the language skills, the interrelationships among them become more complex. In developing his language facility test, Sievers⁴⁶ identified eighteen different facilities, but stated that it was impossible to construct "pure" test items because specific language behaviors cannot be isolated. Ruddell also discussed this complexity of interrelationships of the skills

⁴³Myklebust, op. cit., p. 2. ⁴⁴Loban, op. cit., p. 92.

⁴⁵Dewey W. Chambers and Heath W. Lowry, The Language Arts: A Pragmatic Approach (Dubuque, Iowa: W. C. Brown Publishers, 1975), p. 4.

⁴⁶D. J. Sievers, "Studies in Language Development of Children Using a Psycholinguistic Theory," Deafness, Speech and Hearing Abstracts, 1 (July, 1961) 362-63.

of language.

The student's spoken or written performance will be directly influenced by his knowledge of meanings (lexical, relational, nonlinguistic) and his ability to interpret these meanings through oral and written language. His listening and reading comprehension performance will be directly related to his ability to perceive oral and written language forms and his knowledge of various aspects of meaning, which, in turn, must be integrated as various meanings are interpreted in the comprehension process.⁴⁷

Other factors further complicate the teaching of the language arts. Listening and reading are receptive phases of language, and, while either skill involves active concentration and decision making, what is learned cannot be directly evaluated as a result of the specific input. Evaluation of the receptive skills must be done through use of the expressive skills of speaking and writing.⁴⁸

Strickland postulates that elementary schools in this country "have always assumed responsibility for expanding and refining children's understanding and use of their language, but results have never been wholly satisfactory."⁴⁹

⁴⁷ Ruddell, op. cit., p. 83.

⁴⁸ Commission on the English Curriculum of the NCTE, Language Arts for Today's Children (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1956), p. 78.

⁴⁹ Ruth Strickland, "The Contributions of Structural Linguistics to the Teaching of Reading, Writing, and Grammar in the Elementary School," Bulletin of the School of Education Indiana University, 40 (January, 1964) 1.

Early⁵⁰ has suggested that a balanced language arts curriculum would provide children with power and versatility, but that they have not been getting a balanced program because of an overemphasis on reading. Hansen⁵¹ agrees that too much time is spent teaching reading. He notes that writing is also taught, but listening and speaking are often not included as specific parts of the curriculum. The present language arts program does not appear to meet the standards of these authorities.

What then should be expected of an interrelated program in the language arts? Early⁵² commented that it is not necessary for each of the strands of language arts to have equal time in order to have a balanced program, but each must have equal consideration. Strom⁵³ listed one of the main goals of the language arts program as the effective communication of ideas, but she did not elaborate on the methods necessary to achieve this goal. Hansen⁵⁴ had made the point that effective learning must be based on the language the child brings with him to the classroom and that the teacher should plan activities which will elicit this

⁵⁰Margaret Early, "The Four Wheel Drive," Elementary English, 51 (May, 1974), 707.

⁵¹Hansen, op. cit., p.276. ⁵²Early, op. cit., p. 707.

⁵³Ingrid M. Strom, "Research in Grammar and Usage and Its Implications for Teaching Writing," Bulletin of the School of Education, Indiana University, 36 (September, 1960), 1.

⁵⁴Hansen, op. cit., p. 284.

competence. Shafer⁵⁵ agrees with Hansen and states further that "we badly need to find ways to help teachers gain the knowledge and training" which will make it possible for them to make judgments and develop school programs to develop the language resources of their students.

Few would dispute the fact that the language arts are interrelated and cannot be learned as separate entities. Yet, each aspect of language has distinct characteristics which can be specified. This makes it possible to consider them one by one beginning with listening and concluding with the most complex skill, written expression. In that way, it may be possible to see more clearly the alternatives available in an attempt to achieve the more balanced language arts curriculum which is essential if students are to learn the skills of written expression.

Listening and Its Relationship to Written Expression

Listening is the only one of the language arts which is learned without interrelating with one or more of the others. Weaver and Rutherford reported research showing that a fetus responds to sudden loud sound and that "newborn infants respond reflexively to loud and sudden sounds in their environment."⁵⁶ These first experiences in listening

⁵⁵Robert Shafer, "What Teachers should Know about Children's Language," Elementary English, 51 (April, 1974), 501.

⁵⁶Susan Weaver and William L. Rutherford, "A Hierarchy of Listening Skills," Elementary English, 51 (November, 1974), 1146.

may not be considered to be aspects of language, but, as Hansen has pointed out, the "first environmental contact a child has with language is through listening."⁵⁷

The environmental contact with language begins soon after birth and by about the time the newborn is two weeks old he listens specifically to the human voice. By four weeks of age, he stops the activity in which he is engaged when he hears approaching sound and by eight weeks of age, his behavior indicates that he is definitely responding to the human voice.⁵⁸

This immediacy of environmental contact with listening has led Iris and Sidney Tiedt to describe listening as the "primary" language skill. They state, "It is perhaps this primary nature of listening which has made it a natural skill, one that is known by everyone, one that does not require teaching."⁵⁹ The authors add that although listening is learned naturally, it is not necessarily a "facile skill for there are many factors which impede listening efficiency."⁶⁰

THE TEACHING OF THE SKILLS OF LISTENING

Hollingsworth differentiated between hearing and listening when he wrote, "hearing may be an acquired

⁵⁷Hansen, op. cit., p. 278.

⁵⁸Weaver and Rutherford, loc. cit.

⁵⁹Iris M. Tiedt and Sidney W. Tiedt, Contemporary English in Elementary School (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1967), p. 85.

⁶⁰Ibid., p. 87.

behavior, but good listening is an art."⁶¹ He further explained that preschool children live in a sound-filled environment, but this does not mean they are good listeners. He stated further, "Listening skills may begin at home but listening instruction usually begins in the elementary school classroom [*italics in original*]."⁶²

Hollingsworth, Tiedt and Tiedt, and Strickland,⁶³ among others, have agreed that effective listening must be taught and that there are a number of skills involved in effective listening. Hollingsworth⁶⁴ listed effort, training, practice, participation, and understanding as some of the essential elements in learning the skills for productive listening.

Most of the authorities in the field categorize the skills of listening in some way, but the methods of categorization vary. However, the skills listed by Tiedt and Tiedt⁶⁵ include nearly all of the skills listed by most of the other authors. The Tiedts divided the listening skills into three main categories, each of which has several sub-categories, as follows:

⁶¹Paul M. Hollingsworth, "Let's Improve Listening Skills," Elementary English, 51 (November, 1974), 1156.

⁶²Ibid.

⁶³Hollingsworth, op. cit., p. 1156; Tiedt and Tiedt, op. cit., p. 97; and Ruth Strickland, The Language Arts in the Elementary School, 3rd ed. (Lexington, Mass.: D. C. Heath and Co., 1969), p. 129.

⁶⁴Hollingsworth, op. cit., p. 1156.

⁶⁵Tiedt and Tiedt, op. cit., pp. 89-90.

1. Reception

Hears the sounds which are made externally

Distinguishes the variety in those sounds
(auditory discrimination)

Decides to listen or not to listen

2. Comprehension

Follows the words used by the speaker

Understands the ideas expressed

Recognizes some purpose for listening

Notes the details

Receives new ideas and information

3. Assimilation

Reacts to the ideas expressed--such as agreeing,
disagreeing, or evaluating

Reinforces learning through use

Follows directions which have been received
aurally

Repeats information to another person

Develops given information in some meaningful
way

Adapts new ideas presented

Hollingsworth⁶⁶ elaborated on one of the problems of listening comprehension--the fact that thought is five or six times as fast as speech. He commented, "This discrepancy leaves a lot of time for spare thinking. It is what one does with this spare thinking time that makes one either a good

⁶⁶Hollingsworth, op. cit., p. 1156.

or a poor listener."⁶⁷ Learning to make use of this spare time in a way which improves the skills of listening, rather than becoming distracted by other stimuli is, according to Hollingsworth, a skill which can be taught.

. . . First the listener should think ahead of the speaker to draw conclusions from the words spoken at the moment. Second, the listener should weigh the verbal evidence used by the speaker to support the points that are made. Third, periodically the listener should review the portion of the talk completed thus far. Last, the listener should search for meaning that is not necessarily put into spoken words.⁶⁸

A need for skill in the use of spare time for thinking while listening would appear to be compatible with the theory of "analysis by synthesis" as discussed by Richard Ammon.

. . . Basically, analysis by synthesis is the construction or generation of an utterance by the listener in an attempt to make a cognitive match of the aural message. That is, by providing the learner with input and practice in generation, he will gain a storehouse of words and sentence structures. In addition the practice⁶⁹ of generation directly improves speaking and writing.

Much has been learned since 1949 when the major research in listening began,⁷⁰ both about specific skills and about general principles of teaching listening.

⁶⁷Hollingsworth, op. cit., p. 1157. ⁶⁸Ibid.

⁶⁹Richard Ammon, "Listening as a Means of Developing Language," Elementary English, 51 (April, 1974), 515.

⁷⁰Strickland, The Language Arts . . ., p. 130.

Strickland⁷¹ and Tiedt and Tiedt⁷² have made statements indicating that students should be taught that good listening is complex and must be learned. In addition Strickland⁷³ noted that the maturity of a student's listening skill is related to his having had someone listen to him.

Some of the skills listed above may be more important to the production of written expression than others. The use of time to think about what has been heard and the ability to synthesize this to other aural experiences would appear to be skills important in the relationship between listening and written expression. Little is mentioned in the literature about the direct relationship between these two aspects of the language arts except within a general framework of the interrelationship of the language arts. However, the acceptance of listening as basic to the entire field is one indication of the importance of listening to learning the skills of written expression.

The Oral Language Strand and Its Relationship to
Written Expression

Speech is normally the second of the language skills to develop and, like listening, the beginnings of speech

⁷¹Ibid.

⁷²Tiedt and Tiedt, op. cit., p. 97.

⁷³Strickland, The Language Arts . . . , p. 130.

appear in infancy.⁷⁴ For many years, much has been known about sequential development of oral language. This has been summarized by O'Donnell:⁷⁵

Vocabulary Development

- 2 months--makes sounds resembling vowels
 - 6 months--is babbling with syllable-like sounds
 - 1 year--makes some sounds acoustically the same as mature speech
-
- 1 1/2 to 2 years--has a vocabulary which increases rapidly with up to 200 words
 - 4 years--shows rapid vocabulary growth to as many as 20,000 words

Syntactical Development

- 1 year--first words often mean sentences
- 18 months--often uses 2-word phrases
- 3 years--uses many grammatically complete sentences
- 4 years--most children use a variety of sentences with complex grammatical structure

There is general agreement as to the sequence of this oral language development, but disagreement exists as to how and why it takes place in this way. As discussed earlier Loban⁷⁶ has taken the viewpoint of many developmental and behaviorist psychologists that language is totally a learned

⁷⁴Hansen, op. cit., p. 278.

⁷⁵Roy O'Donnell, "Language Learning and Language Teaching," Elementary English, 51 (January, 1974), 115.

⁷⁶Loban, op. cit., p. 3.

skill, while Hansen⁷⁷ has summarized the viewpoint of most linguists that the child is "preprogrammed" for language learning and learns the specific language he does because it is the language of his culture.

Vygotsky⁷⁸ viewed this same sequence from the basis of the relationship existing between speech and thought, but, in agreement with linguists believed that the basis of language is genetic. He compared his work to that of Piaget.

The theories of both Piaget and Vygotsky are predicated on a genetic programming for language development. However, Piaget differs from Vygotsky in his conclusions about how language and thought are related. Vygotsky explained the differences between his theories and those of Piaget about the role of egocentric speech in this way:

. . . It is this transitional role of egocentric speech that lends it such great theoretical interest. Thus our schema of development--first social, then egocentric, then inner speech--contrasts both with the traditional behaviorist schema--vocal speech, whisper, inner speech--and with Piaget's sequence--from nonverbal autistic thought through egocentric thought,⁷⁹ and speech to socialized speech and logical thinking.

The study of psycholinguistics,⁸⁰ the rediscovery of the work of Vygotsky, and the recent interest in the

⁷⁷Hansen, op. cit., p. 217.

⁷⁸Lev Vygotsky, Thought and Language (Cambridge: Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, 1962), p. 41.

⁷⁹Ibid., pp. 19-20.

⁸⁰Roy C. O'Donnell, "Psycholinguistics," The Encyclopedia of Education, Vol. VII, ed. Lee C. Deighton (New York: The Macmillan Company and The Free Press, 1972), pp. 278-79.

prolific work of Piaget are among the studies of language which have had a major impact on the thinking of scholars from all disciplines concerned with the education of children. Without this recent focus on language, the following statement by Hansen probably could not have been made at this time:

A major contemporary development in early childhood curricula and teaching strategies is the widespread reawakening of interest in the acquisition and development of oral language in children. It has become more and more clear that academic and social skills should be founded on a strong oral communication curriculum in the preschool.⁸¹

The attention given to oral language development as a basis for learning has become more prevalent in the last few years as more and more research points out the importance of spoken language. The body of research transcends traditional boundaries of several disciplines. Ruddell⁸² referred to the following as "reading-language" disciplines: linguistics, sociology, and psychology along with the combined disciplines of social psychology, psycholinguistics, and sociolinguistics.

In a survey of ERIC Reports, Rupley stated:

If, as teachers, we reflect on what research has told us about the importance of oral language and we logically analyze the role language plays in reading, writing, speaking, listening, and concept development, then the instruction and development of oral language

⁸¹Hansen, op. cit., p. 276.

⁸²Ruddell, op. cit., p. 18.

skills should be one of our paramount concerns in a language arts program.

The Findings of Research Related to Teaching Oral Language

Not many scholars agree that research findings have consistently indicated the same things, but the following conclusions could be used as a basis for development of an oral language program directed toward a good program for written expression. Golub has summarized the following research findings:

1. Language abilities are closely related.
2. Facility in oral language generally precedes the learning of reading and writing skills.
3. A warm, individualized relationship between a child and an adult is important in early language development.
4. Peer influences on language increase with age.
5. As children learn new vocabulary, they learn new concepts.
6. Children in the primary grades need a fundamental spoken vocabulary on which to base the learning of reading and writing skills.
7. Children need vocabulary for outside the classroom as well as inside the classroom.
8. Children's vocabulary grows in the number of words learned and in the number of meanings attributed to each word.

9. Children must learn the vocabulary specific to a number of content areas, and these vocabularies must be deliberately taught.⁸⁴

Piaget, in a discussion of the relationship between thought and language has made many provocative statements about oral language development. Two of these seem particularly significant when development of an oral language program is being considered:

~~... enables us to place the beginning of socialization of thought somewhere between 7 and 8. It is about this age that conversations of this type [Collaboration⁸⁵ in Abstract Thought] first make their appearance.~~

Up until the age of 7 or 8 children make no effort to stick to one opinion on any given subject. They do not, indeed, believe what is self-contradictory, but they adopt successively what, if⁸⁶ they were compared, would contradict one another.

Rupley referred to the work of Cooper and Anastasiow who made the point that:

... A child's awareness of himself as an individual and worthy person develops in⁸⁷ direct relation to his ability to express himself.

Hansen used the background of linguistic research to contribute the following ideas toward a program for development of skill in oral language.

⁸⁴Lester Golub, "How American Children Learn to Write," Elementary School Journal, 74 (January, 1974), 337-38.

⁸⁵Jean Piaget, The Language and Thought of the Child, 1926; rpt. (Cleveland: Meridian Books, The World Publishing Company, 1962), p. 81.

⁸⁶Ibid., p. 91.

⁸⁷Rupley, p. 520, citing Georgia Cooper and Nicholas Anastasiow, Moving into Skills of Communication (Bloomington, Indiana: Institute of Child Study, 1972).

. . . language is the key to unlock the child's ability to learn. Since language is the major medium of instruction, verbal differences may create a serious barrier to all forms of educational achievement.

. . . Children between the ages of twelve months and eighteen months produce one and two word remarks. . . . The rate of acquisition and development of the phonotactical sound patterns and grammar (syntactical development) changes radically during the next two years, and then there is a gradual slowing down. After age twelve to thirteen, language acquisition seems to stop.

. . . All of the essential grammatical structures . . . used by adults can be found in the grammar of nursery school children.

. . . Self-esteem of being a worthwhile individual is threatened by non-acceptance of his/her language system, causing guilt-shame feelings of inadequacy.

. . . The first principle of any language program is that . . . it must respect the language the child brings with him to the classroom.

Dora Smith has addressed herself to the implementation of the oral language program and has found evidence that:

Enriching the child's environment, encouraging conversation about it, and pushing through to adequate expression of the experience in words⁸⁸ are major elements in the growth of language.

⁸⁸Hansen, et passim.

⁸⁹Dora V. Smith, "Developmental Language Patterns of Children," Elementary School Language Arts: Selected Readings, eds. Paul C. Burns and Leo M. Schell (Chicago: Rand McNally Co., 1969), p. 69.

Not all of the conclusions summarized above are of equal importance in the development of a program to teach oral language skills. Yet, each statement provides information about the development of oral language which is important for a complete learning program.

Teaching the Skills of Oral Language

Familiarity with research in a given field is the first step in the attainment of the goal of an effective program of teaching. As Rupley has so aptly stated, "The realization that a subject is important is never as difficult as determining how to teach it."⁹⁰

Taylor⁹¹ suggested that it is extremely important to train for oral communication as part of the elementary curriculum because, for most people, speech is the most common method of self-expression. He feels the school should take the responsibility for helping a child become aware of speech problems, and how to correct them without embarrassment, as well as for specific teaching of speech skills to all children. Taylor⁹² has listed the following goals for a speech program.

⁹⁰Rupley, op. cit., p. 520.

⁹¹Elvin Taylor, A New Approach to the Language Arts in the Elementary School (West Nyack, New York: Parker Publishing Company, Inc., 1970), p. 28.

⁹²Ibid.

1. Learning to express one's ideas correctly and concisely.
2. Learning to express one's opinions and ideas in such a way that others are encouraged to listen.
3. Learning to control and manipulate one's voice to be at the best advantage in any speaking situation.
4. Learning to be confident in an audience situation while remaining sensitive to the reactions of the audience.

Tiedt and Tiedt⁹³ stated that a child lives and constantly experiments with the use of language. In order to capitalize on the child's natural language and curiosity about it, they suggested the following objectives for oral language instruction:

1. To achieve linguistic fluency.
2. To attain an extensive speaking vocabulary.
3. To work toward effectiveness of speaking.
4. Learning the elements of successful speaking.
5. Learning the specific parts of speech.
6. Achieving variety in the style of oral presentation.

Burns, Broman, and Wantling are among the authors who have given strong emphasis to the teaching of oral

⁹³Tiedt and Tiedt, op. cit., p. 101.

language. The following strong statements have indicated the reasons behind this emphasis on "oral composition."

. . . Effective oral communication is one of the most important of the fundamental skills taught to elementary school children. The ability to express ideas and feelings probably contributes more to personal pleasure, satisfaction, and success than any other skill learned in school.

Language growth is not developed by formal instruction in a separate language class only. ~~Incidental practice in on-going class activities~~ should be stressed throughout the day and those language skills that need to be improved and extended should be assessed constantly. As the teacher listens, he hears the language of the children and from these data he develops his plans.⁹⁴

These authors further listed oral experiences which can be planned for an elementary classroom, from conversation through reports, to storytelling, to conducting class meetings. Nearly all of these experiences, along with the goals listed previously, provide lead-up activities to written expression or encompass some aspect of written expression in the lesson. Not everyone agrees on methodology or even the goals of an oral language program, but it would be difficult to find an authority who says such a program is not important to the academic and intellectual development of all students.

⁹⁴Paul Burns, Betty L. Broman, and Alberta L. Lowe Wantling, The Language Arts in Childhood Education, 2nd ed. (Chicago: Rand McNally and Co., 1971), Chapter 5.

Reading and Its Relationship to Written Expression

The third of the language arts to develop is reading. Aukerman⁹⁵ has stated that it is only if the child is expected by his society to become literate or is unusually motivated or able that this is true. In many parts of the world, even now, only a privileged few are allowed to learn the code necessary for the acquisition of academic knowledge. In societies where this is still the procedure for learning to read, scholars are held in awe and often possess great power because of their literacy.⁹⁶

This is not true in the society of the United States where every child is expected to learn to read successfully. Although this is the stated goal, it is obviously not achieved, nor is it probable that this objective to which educators give lip service⁹⁷ can be achieved at this time.

How to teach reading, or even what is meant by reading, or how reading relates to written expression are all areas of controversy among specialists in reading and psychology. Each of these areas of controversy will be discussed in this chapter.

⁹⁵ Robert Aukerman, Reading in the Secondary School Classroom (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1972), p. 1.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Henry P. Smith and Emerald V. Dechant, Psychology in Teaching Reading (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1961), pp. 1-2.

Frank Smith takes an extreme position in regard to the relationship between reading and writing.

Writing and reading are often thought of as mirror images of each other, as reflections from opposite angles of the same phenomenon, communication through written language. But there are quite radical differences between the skills and knowledge employed in reading and those employed in writing, just as there are considerable differences in the processes involved in learning to read and learning to write. And I offer as a reasonable working hypothesis that anything that tends to make writing easier will make reading more difficult and vice versa. In other words, the writing system that we have got can be regarded as a compromise between the interests of the reader and the interests of the writer, each of whom benefits at the expense of the other--by one aspect or another of this system.

In the passage quoted, Frank Smith was discussing reading and writing as they relate to phonology and orthography. His definition of reading appears to be much narrower than that given by H. Smith and Dechant:

The receptive skill of reading certainly involves much more than recognition of the graphic symbol; it includes even more than the arousal of meanings or the gaining of meaning from printed symbols. It frequently requires reflection, judgment, analysis, synthesis, selection, and critical evaluation of what is being read. The reader is stimulated by the author's printed words, but in⁹⁹ turn he vests the author's words with his own meaning.

Even with this broader meaning for the word "reading," H. Smith and Dechant also regard reading and writing as opposite skills. Reading is a receptive skill while writing

⁹⁸ Frank Smith, "Phonology and Orthography: Reading and Writing," Elementary English, 49 (November, 1972), 1075.

⁹⁹ H. Smith and Dechant, op. cit., p. 22.

is an expressive skill.¹⁰⁰ Why, then, should one discuss reading at all when the basic focus of this study is writing. Statements from several authors help to clarify this issue.

Chambers and Lowry¹⁰¹ have indicated that both reading and writing are learned. Because, in many ways, these skills are opposites of one another, the learning principles for the reading process also apply to the process of written expression. An additional relationship of the two skills comes about because receptive skills must always be dependent upon expressive skills for communication to others.

Both reading and writing employ graphic symbols although, according to F. Smith,¹⁰² the same symbols represent phonology to the reader and orthography to the writer. The graphic symbols represent the code which must be learned and Golub¹⁰³ is convinced that learning the decoding skills of reading should make it easier to learn the encoding skills of writing.

¹⁰⁰Ibid.

¹⁰¹Chambers and Lowry, op. cit., pp. 113 and 240.

¹⁰²F. Smith, op. cit., p. 1075.

¹⁰³Golub, "How American Children Learn to Write," p. 241.

McDonald¹⁰⁴ has called attention to the fact that the literature available on the teaching of remedial reading is more abundant and more systematic than that of remedial writing. Therefore, in spite of the skills being opposites of one another, the investigator wishing information about remedial techniques must use material gained from the literature of reading and remedial reading.

~~Aukerman has described reading as the "common denominator of academic learning in the secondary school."~~¹⁰⁵ He might well have said that reading is the common denominator of all levels of schooling, since, as H. Smith and Dechant have stated, "reading is so interrelated with the total educational process that educational success requires successful reading."¹⁰⁶

The Teaching of Reading as It Relates to Written Expression

There are many approaches to the teaching of reading and not all approaches are equally successful for all teachers or with all children.¹⁰⁷ Many factors must be considered if most children are to reach optimum levels in

¹⁰⁴Alma Alene McDonald, "A Multimodal Program of Identification and Remediation for Intermediate Students with Learning Disabilities in the Area of Written Expression" (unpublished Master's thesis, University of the Pacific, Stockton, 1973).

¹⁰⁵Aukerman, op. cit., p. 2.

¹⁰⁶H. Smith and Dechant, op. cit., p. 6.

¹⁰⁷Chambers and Lowry, op. cit., pp. 153-158.

the many facets of reading.¹⁰⁸

Strang¹⁰⁹ has listed seven principles for the teaching of reading. These principles have a dual interest:

(1) they apply to most methods or systems for the teaching of reading, and (2) most of the principles apply equally well to the teaching of the skills of written expression.

1. Start where a child is.
2. ~~Nothing succeeds like success.~~
3. Respect for a pupil increases his self-esteem.
4. Learning takes place in a relationship.
5. Success in dealing with seriously retarded readers depends upon discovering what makes them tick.
6. Success in teaching reading results from changing the dynamics of the situation.
7. Children may react differently to what seems like the same approach.

General principles such as those listed by Strang are apparently of value in helping teachers teach reading. Perhaps the fact that such general suggestions are of value is at least partially explained by Emans¹¹⁰ who has said

¹⁰⁸H. Smith and DeChant, op. cit., pp. 2-6.

¹⁰⁹Ruth Strang, Diagnostic Teaching of Reading (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1964), p. 4.

¹¹⁰Robert Emans, "Oral Language and Learning to Read," Elementary English, 50 (September, 1973), 930.

that most children do learn to read even though many different instructional methods may be used. He has reminded us that we have evidence that both method and teacher characteristics influence reading achievement although there are times when this is not obvious. His contention is that the reason that most children learn to read with most methods and with most teachers is "by virtue of the fact that he [the child] ~~has innate capacities to select sufficient information from~~ whatever is prepared for him so he can discover the regularities of written language."¹¹¹ In this way the author considers the learning of reading to be similar to the learning of oral language.

The following statement by Shafer lends credence to the statements of Emans:

The reader as a seeker of meaning, continually makes predictions based on minimal kinds of information and increasingly brings linguistic competence and experience to that task as a creative act. As soon as a system of writing as a language form that has some kind of a familiarity is recognized, predicting its patterns begins. This prediction is based largely on syntactic competence and the experimental-conceptual background that is brought to the reading task. What is important is that the reader knows the relative amount of information that particular graphic cues in writing carry and therefore which distinctive features should be looked for.¹¹²

Any teacher who agrees with Shafer and Emans¹¹³ would probably want to provide a beginning reading program

¹¹¹Emans, op. cit., p. 930.

¹¹²Shafer, op. cit., p. 500.

¹¹³Shafer, loc. cit.; Emans, loc. cit.

based on the language of the students. The experience chart has long been used for this purpose and has been recommended by Burns, Broman, and Wantling, who say:

It is difficult to recommend a more effective device than experience chart writing for realistic, functional, and constructive learning and teaching. The important language relationships are established effectively in experience writing. This is the relationship of an experience (with its ideas, structure, and inherent significance) to the manifestation, first in oral language, then in written form, and finally in reading what has been written.¹¹⁴

For the teacher who wants a somewhat more structured beginning reading program Ruddell¹¹⁵ has discussed several different types of published programs with a language-structure emphasis. Among the programs built primarily on the child's own language, Ruddell focused on Roach Van Allen's Language Experiences in Reading. This program is based on principles which Ruddell summarized as follows:

1. What he [the child] thinks about he can say.
2. What he says can be written (or dictated).
3. What has been written can be read.
4. He can read what he has written and what others have written for him to read.¹¹⁶

¹¹⁴Burns, Broman and Wantling, op. cit., p. 185.

¹¹⁵Ruddell, op. cit., pp. 122-127.

¹¹⁶Ibid., p. 118.

More specific instructions for teaching and more specific reading material, but with the content still based on language-structure are found in the following programs for elementary school students as described by Ruddell:

Program Build: Basic Understandings in Language Development--utilizes patterns of language structure that have been identified in children's oral language.¹¹⁷

The Sounds of Language Readers--approach structure and meaning indirectly [to show] the word, phrase, and sentence equivalents of oral language [by use of] varied print and graphic forms, and good quality literary selections.¹¹⁸

All of the reading programs which have been described, in addition to being based on the structure of language, include work in the development of written abilities as an integral part of the reading lessons. Ruddell¹¹⁹ has stressed that in reading programs of this type, the relationship between oral and written language is used as a basis for enhancement of all the language skills.

There is not general agreement that reading should be taught from the point of view of language structure and meaning. One of the most outspoken of those with another approach is Engleman.¹²⁰ He has stressed his belief that an

¹¹⁷ Ibid., pp. 123-24.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., pp. 125-26.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., p. 126.

¹²⁰ Siegfried Engleman, Preventing Failure in the Primary Grades (Chicago, Illinois: Science Research Associates, Inc., 1969), p. 83.

initial program based on meaning will make it more difficult for a child to learn to read. He has insisted that the emphasis must be on decoding only; that the child must be taught "how to translate the written symbols into appropriate sounds."¹²¹

Engleman has stated further that after mastering the decoding process, "The child can be taught the intent of ~~communication by being shown in detail how words and sentences function in solving communication problems.~~"¹²² A part of the program of "solving communication problems" involves language instruction other than reading.

Examples of the written work suggested by Engleman¹²³ are: filling blanks with specific words or class words, writing descriptions of specific objects, or writing definitions. Written expression is very limited in the Engleman approach to reading-language instruction.

Summary

Experts from a number of different disciplines agree that man is a language-specific species. They disagree about the manner in which language is acquired. Some authorities believe that language is a totally learned behavior while others believe that the brain is preprogrammed for language.

¹²¹Engleman, op. cit., p. 123.

¹²²Ibid., p. 152.

¹²³Engleman, et passim, pp. 161-224.

They believe that the child is ready to learn language and learns the particular language of the culture in which he lives.

Researchers have noted that language has four separate but interrelated facets which are usually acquired in the following sequence: (1) listening, (2) speaking, (3) reading, and (4), written expression. The term language arts is used to refer to the study of the four facets of language.

Although most authorities agree that listening and speaking are basic to the acquisition of the skills of reading and written expression, some experts believe that reading is the only strand of language which receives adequate attention in school.

Listening is usually acquired before the other language skills. Although the ability to hear and listen to language is acquired naturally and without deliberate effort, most experts believe that the skills of listening need to be carefully taught in school. Teaching-learning techniques have been developed to help students learn to better understand and use the information gained through listening.

Speech is the second of the skills of language learned by most children. The basic skills are believed to be learned during the preschool years. However, most authorities in the field are in agreement that the school years should include a great deal of instruction in oral language. The ability to use oral language effectively

appears to have a direct relationship to the ability to learn to read and to learn the skills of written expression.

In a literate society, such as that of the United States, children receive formal training designed to teach them to read. Most children learn to read although many of them do not learn to read well. The methods used to teach reading vary and it is possible that the method used to teach reading may have an effect on how reading and written expression relate to one another.

Reading is related to writing because both skills are based on the previously learned skills of listening and speaking and both make use of a specific, learned, abstract symbology. Neither skill is learned naturally by most individuals as are the skills of listening and speaking.

THE COMPLEXITY OF WRITTEN EXPRESSION

The skill of written expression is the last of the language skills to be learned by most people. Learning to express oneself in writing is the most complex of the language skills. It involves many of the skills of the other language arts in addition to the motor skills necessary for handwriting.¹²⁴ Insight into the complexity of written language can be gained from the work of a number of writers.

¹²⁴Myklebust, op. cit., p. 3.

Myklebust¹²⁵ has stated that, although speech and written expression are both output skills, written language differs in that it requires more intelligence, more complex intersensory perception and greater maturity of psychoneurosensory processes. In addition, he stated that in order to learn written language one must have developed the ability to relate visual and auditory word images.

Porter has noted that both spoken and written language are encoding skills, but do not seem to be learned in the same way.

It is not at all apparent why a one-to-one transfer between the encoding processes of speech and of writing does not occur with children automatically, given adequate handwriting and spelling assistance. But it is a fact that learning to write sentences and strings of sentences for many children is an exceedingly difficult process which only remotely resembles the effortless way¹²⁶ in which these children acquired their oral language.

West looked at the complexity of the subject from yet another viewpoint.

The materials to be put together in written composition are the details from personal sensory experience, from vicarious experiences (reading, listening, viewing), and from inferences. The structures into which these details are placed derive from personal creation, from productive thinking processes and from learned patterns of a particular culture. To be a skilled writer, then, an individual must be a skilled observer and perceiver; a skilled reader, listener, and viewer;

¹²⁵ Ibid., pp. 3-5.

¹²⁶ Jane Porter, "Research," Elementary English, 49 (October, 1973), 867.

a skilled creator of original structures; a skilled thinker; and a skilled adapter of traditional cultural patterns. In addition, he must be skilled in the mechanics of setting down the integrated products of these skills so that he reaches the minds and emotions of his readers.¹²⁷

The authors quoted are representative of many others who have written on the subject of written expression. This agreement on the complexity of written composition does not mean that these authors are in agreement on all aspects of the subject being studied.

What Can Be Learned from Research in Written Expression

A number of authors have reviewed available research to determine what is known about the specific components of the complex skill of written expression. Not everyone agrees as to what has been learned from research.

Pierson¹²⁸ has stated that research does not offer the English teacher any specific answers about any aspect of written expression, only tentative information. Golub¹²⁹ has listed a number of specifics which can be found in the research. Of the specific findings listed, about half deal with the mechanics of writing and probably would not satisfy the English teacher of whom Pierson speaks, who is searching

¹²⁷West, op. cit., p. 365.

¹²⁸Pierson, op. cit., p. 28.

¹²⁹Golub, "How American Children Learn to Write," pp. 237-38.

for specific skills or teaching methods in the area of written language.

Burns, Broman, and Wantling,¹³⁰ after an extensive review of the available literature, have provided a composite list of the fundamental theses from research.

1. Children can and should be encouraged to write creatively. The motivation for writing should be from the child's experience. Freedom of expression should be stimulated and encouraged. It has been noted that different stimuli appear to bring different responses.
2. A carefully planned program in written expression is needed for students of all ages and backgrounds.
3. Primary children are capable of a great amount of creative writing. Provision must be made for opportunities to dictate and/or have access to words which have been spelled for them.
4. Flexible grouping will sometimes provide for varied experiences and recognition of individual differences.
5. The results are conflicting, but it is possible that derived experiences lead to higher quality writing than direct experiences do.

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Burns, Broman and Wantling, op. cit., pp. 191-93.

6. Personal writing usually produces the highest quality work so a greater percentage of time should be spent in this area.
7. Teachers should encourage children to write about their experiences instead of the teacher choosing topics for them. Children can be taught to choose topics by teaching them to observe and think creatively about their experiences.
8. Teachers need to recognize that children sometimes need help in identifying their interests and writing about them.

The authors¹³¹ cited differ in their interpretation of what can be found in research which will help the teacher of written expression. However, none of the authorities consulted appears to have found much in available research which will give insight into the specific components of the skill of written expression. It seems quite possible that most of these authorities would agree with this statement by Graves.

. . . The main problem is that we do not fully understand just what goes into good writing, much less great writing. We cannot say with much accuracy just what the components of good writing are, nor do we know how many there are. If we knew these things, the teaching of composition would be much simpler.¹³²

¹³¹Pierson, loc. cit.; Golub, "How American Children Learn to Write," pp. 237-38; Burns, Broman and Wantling, op. cit.

¹³²Richard Graves, "CEH AE: Five Steps for Teaching Writing," English Journal, 61 (May, 1964), 697-98.

A Theoretical Framework for Teaching Written Expression

The lack of a large research base leaves "the common experience and intuition"¹³³ of teachers and a limited amount of theory as background information upon which to draw in order to teach written expression.

One important and relatively recent theoretical thrust comes from the study of linguistics. Hansen has discussed some aspects of the linguistic theory of Chomsky, which may be of importance in understanding the complexity of written language.

. . . Recent research evidence indicates that a conception of the genesis of language comes from an analysis of two major aspects of linguistic activity: (a) linguistic competence, and (b) linguistic performance. . . . The term competence refers to the "hypothesized" underlying rules that have been mastered by the speaker-hearer. Performance on the other hand, is "how" a speaker produces sentences. This "how" operates under the constraints of memory, attention, motivation, distraction errors, the external speech environment, as well as physiological and acoustic parameters. [Italics in the original.]¹³⁴

Hansen adds that thought, which is conceived in the deep structure, is transformed into speech and becomes surface structure. Deep structure is abstract while surface structure "concretely specifies the syntactic structure necessary for spoken or written communication."¹³⁵

¹³³ Corbin, op. cit., p. 23.

¹³⁴ Hansen, op. cit., p. 279.

¹³⁵ Ibid., p. 280.

Frank Smith has extended this concept by focusing on the place of reading in this theoretical approach to writing.

. . . the reader's direction of information processing goes from the surface structure to the written symbol to the deep structure of meaning . . . while the writer must work in the opposite direction.¹³⁶

The framework of deep structure and surface structure as discussed by Hansen and F. Smith¹³⁷ suggests that reading, by going from concrete to abstract concepts may be a less complex process than either spoken or written language. The expressive language arts, according to the theory discussed, involve beginning at an abstract level and bringing the abstract to the concrete form of surface structure.

This similarity of spoken and written language brings into focus another of the controversies in the field of written expression. This controversy centers around whether or not written language is a form of spoken language expressed through a different symbology.¹³⁸

Chaika¹³⁹ has written that her students are relieved to discover that written language and spoken language are

¹³⁶ Frank Smith, op. cit., pp.1078-79.

¹³⁷ Hansen, loc. cit.; and F. Smith, loc. cit.

¹³⁸ Elaine Chaika, "Who Can Be Taught?" College English, 35 (February, 1974), 575.

¹³⁹ Ibid.

different and that the students no longer need to feel stupid because they cannot write and make it sound like speech. To further emphasize the differences between the two expressive forms of language, she points out that studies of aphasics have shown that entirely different nerve channels of the brain are used for written language than those which are used for spoken language.¹⁴⁰

~~Shiflett, on the other hand, put great emphasis~~
 on the fact that in order to write successfully, the student must "tell it to the paper."¹⁴¹ O'Donnell¹⁴² has suggested that, in the early stages of learning to write, written expression is speech put on paper, but that stage lasts only a short time. Authorities such as Strickland and Dawson,¹⁴³ who have called dictation to the teacher the first stage in learning to use written language, would agree with at least the first part of O'Donnell's suggestion.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

¹⁴¹ Betty Shiflett, "Story Workshop as a Method of Teaching Writing," College English, 35 (November, 1973), 147.

¹⁴² O'Donnell, Language Learning and Language Teaching, p. 117.

¹⁴³ Ruth Strickland, The Language Arts in the Elementary School (2nd ed., Lexington, Massachusetts: D. C. Heath and Company, 1969), p. 294; Mildred Dawson and Marion Zellinger Guiding Language Learning (Yonkers-on-Hudson, New York: World Book Company, 1957), p. 309.

In order to study the controversy from another approach, Blankenship¹⁴⁴ studied the relationship of the speaking styles and writing styles of four well-known writers. She concluded from her research that "syntactical structure is determined by an individual style rather than by read/heard purpose."¹⁴⁵ However, this conclusion must be evaluated in the context that Blankenship compared published writings of four well-known professionals with prepared speeches they had given. Had she made the comparison between the authors' written work and their conversations, she may well have found greater differences.

Vygotsky's theory would not support the thesis that written language is oral language symbolized on paper. He wrote:

In written speech, lacking situational and expressive supports, communication must be achieved only through words and their combinations: This requires the speech activity to take complicated forms--hence the use of first drafts. The evolution from draft to final copy reflects our mental processes. Planning has an important part in written speech, even when we do not actually write out a draft. Usually we say to ourselves what we are going to write; this is also a draft, though in thought only. . . . this mental draft is inner speech.¹⁴⁶

Vygotsky¹⁴⁷ explained further that inner speech consists of predication only since we already know the subject

¹⁴⁴Jane Blankenship, "A Linguistic Analysis of Oral and Written Style," The Quarterly Journal of Speech, XLVIII (December, 1962), 422.

¹⁴⁵Ibid., p. 419.

¹⁴⁶Vygotsky, op. cit., p. 144.

¹⁴⁷Ibid., p. 145.

and situation about which we are thinking. According to the theory, inner speech is always in an abbreviated form and works with semantics not phonetics. Vygotsky concluded that inner speech is thought connected with words and has fewer words connected with it as it approaches pure thought and more words as it approaches spoken language.

Vygotsky's explanation of the differences between spoken and written language suggests that the thought processes involved are different for each. With written language, the thought process involves planning for the manner in which the writer will compensate for the "lack of situational and expressive supports."¹⁴⁸

In her discussion of the work of Riling, Everts¹⁴⁹ calls attention to the fact that Riling may have found evidence of the differences in thought processes for speaking and writing. Everts made the following statement regarding Riling's research:

. . . [The research] showed clearly that children, in handling the written language, can use structures which they cannot use to any extent in handling the oral. Riling believes that this manifests an awareness on the part of children of the more complex thought processes which are called into play when one writes.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁸Vygotsky, op. cit., p. 141.

¹⁴⁹Eldonna Everts and others, The Nebraska Study of the Syntax of Children's Writing, 1964-65. Vol. I (Lincoln, Nebraska University Curriculum Development Center, 1965), p. 4, citing Mildred E. Riling, "Oral and Written Language of Children in Grades 4 and 6 Compared with the Language of Their Textbooks," Southeastern State College, Durant, Oklahoma, 1965 (Report to the U.S. Office of Education, Cooperative Research Project No. 2410).

¹⁵⁰Ibid.

Summary

As one might expect, with such a complex subject, there is much controversy about written language. One of the major controversies has to do with the relationships of spoken and written language. Some authors take the position that written language is spoken language transformed into writing by a specific symbology; other authors suggest that written language is a form of thought, not speech, put into writing.

The evidence suggests that the theories of both groups are plausible in some circumstances. The earliest attempts at writing are probably often speech put on paper and some later writing probably fits that category. However, it also appears that even at the early stages, some writing is thought--not speech--put into writing.

Most authorities consulted do agree as to the complexity and many-faceted aspects of written expression. They agree, as well, that there is a lack of definitive research in the field. This paucity of research has meant that most of the literature in the field is, to some degree, speculative. Any attempt at this time to ascertain the basic components of the skill of written expression is without supportive research.

THE TEACHING OF WRITTEN EXPRESSION

Francis Christensen was quoted by Graves as having made the following statement in the early 1960s. "In composition courses we do not really teach our captive charges

to write better--we merely expect them to."¹⁵¹ A decade later Graves observed, "The main problem in composition is not that we are teaching it poorly, but rather that we are not teaching it at all." [Italics in the original.]¹⁵²

In an attempt to explain why this is happening, Graves reported that "Dwight L. Burton has identified the ability to teach composition as one of the major gaps in the preparation of prospective teachers."¹⁵³ Another aspect of the problem was reported by Golub,¹⁵⁴ who has indicated that, after carefully studying four series of elementary school language tests, he found that little attention has been given to teaching composition as a process involving encoding and thinking.

Blanche Smith¹⁵⁵ tentatively put forth the explanation that not much teaching of written expression is done because many teachers are of the opinion that writing skills develop naturally without being taught. Reimer apparently would not agree with that explanation. He has made the

¹⁵¹ Graves, op. cit., p. 696, citing Francis Christensen.

¹⁵² Ibid.

¹⁵³ Graves, op. cit., p. 696, citing Dwight L. Burton, "English in No-Man's Land: Some Suggestions for the Middle Years," English Journal, 60 (January, 1971), 29.

¹⁵⁴ Golub, "How American Children Learn to Write," p. 238.

¹⁵⁵ Blanche Hope Smith, "Spontaneous Writing of Young Children," Elementary English, 52 (February, 1975), 180.

following accusation: ". . . we have no grade school writing curriculum. No one's trained to teach it. Everybody's so busy teaching Johnny to read there's nobody left to teach him to write."¹⁵⁶

In one way or another each person quoted has supported the statement by Burton¹⁵⁷ that composition is not taught and teachers do not know how to teach it. Does this mean there is no literature on the subject of teaching written expression? No, the literature on teaching methods is abundant. However, Golub's¹⁵⁸ review of the research upon which to base a literature for instructional methods for composition, revealed that most of the available literature is based on empirical evidence or scholarly opinion rather than the evidence of research.

The authors quoted have suggested that the teaching of written composition is either not done or is done poorly. These same authors along with many others appear to believe that the situation can and should change. Burrows and Applegate¹⁵⁹ are among those who have written of specific

¹⁵⁶George Reimer, How They Murdered the Second "R" (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, Inc., 1969), p. 1.

¹⁵⁷Graves, op. cit., p. 696, citing Burton.

¹⁵⁸Golub, "How American Children Learn to Write," p. 238.

¹⁵⁹Burrows, op. cit.; Mauree Applegate, Freeing Children to Write (Evanston, Illinois: Harper and Row, 1963).

methods which have worked for them. An obvious question, then, is, if these methods work, why is it that teachers are not using them? The answer may be found in Burton's¹⁶⁰ accusation that teachers are not taught how to use these methods or any other methods for teaching composition.

Developing a Framework for Teaching Written Expression

Enough scholarly opinion and empirical evidence is available that the National Council of Teachers of English Commission on Composition has published a set of eighteen principles to be considered when developing curriculum for teaching the skills of written expression.¹⁶¹ These principles cover such areas as (1) the need for writing, (2) that students learn to use written language by writing, (3) that specific instruction should be given, and (4) that many types of writing should be required from every student. The Commission stated that the principles are "general" which leaves the curriculum planners to supply the specific goals and methods for a curriculum for written expression.¹⁶²

Golub is one of the scholars who has developed a model for teaching written expression. Although this model

¹⁶⁰ Graves, op. cit., p. 696, citing Burton.

¹⁶¹ National Council of Teachers of English Commission on Composition, "Composition: a Position Statement," Elementary English, 52 (February, 1975), 194-96.

¹⁶² Ibid.

was available before the Commission report, it appears to meet most of the specifications covered by the position of The National Council of Teachers of English. Golub's model for composition combines oral and written composition in order to meet his stated goals:

1. The student should develop a positive attitude and motivation for expressing his thoughts and perceptions in oral and written language.
2. He should produce writing which is clear, direct, economical and sincere.
3. He should be able to write clearly on a variety of concepts and emotions relevant to him in a variety of ways.¹⁶³

Goals, principles, and models begin to provide a framework for the teaching of written expression. West¹⁶⁴ has added to the structure for teaching by an analysis of the steps involved in expressing oneself in writing.

These steps are:

1. Find something to say.
2. Determine the purpose.
3. Commit one's self to the task so that the tendency toward inertia of non-communication is overcome.
4. Gauge one's audience.
5. Choose appropriate form (sonnet, essay, narrative).

¹⁶³Lester S. Golub, "A Model for Teaching Composition," The Journal of Educational Research, 64 (November 1970), 115.

¹⁶⁴West, op. cit., p. 368.

6. Research the subject
7. Organize ideas.
8. Select appropriate words.
9. Construct sentences and paragraphs.
10. Utilize conventions effectively.
11. Enhance message stylistically.
12. Revise completely.

Providing a Foundation for Written Expression

There is general agreement that specific preparation for written expression should begin soon after a child starts to school. Burrows, Applegate, and Strickland¹⁶⁵ are among the many authorities who subscribe to this point of view. Oral language development is the basis upon which written language is built in this preparatory stage. According to Burrows¹⁶⁶ this early oral language experience is actually more important than the actual writing as the young child develops skill in written expression.

Taylor¹⁶⁷ is among those who have noted that at first the child is completely dependent upon the teacher

¹⁶⁵Burrows, op. cit., p. 31; Applegate, op. cit., p. 77; Strickland, Language Arts in the Elementary School, p. 299.

¹⁶⁶Burrows, loc. cit.

¹⁶⁷Taylor, op. cit., p. 109.

or other adult to do the actual writing while he composes. Taylor suggested that the child should see words transcribed long before he masters the skills of handwriting. This visual input serves as part of the foundation for written expression. The stages involved in this foundation building stage of composition are listed by Shane, Reddin, and Gillespie as:

1. Dictation--the early oral stage.
2. Copying--a stage during which the children continue to dictate their ideas to the teacher, then make a copy of their own.
3. Partial independence but with much teacher aid--children write without a sample.
4. Increasing independence--characterized by the ability to use self-help materials.¹⁶⁸

The Role of the Teacher in the Teaching of Written Expression

In the chapters they have devoted to written expression, Chambers and Lowry have repeatedly referred to the role of the teacher in providing the atmosphere necessary if a child is to be free to discover his potential as a writer. Among the statements they have made about the role of the teacher is:

The wise teacher . . . will expect a considerable less than perfect "first draft" of any composition that she may request from children. She will accept

¹⁶⁸ Harold Shane, Mary Reddin, and Margaret C. Gillespie, Beginning Language Arts with Children (Columbus, Ohio: Charles E. Merrill Books, Inc., 1961), p. 230.

it, work with the refinements that are needed, . . . and allow him a chance to submit a "second draft" and sometimes a "third draft."¹⁶⁹

Judy is another who has given considerable attention to the role of the teacher, particularly in the rewriting process. He compared the role of the teacher to that of an editor and found they are not always the same.

. . . On the whole the editor remains indifferent to whether the author's writing improves in the process.

.
 . . . An editor, of course, works with adults who are reasonably accomplished to begin with. Because the teacher works with young people who are in the process of growing, both as people and as writers, his specific roles will be more complicated. At times the teacher should be an editor, dealing with the strengths and weaknesses in papers as publication or public presentation approaches. At other times, however, he must serve as a talent scout, adult respondent, interested human being, friend, or advisor. The roles will differ with the student, the circumstances, and the state of the original manuscript that the teacher receives.¹⁷⁰

Golub's¹⁷¹ review of the research which has been done in the field of written expression has indicated that one of the few definitive statements which can be made as a result of research findings is that the teacher is of great

¹⁶⁹Chambers and Lowry, op. cit., p. 252.

¹⁷⁰Stephen N. Judy, "Writing for the Here and Now: An Approach to Assessing Student Writing," English Journal, 62 (January, 1973), 71.

¹⁷¹Golub, "How American Children Learn to Write," pp. 237-38.

importance in the total language process. One finding of research which is consistent is that a warm, supportive relationship between a child and an adult is important in early language development. A warm, accepting environment seems to be particularly important in early experiences in written expression.

The Categories of Written Expression

Many authors divide experiences in written language into two categories. Burns, Broman, and Wantling¹⁷² called the categories "functional writing" and "creative writing," while Burrows¹⁷³ classified the types as "personal writing" and "practical writing." The categories are the same even though the names differ. The authors cited agree that different methods are used to teach the two kinds of written expression.

Deighton has suggested another way to classify written expression. His categories of "writing to the teacher" and "out of school communication" provide an entirely different focus for looking at written communication. According to Deighton:

. . . The inescapable condition of the present-day school context is that it is necessary to engage in writing to the teacher in order to succeed in school . . .

.....

¹⁷²Burns, Broman, and Wantling, op. cit., p. 189.

¹⁷³Burrows, op. cit., p. 2.

. . . The school context for writing has its own motivations, its own constraints of time and subject matter, and its own different standards of quality. These differences are not sufficiently taken into account by the models for writing provided for teachers in the professional literature. These models call for the creation of purposeful situations in which a child writes to his peers, his parents, and resource people in the community. The truth is, of course, that in such conditions no child would normally think of writing a message; the telephone is easier and more satisfying since it permits two way communication. The specious goals of reality and relevance to out of school experiences have diverted curriculum and textbook producers from the fact that most of the writing the average pupil will do in his lifetime will be in school.¹⁷⁴

Whether the skills of writing are divided into the categories suggested by the authors mentioned or some other system of classification, it is almost certain that the methods used for teaching each classification will differ in some ways and have some similarities. All of the skills can be included in a discussion classifying the strategies for teaching as prewriting skills, writing skills, and rewriting skills. This classification can be used whether teaching the elementary school child as discussed by Chambers and Lowry¹⁷⁵ or the secondary school student as discussed by Parker.¹⁷⁶

¹⁷⁴ Lee C. Deighton, "Teaching of English in Elementary Schools," The Encyclopedia of Education, Vol. III, ed. Lee C. Deighton (New York: The Macmillan Company and The Free Press, 1971), p. 311.

¹⁷⁵ Chambers and Lowry, op. cit.

¹⁷⁶ Robert P. Parker, Jr., "Focus on the Teaching of Writing: On Process or Product?" English Journal, 61 (December, 1972), 1328-333.

Teaching the Skills of the Prewriting Stage
of Written Expression

The prewriting stage of written expression, according to Parker includes "all that happens to the writer, all that happens in the writer, and all that the writer does (especially talking) before he begins inscribing words on paper." [Italics in the original.]¹⁷⁷ Parker has elaborated on this statement to show that motivation, providing experiences, sensing, imagining, talking, and thinking, are part of the prewriting activities.

Golub¹⁷⁸ has described the need for a stimulus which is relevant to both the student and the teacher. Applegate¹⁷⁹ suggested that one purpose of a preparation period is to provide ideas for those people who are not creative. A different approach to motivation has been taken by Murray in his statement:

If a student is encouraged to write in an environment which allows the process of discovery, respect for the individual, opportunity for publication, and the productive experience of failure, he will discover his own reasons for writing.¹⁸⁰

A number of writers have suggested that the prewriting period is a time for teaching skills to be used during the

¹⁷⁷Parker, op. cit., p. 1329.

¹⁷⁸Golub, "A Model for Teaching Composition," p. 45.

¹⁷⁹Applegate, op. cit., p. 3.

¹⁸⁰Donald M. Murray, "Why Teach Writing--and How?" English Journal, 62 (December 1973), 1237.

writing stage of the work. This is particularly true for those authorities whose main concerns are with the teaching of elementary school children. Chambers and Lowry¹⁸¹ have pointed out that a child needs instruction to help him cope with the structure and form required. Tiedt¹⁸² has suggested talking with students about skills such as writing more descriptive sentences in order to provide clearer pictures, and showing students some of the intricacies of writing dialogue. These are skill teaching activities that will be interesting to children if they are presented as prewriting activities, before the skills are needed, according to Tiedt. Trosky and Wood¹⁸³ have suggested that listing ideas and grouping them are among the skill teaching activities in the prewriting period.

Burrows¹⁸⁴ is among the authors who have insisted that the prewriting stage should provide children with a reason for writing. The purpose for writing helps to determine the form of writing, which West¹⁸⁵ listed as one of the steps in composition. Determination of purpose

¹⁸¹Chambers and Lowry, op. cit., p. 251.

¹⁸²Iris Tiedt. Editorial, Elementary English, 52 (February, 1975), 103.

¹⁸³Odarka S. Trosky and C. C. Wood, "Paragraph Writing: A Second Look," Elementary English, 52 (February, 1975), 197.

¹⁸⁴Burrows, op. cit., p. 2.

¹⁸⁵West, op. cit., p. 238.

in the prewriting stage sets the stage for the variety of kinds of writing assignments, from narratives to dialogues to poetry. Variety of composition assignments was one of the recommendations of the National Council of Teachers of English Commission on Composition.¹⁸⁶

Just as it is important to establish the reason for writing as part of the prewriting activity, Porter¹⁸⁷ has suggested that the audience to whom the writing is to be directed should be determined. She discussed evidence that children tend to write to an audience which speaks the same dialect that they do unless a specific audience is designated in advance. As a consequence, students sometimes appear to lack ability to write in standard American English when they may be able to use the standard form.

Determining, during the prewriting period, the reason for writing, the form of writing to be used, and the audience who will read the paper should give the student an understanding of what is expected of him. Tway¹⁸⁸ discussed the need for the child to have this information

¹⁸⁶ National Council of Teachers of English Commission on Composition, op. cit., pp. 1901-1905.

¹⁸⁷ Porter, op. cit., p. 865.

¹⁸⁸ Eileen Tway, "Creative Writing: From Gimmick to Goal," Elementary English, 52 (February, 1975), 173.

so that he will feel that the output of physical and mental energy will be worth the effort.

Models of the kind of writing expected are an important aspect of the prewriting period, according to Graves.¹⁸⁹ He advocates the use of models to show the form of writing as well as for examples of good writing, in order to teach older students what is expected of them. Chambers and Lowry¹⁹⁰ have called attention to the importance of the use of writing models for elementary students. Some of the kinds of models which they suggest using are: (1) the alphabet, (2) sentence form and punctuation, (3) proper headings for papers, (4) paragraph construction, (5) outlines, and (6) poetry. They have pointed out that the form of writing should be modeled in such a way that the student is provided with visual reinforcement for the task.

Not every activity suggested for prewriting would be used for every type of lesson in written expression. However, according to Applegate and Chambers and Lowry¹⁹¹ some type of idea building or input activity must take place if children are expected to express themselves in writing.

¹⁸⁹ Graves, *op. cit.*, pp. 688-89.

¹⁹⁰ Chambers and Lowry, *op. cit.*, pp. 650-51.

¹⁹¹ Applegate, *op. cit.*, p. 32; Chambers and Lowry, *op. cit.*, p. 257.

Teaching the Skills of the Writing Stage of Written Expression

Although there is general agreement that a writing stage follows the prewriting stage, not everyone agrees as to what takes place during the writing stage. Parker has characterized this step of the process as "all that happens between the writer's inscribing the first word on paper and his deciding, by himself, that the thing he has been writing is finished."¹⁹² He further noted that some people believe that all thinking activity and discovery takes place in the prewriting stage, and the writing stage is simply an act of inscribing already discovered ideas and words. Parker disagrees with this concept and quoted several well-known authors who described their writing stages as varied processes, with each author having his own work style.¹⁹³

Murray has described the writing stage as an active one:

The creative writing teacher will . . . allow time for writing, the production of many drafts, the essential failures, through which the student will find his own subject. Writing is discovery and commitment. By writing, the student discovers his questions and his answers. He uses words to explore his world and create his world.¹⁹⁴

¹⁹²Parker, op. cit., p. 1329.

¹⁹³Ibid., p. 1331.

¹⁹⁴Murray, op. cit., p. 525.

Shiflett¹⁹⁵ has stated that the writing stage is one which should be just a time for writing to get ideas on paper. The student is told not to stop to be concerned about rearranging words, checking spelling, grammar, or punctuation, or worrying about sentence structure. In the instructional process she has advocated, Shiflett has described the writing stage for fairly mature students. Her suggestions are very different than are those for inexperienced students. The National Council of Teachers of English Commission on Composition have concerned themselves with less mature writers.

Inexperienced writers should have an opportunity to compose in school with help during the actual writing process in clarifying ideas, in choosing phrases, and sometimes in dealing with mechanical problems.¹⁹⁶

No matter what goes on with the writer during the writing stage, Chambers and Lowry¹⁹⁷ have concluded that the following should be provided in order for children to express themselves in writing:

1. A reason for writing.
2. The necessary equipment available.
3. A quiet, relaxed atmosphere.
4. Ample time for writing.
5. A skillful, understanding, professional teacher.
6. Knowing there will be acceptance of a first draft that is not perfect.

¹⁹⁵Shiflett, op. cit., p. 147.

¹⁹⁶NCTE Commission on Composition, op. cit., p. 194.

¹⁹⁷Chambers and Lowry, op. cit., p. 252.

Teaching the Skills of the Rewriting Stage of Written Expression

The third stage of written expression is rewriting. The exact skills involved in rewriting are no more precisely defined than are those for prewriting and writing. Not all authorities place the same value on this stage of written expression. Parker¹⁹⁸ has noted that he has little interest in what happens after the writer decides he is finished. He appears to expect the final touches in the completion of the composition to take care of themselves, after all the effort which has gone into the writing stage.

Maxwell,¹⁹⁹ in contrast to Parker, places considerable emphasis on the place of rewriting in the total process. He complained that the National Assessment of Writing surveyed the art of rough draft writing rather than the student's real skill in written language. Maxwell's criticism of the survey continued:

The National Assessment revealed . . . that multitudes of Americans are not aware that revision is a major part of a process called writing. The silken, sad, uncertain rustling of ballpoint on paper was not writing in the sense that journalists, authors, and even business executives use the term. The appearance is that the National Assessment (and their subcontractors, the Educational Testing Service) did not conceive revision to be a normal part of the writing process.²⁰⁰ [*Italics in the original.*]

¹⁹⁸ Parker, op. cit., p. 1332.

¹⁹⁹ John C. Maxwell, "National Assessment of Writing: Useless and Uninteresting?" English Journal, 62 (December, 1973), 1256.

²⁰⁰ Ibid.

Maxwell commented that the question of revision was brought to the attention of the assessment team and they agreed to include rewriting in the second round of assessment. He has described the results:

. . . Insofar as I have been able to determine, asking students to revise their papers in the tryout of second-round exercises proved disastrous. At best, some proofreading was done. According to the assessors the students did not know how to revise, didn't appear to want to, and didn't.

. . . If our students do not know how to revise, are baffled by the instruction, or simply refuse to do so, can we say that writing is being taught in the schools? Or are we teaching rough draft writing and, like NAEP, calling it by a grander name?

To me two of the important implications of the National Assessment of Writing are that first, the writing assessment is misnamed because writing was not assessed; therefore deductions from the data are generally awry; secondly, a great deal of work needs to be done in schools to make revision a full part of the act of written composition.²⁰¹

Editing and Revision. A survey of some of the literature in the field of written expression revealed little disagreement with Maxwell as to the importance of rewriting procedures. Editing, revision, and production of more than one draft is essential if the written work is to be read by others, according to Burrows, Applegate, and Chambers and Lowry.²⁰²

The age level of the writer does not appear to be a factor in the need for the rewriting phase of written

²⁰¹Maxwell, op. cit., 1257.

²⁰²Burrows, op. cit., p. 5; Applegate, op. cit., p. 35; Chambers and Lowry, op. cit., p. 251.

expression. Pierson's statement has summed up the reasons for this continuing need:

. . . Except for the unusually fluent and talented writer, poor writing precedes good writing, and editing is the only passage from one to another.²⁰³

For the teacher who has followed the advice given by Shiflett²⁰⁴ and others that it is important to get the student's perceptions and ideas on paper with a minimum of interference, rewriting and revision play a major role.

Shiflett appears to expect a first draft which is of a skeletal nature with most of the movement or real awareness left out. With this method the drafts are revised for precision and the development of style until these criteria are met. When that has been accomplished, editing takes place.

Suggestions made for the rewriting stage range from the extensive rewriting described by Shiflett²⁰⁵ to proofreading and recopying which Parker²⁰⁶ seems to expect. However, the goals for the final draft may not differ much, since the differences appear to be in the approach taken by each author to the earlier stages of prewriting and writing.

²⁰³Pierson, op. cit., p. 65.

²⁰⁴Shiflett, op. cit., p. 147. ²⁰⁵Ibid.

²⁰⁶Parker, op. cit., p. 159

Murray²⁰⁷ has called attention to the fact that failure is an essential part of the process of written communication. It is during the rewriting stage of revision that the student learns to accept and make use of the failures of previous drafts. Murray has not suggested that this simply happens. His plan for learning the skills of written expression includes having students write discovery drafts, ~~recognition of the element of failure and teaching~~ them how to use this failure as a means of beginning again and working toward successful drafts.

Burrows et al. discussed this same aspect of the writing process.

We know that if a child is to be an effective poised personality he must have an awareness and appreciation of his own power. Such self-knowledge comes only through frequent opportunity to experiment and to fumble along the lines of his desire until out of his effort he fashions something which in his eyes is good. . . . The satisfaction he has had in what he has made--the momentary kinship with creative power--makes him worthy to himself. And once having tasted such deep delight, he rarely rests content, but tries again and again, spurred on by those exhilarating moments²⁰⁸ when the excitement of creation possesses him.

Although some writing is strictly personal, in which case rewriting serves no purpose, most written expression done in school is for someone else to read. When the written composition is meant to communicate to

²⁰⁷Murray, op. cit., p. 1237.

²⁰⁸Burrows et al., op. cit., p. 1.

others, revision and editing are important. Applegate, Chambers and Lowry, and McDonald²⁰⁹ are some of the authors discussing written expression for young children who have agreed that writing done for an audience should be revised. Judy²¹⁰ has reached a similar conclusion about the written work of older students.

The Skills of Rewriting. Most authorities agree that children need to be taught the skills of rewriting.

There is less agreement as to what these skills are.

Blanche Smith²¹¹ has said that the skills of written expression are difficult to define or measure. While she does not define the skills to be measured, she does say that evaluation of the objectives must be a continuous process with specific skills being assessed and the student's progress recorded. The reader is given no hint as to what is being assessed and compared.

Judy,²¹² however, has specified several objectives which he seeks in the written expression of his students. Among these objectives are: (1) that the paper be lively, (2) that the paper reveal something of the student, and

²⁰⁹Applegate, op. cit., p. 35; Chambers and Lowry, op. cit., p. 260; Alene McDonald, Toward Independence (Pleasant Hill, California: Contra Costa County Department of Education, 1968), p. 44.

²¹⁰Judy, op. cit., p. 75.

²¹¹Blanche Smith, op. cit., p. 188.

²¹²Judy, op. cit., pp. 72-73.

(3) that the experience be profitable and reasonable for the student.

In his examination of language arts textbooks, Golub²¹³ found that one of the goals of the written language program was to teach students to edit and rewrite their work. He did not discuss specific skills, however, he concluded that all of the objectives for the language arts program were far too general and that the textbooks lacked a research-based approach. Golub's²¹⁴ composition model culminates in a product which is meant to communicate to someone other than the author. He does not discuss the skills included, although he does discuss evaluation of the quality of the composition. Quality, for Golub's purposes, would be determined by principles which have been emphasized as a part of the instructional program. The use of the composition model developed by Golub apparently presupposes that specific goals and objectives will be developed by the teacher using the model.

The public, written composition discussed by Golub²¹⁵ and other authors is evaluated in some manner, but methods

²¹³Golub, "How American Children Learn to Write," pp. 237-38.

²¹⁴Golub, "A Model for Teaching Composition," p. 116.

²¹⁵Ibid.

vary to a great degree. The paucity of research on which to base objectives seems not to have led to a paucity of techniques of evaluation. An overview of evaluative techniques which are discussed in the literature leads to the conclusion that most evaluation appears to be based on the nebulous factor of quality. However, quality at this time remains difficult to define and even more difficult to measure.²¹⁶

Methods of Evaluation as Part of the Rewriting Process. B. Smith²¹⁷ has discussed evaluation of written expression as an ongoing procedure. Chambers and Lowry²¹⁸ appeared to agree with that premise when they mentioned that students should be allowed to work on several drafts of an assignment, with some evaluation made of each draft before the next one is begun. These authors believe that both student and teacher should be involved in evaluation of written assignments and offered the following suggestions for methods of helping children to evaluate their work.²¹⁹

1. The teacher and a small group of students focus attention on the use of assessment questions as an evaluative technique.

²¹⁶ McColly, op. cit., pp. 148-49.

²¹⁷ Blanche Smith, op. cit., p. 188.

²¹⁸ Chambers and Lowry, op. cit., p. 252.

²¹⁹ Ibid., pp. 260-61.

2. Partners work together to assess their compositions according to some previously identified criteria for evaluation.
3. Students use simple checklists to evaluate their own work.
4. The teacher directs group proofreading lessons using compositions prepared with the group lesson in mind.
5. A student volunteers to use his composition for socialized correction. The author projects his paper and corrects it while others watch. He reads and revises orally. When the author has completed corrections, he may ask the group for additional help.

McNeil and Fader²²⁰ have suggested that students be given many assignments that are not evaluated at all, but are considered to be practice exercises. They would correct a few of the papers for rhetoric and language conventions. Their reasoning is that a student's writing will improve greatly just by writing, without a great deal of specific instruction. McDonald²²¹ reported that when students were asked to give all papers to the teacher, but were allowed to designate whether or not the papers were to be corrected,

²²⁰Elton B. McNeil and Daniel N. Fader, English in Every Classroom (Ann Arbor, Michigan University, 1967), p. 8.

²²¹McDonald, Toward Independence, p. 44.

nearly all students asked for the teacher evaluation.

Judy²²² has recommended that the teacher respond or react to every paper either orally or on paper very soon after the student finishes. The response he suggests is one of the teacher's feeling about the meaning of the paper, rather than a correcting procedure. Later, according to Judy, corrections can be made if an audience other than the teacher will read the paper.

The type of evaluation to be made appears to be another of the facets of written expression about which authors disagree. Nearly all do agree, however, that evaluation is an important part of the process of teaching written expression.

The Conventions of Written Language. Most authorities agree that during the rewriting or final draft stage of written expression, some attention must be given to the conventions of written language. Burns, Broman, and Wantling have discussed this aspect of written expression.

. . . Writing is learned behavior--a form of language learning. Language learning is the acquisition of particular language forms and/or uses of these same forms. Language forms and uses are shared public conventions: these conventions being dialect specific and situation specific. The acquisition of these conventions is developmental through many years.²²³

²²²Judy, op. cit., pp. 73-74.

²²³Burns, Broman, and Wantling, op. cit., p. 220.

The shared "public conventions" for the student of American English are: (1) a writing system, (2) a consistent spelling system, (3) the mechanics of punctuation and capitalization, and (4) grammar and usage.²²⁴ After examining six books written for teachers and/or prospective teachers, McDonald²²⁵ found a lack of agreement on the importance of teaching or the methods of teaching the conventions of written language.

In her review of fifty years of research done on the conventions of language Strom concluded:

The research findings show clearly that direct methods of instruction focusing on writing activities and the structuring of ideas are more efficient in teaching sentence structure, usage, punctuation, and other related factors than are such methods as nomenclature drill, diagramming, ²²⁶ and rote memorization of grammatical rules. . . .

The National Council of Teachers of English Commission on Composition²²⁷ did not include a specific reference to the teaching of the conventions of language as a principle of teaching composition other than suggesting the teaching of usage as an aspect of rhetoric. However, they did suggest that grammar be taught as of interest in itself, but not as a method of improving composition. Braddock,

²²⁴McDonald, "A Multimodal Program . . . ," p. 22.

²²⁵Ibid.

²²⁶Strom, op. cit., p. 13.

²²⁷NCTE Commission on Composition, op. cit., pp. 194-95.

Lloyd-Jones, and Shoer apparently would not teach grammar at all since they have stated,

. . . the teaching of formal grammar has a negligible or, because it usually displaces some instruction and practice in actual composition, even a harmful effect on the improvement of writing.²²⁸

The effects of handwriting and spelling on written expression are not clear. Applegate²²⁹ has noted that primary grade children often have ideas for stories, but are handicapped by their lack of facility in handwriting and spelling. Her opinion that the quality of composition is affected by spelling and handwriting appears to be at variance with Braddock, Lloyd-Jones, and Shoer.²³⁰ They have observed that spelling and handwriting do not have as great an effect on written composition as most people believe.

As with other facets of written expression, the importance of facility with the conventions of written language on the final quality of composition is a matter of disagreement. There is also a paucity of definitive information about what and how to teach or whether methods should be similar or different for varying age groups.

²²⁸ Braddock, Lloyd-Jones, and Shoer, op. cit., p. 15.

²²⁹ Applegate, op. cit., p. 77.

²³⁰ Braddock, Lloyd-Jones, and Shoer, op. cit., p. 50.

Summary

Written expression appears to be a neglected area of the curriculum, being either poorly taught or hardly taught at all. Many of the authors consulted believe that the major cause is the poor preparation of teachers in this area of curriculum. In view of the differing opinions on virtually every facet of the subject, it would seem that adequate preparation of teachers will be, at best, difficult, as long as the subject of written expression remains in the current state of confusion. The quality of instruction may not improve as long as the confusion remains.

Although most of the suggested methods of teaching can be described as having three distinct phases, there is a great disparity in what is considered essential to each phase. The most definitive statements which can be made are:

1. The prewriting stage of written expression involves some type of motivational activity.
2. The writing stage of written expression involves the expression of thought in graphic form.
3. The rewriting stage of written expression involves the preparation of the composition in some form which will adequately communicate to others.

Written expression is a complex, learned activity and as such it can be taught. What the component skills are, how to teach them, and when they should be taught, are all areas in which there is disagreement. In spite of wide

variation in authoritative opinion and a paucity of specifics verified by research, countless authors and teachers continue to study, strive to teach, and write about written communication.

REMEDIAL AND MULTIMODAL TEACHING

Remedial Teaching

As noted by several authors²³¹ remedial teaching techniques usually differ from other teaching techniques in several aspects. First, the assumption is made that the student has, at an earlier time, been exposed to the material to be learned and for some reason failed to learn the task as expected. Second, the student is older so that he will usually be mentally and physically more mature. Third, the teacher is aware that some diagnosis of the student's strengths and weaknesses needs to be made before instruction can begin.

Developmental Considerations for Remedial Teaching of Written Expression. The literature in the field of written expression indicates that the teaching of the skills of

²³¹Guy L. Bond and Miles Tinker, Reading Difficulties: Their Diagnosis and Correction (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Educational Division, Meredith Corporation, 1967), pp. 241-266; Edward William Dolch, Problems in Reading (Champaign, Illinois: The Garrard Press, 1948), pp. 200-205; Donald D. Durrell, Improving Reading Instruction (Yonkers-On-Hudson, New York: World Book Company, 1956), pp. 349-358; Albert J. Harris, How to Increase Reading Ability, 5th ed. (New York: David McKay Company, Inc., 1970), pp. 281-284.

written language begins in the early primary years²³² but remediation for unlearned skills apparently does not begin until college. Since authors such as Brooks, Chaika, and Shiflett²³³ agree that large numbers of college freshmen need remedial instruction, it seems likely that remediation may be possible and needed at an earlier time.

In order to determine the time at which remedial teaching in written expression should begin, it is necessary to determine the approximate age at which a child has mastered the language and motor skills needed to successfully communicate in writing. The oral language skills necessary for genuine understanding are achieved at about seven or eight according to Piaget.²³⁴ Johnson and Myklebust²³⁵ have indicated that learning written language is a more complex procedure than learning oral language. They have suggested that the normal child will develop skills of written communication after he has attained fluency with oral language. Using the developmental standards of these authorities written language skill would not be expected to have developed for all children until some time after eight

²³²Burrows et al., op. cit., p. 1.

²³³Phyllis Brooks, "Mimesis: Grammar and the Echoing Voice," College English, 35 (November, 1973), 161; Chaika, op. cit., p. 575; and Shiflett, op. cit., p. 114.

²³⁴Piaget, op. cit., p. 81.

²³⁵Doris J. Johnson and Helmer R. Myklebust, Learning Disabilities: Educational Principles and Practices (New York: Grune and Stratton, 1967), p. 103.

years of age.

The motor skills for handwriting involve the fine muscle coordination of the hands and eyes, and the child cannot be expected to express himself in writing until these have developed. According to Burns²³⁶ these skills should be developed by the time the child is nine or ten.

Loban²³⁷ studied the development of written expression from the third grade on, but this evaluation of data was based on work done from the fourth grade through the tenth grade. The data from Hunt's work²³⁸ also had a lower limit of grade four. Hunt has stated that most children do not begin to write comfortably until the fourth grade.

The evidence indicates that most nine-year-old children have reached the physical, mental, and language developmental stages which are needed in order to learn to communicate in writing. In schools in the United States, a nine-year-old child is usually in the fourth grade.

Developmental theories do not appear to have been an important consideration of the authors of language arts textbooks which nine-year-old students are expected to use.

²³⁶Paul C. Burns, Improving Handwriting Instruction in Elementary Schools (Minneapolis: Burgess Publishing Company, 1962), pp. 5-6.

²³⁷Loban, op. cit., pp. 13-17.

²³⁸Hunt, op. cit., p. 18.

An examination of the skills needed as prerequisites or the skills taught in a representative English textbook make it apparent that the fourth grade student is expected to have considerable skill in written language. No alternate lessons were proposed for students who lack the necessary skills for written assignments.

The expectations of achievement inherent in such textbooks would appear to be a source of potential failure for the child who has developed slowly in either language or motor skills. If so, many of these students can be expected to be from moderately to seriously retarded in the area of written language. The statement by Strickland²³⁹ that arrested development is more common in written language than in any other area of the curriculum appears to support this conclusion. No evidence has been found to suggest that maturation or other natural occurrences alleviate or decrease the problem.

A Summary of the Skills of Written Expression in a Fourth Grade Language Arts Textbook. The summary which follows includes both skills which are prerequisites to the task taught and the skills which are introduced in the fourth grade textbook. The language arts textbook which has been summarized was similar in content to other textbooks which were examined. The following is a partial list of the language arts skills taught in one fourth grade book:

²³⁹ Strickland, The Language Arts . . . , pp. 328-29.

1. General Knowledge
 - Know meaning of terms: alphabet, word, sentence, and paragraph
 - Read at or above grade level
 - Able to copy accurately from the textbook
 - Able to recognize and reproduce letters of alphabet
 - Know sound-symbol relationships of most graphemic patterns of English
 - Familiar with and able to use the dictionary
2. Spelling
 - Know how to find a word in the dictionary when the approximate spelling is known
 - Able to think of several alternate spellings for the sounds of the desired word
 - Able to spell correctly enough words to carry out the writing assignments without great difficulty
3. Use of capital letters--know the following uses
 - First letter of a sentence
 - Word "I"
 - Place names (as well as when not to capitalize words such as "lake" or "county")
 - Proper names
 - Dates
 - Form for correspondence
4. Use of punctuation--know the following uses
 - Periods, question marks, and exclamation marks to close sentences
 - Quotation marks for dialogue
 - Commas--as a symbol for a pause, to separate words in a series, to separate name of person addressed from rest of sentence, after greeting and closing in friendly letter, in date, between city and state, when to place inside quotation marks and when outside
 - Apostrophe in possessives and contractions
5. Composition
 - Keep lists and other records
 - Write descriptions--what is seen, what has happened, how something is done
 - Composing titles
 - Choosing a topic and keeping to the main idea
 - Narrowing a topic
 - Ordering events according to chronology or other specified sequence
 - Taking notes

Writing factual reports
 Writing good beginnings and endings
 Working out the plot of a story
 Combining two or more ideas into a single sentence
 Expanding sentences
 Writing invitations and friendly letters

6. Revision

Change words and phrases to be more specific or make more interesting
 Rewrite to make more exciting or detailed
 Use a proofreading checklist
 Proofread for:

Mistakes in capitalization and punctuation
 Spelling
 Words omitted
 Copy in legible handwriting 240

The Need for Remedial Teaching of the Skills of Written Expression. In a study conducted with students in a summer school program for children who were in classes for Reading and Language Improvement, McDonald²⁴¹ found that 82 out of 248 students were so seriously retarded as to be unable to handle written assignments or to do so only with great difficulty. McDonald did not attempt to identify those students who did work of poor quality part of the time, but instead limited her study to those students who met the criteria for a "learning disability" as defined by Kirk and McCarthy:

²⁴⁰R. Robert Tabacknich and Dan W. Anderson, Ginn Elementary English: 4 (Boston: Ginn & Company, 1970).

²⁴¹McDonald, "A Multimodal Program . . . ," p. 38.

. . . Disability is indicated when a significant discrepancy exists between a child's general ability and his functioning in a specific area, such as reading, writing, or arithmetic, even though adequate instruction has been given and no sensory or intellectual deficit exists.²⁴²

Neither verification nor refutation have been found in the literature for McDonald's observation that approximately one-third of the students who need special help in language arts are very seriously retarded in written language. Loban²⁴³ found many students who lacked facility in written language, but methods of evaluation used by Loban and McDonald differ so that numerical comparisons are not possible. It does seem clear however, that a substantial number of public school students have great difficulty with written language by the time they are in the fourth grade and that the situation does not improve as students get older.

Loban²⁴⁴ found that there was a definite relationship between poor skills in written language and poor reading skills. He did not find a one-to-one correspondence in the problems of these language areas. He did find, however, that in both skill areas the gap widened as the students grew older.

²⁴²Samuel A. Kirk and James J. McCarthy, "Learning Disabilities," The Encyclopedia of Education, Vol. V, Lee C. Deighton, ed. (New York: The Macmillan Company and The Free Press, 1970), p. 443.

²⁴³Loban, op. cit., pp. 81-87.

²⁴⁴Ibid., p. 92.

The problems of the poor reader have been given serious attention for many years and continue to have this attention. The literature surveyed fails to explain why written language problems have not received this same attention. In fact, few authors even direct attention to written expression as an area of possible problems in the elementary or high school.

Strickland²⁴⁵ is one author who does mention the problem. She suggests that the same teaching methods be used for the older students as for the younger students. She includes a cautionary statement about the older child needing greater motivation. Myklebust²⁴⁶ has given careful attention to those students with severe learning disabilities which interfere with their ability to learn to use written language. He recommends a complex diagnostic procedure and highly specialized teaching procedures for these handicapped students.

McDonald²⁴⁷ attempted to avoid working with students who had been diagnosed as having specific language disability or some other specific learning disability, other than the somewhat ambiguous assessment that the student was

²⁴⁵Strickland, op. cit., p. 325.

²⁴⁶Myklebust, op. cit., pp. 9-20.

²⁴⁷McDonald, "A Multimodal Program . . . ," pp. 2-3.

unsuccessful in written work. No particular motivational technique was used other than that of possible improvement in the student's work. Her methods were based on methods used to teach younger children, but they were also worked out with reference to guidelines for teaching remedial reading which had been advocated by Monroe and Backus.²⁴⁸ These teaching techniques follow:

1. Remedial teaching is best done individually.
2. Lessons are based on simple, interesting, and varied materials.
3. Methods are systematic and regular.
4. Lessons are planned to give direct therapy in the field of weakness.
5. Lessons are geared to the utilization of the strongest learning modality.

Since the students in McDonald's study did fit the description of students with learning disabilities, she also consulted pertinent literature from that field. Authorities such as Fernald, Frostig and Hume, and Stuart²⁴⁹ were among

²⁴⁸ Marion Monroe and Bertie Backus, Remedial Reading (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1937), p. 5.

²⁴⁹ Grace Fernald, Remedial Techniques in Basic School Subjects (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1943); Marianne Frostig and David Hume, The Frostig Program for the Development of Visual Perception (Chicago: Follett Publishing Co., 1964); Marion Fenwick Stuart, Neurophysiological Insights into Teaching (Palo Alto: Pacific Books, 1963).

those who recommended multisensory or multimodal lessons for the student with learning disabilities.

Very little information has been found on the subject of remedial instruction for children with problems in written expression. However, a great deal has been written about the remedial teaching of young adults who are in college and having difficulty with written communication. A study of developmental levels of children and expectations of the school would indicate that many children would have serious difficulty with the tasks of written language by the time they reach fourth grade. Although there is research verification of the expected problems in written language, these problems do not appear to be discussed to any great degree in the literature on remediation.

Multimodal Teaching Techniques for Remediation

In order to develop a program designed for remediation of problems of written expression, the literature of remedial reading and learning disabilities was consulted. Meeting the diagnosed needs of the individual, covering the same basic learning steps as in beginning instruction, and a multimodal approach are among the general principles of remedial instruction which seem applicable to written expression.

Instructional materials based upon the guidelines listed by Monroe and Backus²⁵⁰ can be prepared for use with

²⁵⁰ Monroe and Backus, op. cit., p.5.

the tape recorder. The use of pretaped lessons is also an efficient means of providing for the simultaneous use of auditory, visual, and kinesthetic learning modalities.²⁵¹

The prerecorded tapes also have the advantages listed by Lalime²⁵² to provide for:

1. The efficient use of teacher time--both for preparation and evaluation.
2. The ease of use by students.
3. Meeting the needs of individual students.

Lalime, McArthur, and Silverstone²⁵³ are among the authors who have discussed the use of prerecorded lessons. They agree that careful planning and organization are essential if the lessons are to meet specific, preplanned objectives. Each taped lesson must be planned so that the need for student questions is avoided. This entails working from a general outline as well as specific performance objectives.

McDonald adapted the suggestions of the authors mentioned above to prepare the following for a guide in the writing of scripts of prerecorded lessons:

²⁵¹Mary Nichol Meeker, The Structure of Intellect: Its Interpretation and Uses (Columbus, Ohio: Charles E. Merrill Publishing Company, 1969), p. 108.

²⁵²Arthur W. Lalime, "Tape Teaching." Unpublished Monograph from Directors of Instructional Materials (Norwalk, California: Norwalk Board of Education, no date), pp. 1-3. (Mimeographed.)

²⁵³Ibid; Margaret J. McArthur, "Learning Through Listening," Audiovisual Instruction, 13 (January, 1968), 59; David M. Silverstone, "Listening and Tape Teaching," Audiovisual Instruction, 13 (October, 1968), 870.

1. The taped lesson should provide for motivation and the introduction to lessons and materials.
 2. The voice recording on the teaching portion of the tape should be done in a normal speaking voice.
 3. Provisions should be made on the tape for pauses of sufficient length for student response.
 4. Directions on tape must be explicit.
 5. Summary, review, and evaluation sections are essential elements of each taped lesson.²⁵⁴
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The use of taped lessons seems to be particularly valuable for teaching remedial students. The tapes can be used for small groups or individually as needed; they provide for ease of use by both the student and the teacher; they can be repeated as often as desired; lessons can be carefully prepared at the convenience of the teacher; and the student listens, looks at written material, and writes his own paper in a controlled environment.²⁵⁵ Another advantage of using taped lessons is less obvious, but is well expressed by Klyhn:

. . . Not until I started to work with young children on the tape recorder did I realize that a machine could come alive. Adults are inhibited by the machine. Children accept it without a thought--talk to, talk back to, interact with the machine in a relaxed and easy way. In some learning situations a child can be more at ease with a machine than with a human teacher.²⁵⁶

²⁵⁴McDonald, "A Multimodal Program . . . ," p. 28.

²⁵⁵Ibid., pp. 27-29.

²⁵⁶Joan Klyhn, "A Tape Library for First, Second and Third Grades," Audiovisual Instruction, 13 (April, 1965), 350.

SUMMARY

The dearth of a strong research base or accumulation of literature in the area of remedial instruction for written expression has led to an examination of literature in subject areas directly related to the one being studied. Even for those subject areas with strong research backgrounds and much general agreement, it is apparent that the nearer one comes to the field of written language, the more the literature becomes, at best, ambiguous, and, at worst, argumentative.

The monumental problems of conducting research in the field have only recently begun to seem susceptible to attack, and, as yet, no solutions are in sight. The multiple human problems in the task of controlling the writing situation remain constant, but gradually, skill is being acquired in knowledge of what the variables are and some compensating possibilities for building control into the research design. The most important breakthrough in writing research is in the field of measurement as scholars have developed objective methods of evaluation which are being used by enough investigators that research findings can be compared. In spite of progress in the use of computers, any research in written communication continues to be tedious and time-consuming.

The interrelationship of the skills of listening, speaking, reading, and written expression plus the hierarchial development of the strands of language make it necessary

to be quite familiar with both theories and methodology in the total field. The study of how language is acquired and develops becomes involved with theories of the total learning process. All aspects of language must of necessity be treated in less depth than one would wish in a study of this type.

In spite of this lack of depth, the investigator became more and more impressed with the evidence, both in theory and in research, that all phases of language relate directly to listening, and then, interrelate among all of the strands of language. The relationship of language and thought also appeared to be much more important to the study of the total field of communication, and particularly to written language, as the review of the literature continued. This relationship had not figured in the original premises about related subject areas.

Many authors have written and continue to write about methods for improving instruction in written expression. There seems to be no doubt that many of these methods have been used with considerable success, but the factor or factors which lead to success remain elusive. Throughout the literature, from methods for teaching primary grades to methods for teaching adults, runs the thread of criticism that written language is poorly taught by poorly-prepared teachers.

Although many authorities are critical of the present teaching-learning methods, they believe that the program for

teaching written expression could and should be improved. However, there is little agreement or even much discussion as to how to bring together the divergent opinions expressed in the literature. With the present state of knowledge, it would seem the only recourse which a teacher has is to develop his or her philosophy about the methods which work best. Before that can happen, however, that teacher must feel that written language can be taught and teaching it is important. This does not appear to be a widespread opinion.

With any complex subject, teachers should expect to have some students who do not achieve well at the time specific skills are originally introduced. For some unexplained reason, the complex subject of reading is considered to be one with many students needing remedial instruction while the complex subject of written language is virtually ignored as an area of remediation in elementary and high schools. The need for remedial work in written expression is not ignored by college professors. They have a great deal to say about the problems of teaching the student who cannot communicate in writing.

Available evidence indicates that most children are mentally, physically, and linguistically ready for the task of written expression by the time they are in the intermediate grades. The same evidence indicates that many students are not ready to learn these skills in the primary grades when they are originally taught. It seems that some

provision should be made to provide remedial instruction in the skills of written expression when these students can profit from such instruction. The literature indicates that there is a need for remedial instruction in written expression, but the need is rarely discussed except by college instructors. There is no obvious reason for the paucity of literature in the field of remediation in written expression before college level. It does seem obvious that college is somewhat late to help many students with problems in the subject. It appears that it is not only possible, but also important, to begin such instruction in the elementary schools and continue into secondary schools according to the needs of the students.

An investigator has only a general knowledge of the fields of remedial teaching and learning disabilities from which to develop a program for remedial instruction for young children. Little is known which would help with specific content except to begin at the beginning. Apparently no one is quite sure where that is, but it definitely is not where the teachers in college classes begin. At this stage of knowledge in the field, it is possible that it would be as valuable to find out what is not the beginning as what is the beginning; and what skills we attempt to teach which are not essential in the learning hierarchy as well as which are essential.

In essence, the investigator has come to the conclusion that the only way to build a field of definitive information is to begin testing and retesting some of the theories held and methods used at this time. There now are some measurement tools which work, and if researchers are willing to make mistakes and to accept the failures along with the successes, the knowledge needed for improving instruction can gradually be discovered.

Chapter 3

DESCRIPTION OF THE RESEARCH DESIGN AND PROCEDURES OF THE STUDY

The following information pertaining to this study is presented in Chapter 3.

1. Population Source and Sampling Procedures
2. The Research Design
3. Experimental Procedures
4. Instrumentation and Evaluative Data
5. Analysis
6. Summary

POPULATION SOURCE AND SAMPLING PROCEDURES

The accessible population for an experimental study of middle grade students was found in schools of Manteca, California, and Pittsburg, California. The students were in schools in which teachers had expressed concern about the quality of their students' written assignments. The three schools from which the sample was chosen were: French Camp and Lincoln Elementary Schools in the Manteca Unified School District and Heights Elementary School in the Pittsburg Unified School District. French Camp Elementary

School had five classes; Lincoln Elementary School had three classes; and Heights Elementary School had two classes participating in the study.

Sampling Procedures for Teacher Selection

The nature of the treatment being studied made the random selection of subjects an impossible goal. In order to use the experimental program, a system for the Multimodal Reteaching of the Skills of Written Expression, a teacher had to be willing to rearrange the class schedule to some degree, attend a brief in-service training period, discuss progress with the investigator during the study, and adhere to the schedule set by the investigator. These restrictions limited the population of principals willing to discuss the program with their staffs and limited the number of teachers willing to volunteer to participate.

The teachers who participated were selected by the building principal and randomly assigned to teach control or experimental classes. However, at one school two teachers exchanged assignments when one felt that other duties prevented her from doing the experimental program.

When the investigator contacted the principals, she was given the names of the teachers who would be taking part. The teacher participation factor was known to be one over which the investigator would have little control. It is assumed that all teachers were volunteers. However, the researcher recognizes that teachers may have had different motivations for participation.

In-Service Procedures for the Teachers

The orientation procedures at each school were arranged by the building principals in the way that seemed best for time utilization for his staff members. Two of the principals attended the first part of the orientation meeting when philosophy, goals, and materials for the study were being discussed. The third principal had been ~~called to a meeting unexpectedly, but met with the investi-~~gator immediately following the orientation meeting. Both the principals and the teachers in two of the schools had examined the tapescripts before the meetings and all of the principals had met with the investigator before volunteering to take part in the study. Each in-service session included the following:

1. Introduction of the investigator and a brief statement of her philosophy about the teaching of written expression and her belief that remedial procedures should begin as soon as a child has the physical, mental, and emotional maturity for the task and a need to be successful.
2. Description of the materials.
3. Examination of the materials.
4. Discussion of the investigator's goals and what she expected to accomplish.
5. Discussion of the problems and surprises which the investigator had experienced in the lessons in the earlier study.

6. Time schedules.
7. Continuing help available from the investigator.
8. Time allowance for each teacher to decide how to work the program into her schedule or to decide not to take part in the study.

During the period in which the lessons were being used, the investigator visited the teachers frequently during lunch hours, or before or after school, to discuss what they were doing. The visits seemed to reinforce the feeling of the teachers that they were taking part in an important project.

The In-Service Procedures

One specific aspect of the in-service program is noteworthy. The degree of involvement and commitment to carrying out the program according to the investigator's proposed plans and time schedule was directly related to the amount of time given to in-service orientation.

The principal of School A gave his teachers one full day of released time, and after a get-acquainted period in his office, arranged for the group to have a room in which to work during the day. The group spent much of the day informally discussing the study and the entire field of written expression. The control group teachers were included in the entire orientation period. The teachers examined tapescripts, listened to tapes, asked questions, examined pictures for the test, and

freely discussed their own philosophies and frustrations in teaching the skills of written expression.

All of the teachers at School A, whether they taught the control group or the experimental group, showed a strong personal involvement in the program and the progress of the students. The experimental teachers saw the RSWE program as an important phase of their total language arts program. They attempted to finish within the time schedule and were the first group to finish the posttests. It was important to them to know the results of the study.

The in-service program at School B took place after school. The teachers had seen the materials briefly prior to the meeting, but did not feel that they knew much from looking at the tapescripts. The original in-service meeting lasted about forty-five minutes. The teachers asked a few questions and briefly discussed the problems of instruction in written expression.

The teachers usually asked the investigator further questions during her visits to the school. They were interested in the program and its goals and volunteered that they had learned a great deal about what children do and do not know from giving the lessons. However, they saw the lessons as peripheral to their regular program and had trouble "squeezing them in." The visits of the investigator served as a stimulus for the "squeezing."

The in-service at School C took place during a lunch period with the principal, the teachers, and the investigator sitting at one end of the lunch table where a number of other teachers were eating. The principal was the only one who had seen the materials, but he had discussed them with the teachers, and they were interested in the program. Because the teachers had not seen any of the materials, they attempted to examine and discuss the program at the same time. In addition, other teachers were asking questions and the teachers involved were trying to eat lunch.

At School C, two of the teachers designated to teach experimental groups decided they were too busy with other things to follow through with the commitment. One of these teachers said that she would be able to serve as a control teacher, and a teacher who had originally been assigned a control group agreed to exchange and teach the experimental group.

When the investigator visited, the teachers discussed how far behind they were because of other commitments. They appeared to see no connection between the RSWE program and their ongoing language arts instructional procedures. A control teacher lost her pretest and did it over. Her posttest was then done at a later date than the other posttests in the study, adding another unforeseen variable.

It is quite possible that the relationship of in-service time to involvement of the teachers in the program is a coincidence. It is also possible that an important relationship does exist. One other variable which seems to be important to the success of a program in an elementary school is the cooperation and attitude of the principal. In all three schools, the investigator felt that the principals had positive, supportive feelings toward the program, but the principals in Schools A and C were more personally involved during the study.

Selection of Subjects

During the in-service orientation period, teachers were given a list of criteria for choosing subjects for the study. The following criteria were used for selection of subjects:

1. Students who read at second-grade level or above.
2. Students who do not complete written assignments.
3. Students who do not accurately copy from a written text.
4. Students who make acceptable oral responses but make unacceptable or incomplete written responses.
5. Students who have established a pattern of delaying behavior, such as sharpening pencils, going to the wastebasket, or losing their materials.

The McDonald Test of Written Proficiency was administered to all classes by the teachers within a one-week period. Scoring was done by the investigator and scores

were then discussed with the teachers. Those students who were identified by the test and/or the teacher were designated as subjects for the study. Those students identified by the test as lacking proficiency in the skills of written expression, but who were identified by the teacher as educationally handicapped or severely retarded in reading, however, were not designated as subjects for the study.

Methods Used to Train the Experimental Group

The lessons in the RSWE program were designed to be done with a minimum of teacher assistance after an initial training program for those students who were involved. Before the lessons began there was a brief discussion between the teacher and the students about (1) why they were chosen, (2) the experiment, (3) a description of the lesson, and (4) what the lessons were designed to teach. The students then took part in a brief training session.

The training included briefing the students on:

1. What materials were to be used and their location in the classroom.
2. How the material was organized.
3. How to run the tape recorder.
4. How to check their work.
5. How to put materials away.
6. What to do if not satisfied with their performance on a lesson.
7. When to go to the teacher for a conference for additional help.

Each teacher was given instructions for training procedures. She then adapted them to her particular classroom routine. No teacher taking part in the study gave the students the amount of individual responsibility which the investigator had suggested.

THE RESEARCH DESIGN

The experimental design was in the form of the pre-test posttest design as described by Campbell and Stanley.¹ The design controls for such variables as personal history of subjects, maturation, and regression. Although control of many variables is built into this design, the investigator was aware that investigations of written expression often leave many "important variables uncontrolled or undescribed."² An effort has been made to adhere as closely as possible to the criteria suggested by Braddock, Lloyd-Jones, and Shoer,³ in order to control as many variables as possible.

¹Donald T. Campbell and Julian C. Stanley, "Experimental and Quasi-Experimental Designs for Research on Teaching." Handbook of Research on Teaching, ed. N. L. Gage (Chicago: Rand McNally and Company, 1963), pp. 177-197.

²Richard Braddock, Richard Lloyd-Jones, and Lowell Shoer. Research in Written Composition (Champaign, Illinois: National Council of Teachers of English, 1963), p. 55.

³Ibid., Chapters 1 and 4.

The pretest was administered to all students taught by the teachers who had experimental or control classes. Each teacher decided on how the treatment was to be used in her class: large group, small group, or entire class. No teachers who used the materials with the entire class had any students who were non-readers or diagnosed as educationally handicapped or mentally retarded. The posttest was administered to all students in each class unless they had been excluded for the reasons mentioned above.

EXPERIMENTAL PROCEDURES

The experimental treatment was a series of ten two-part lessons designed to improve the skills of written expression of intermediate grade students. The investigator's purpose in developing the program was that it would be used in a diagnostic, prescriptive manner with those students who lacked proficiency in skills of written expression.

The study done in 1972⁴ with the investigator as the teacher indicated that the materials were successful in helping students who had problems with written assignments.

⁴Alene McDonald, "A Multimodal Program for Identification and Remediation for Intermediate Students with Learning Disabilities in the Area of Written Expression," unpublished Master's Thesis, University of the Pacific, 1973.

The investigator had been the teacher so the possibilities of a Hawthorne effect and the overall teaching methods of the investigator's affecting the results must be considered when viewing the findings of the earlier study.

It was recognized by the investigator that, if a program is to be of benefit to more than a few students, it must be tested under many circumstances, not all of which were necessarily considered at the time the program was planned. If a teaching tool is to be of value to many, teachers must be able to adapt it to their students and their particular teaching styles.

With these constraints in mind the investigator explained in detail to each teacher the instructional methods for which the program was designed. The teacher was asked to examine the materials carefully and decide how the materials could be used in her classroom.

Some teachers used the materials with every child in the class⁵ and some used the program with all of the students except those with very serious learning problems. No teacher in this study used the program as it was designed to be used.⁶

⁵These classes had no severely retarded readers or students in, or awaiting admission to, special education classes.

⁶The investigator used the materials as a diagnostic, prescriptive program with the exception that other students who wanted to do the lessons were allowed to do so even though their high test scores would exclude them from the study. A number of teachers have field-tested the

A Description of the Lessons in the Remedial Program

All lessons were on tapes and were used with printed work sheets, writing paper, and pencils. Each lesson had two parts. Each part of the lesson included pre-taped instructions for the lesson. All students completed Part A of each lesson. Part B was done only by those students who had difficulty with Part A. In addition to the information given in Part A, Part B discussed possible reasons the student made errors on Part A, and some ways to avoid these errors. The teaching portion of Part B included different material than for Part A, but the learning task was the same. Sample lessons may be found in Appendix B.

The lessons were planned to progress from simple to more difficult tasks. They were based on the teaching sequence worked out by the investigator during the years she spent teaching primary grades. The sequence of lessons was:

1. Listening and writing from dictation with no visual stimulus.
2. Copying from a printed copy and at the same time listening to detailed dictation during the entire lesson.
3. Copying from a printed copy within a timed interval after the material had been read and specific directions given to them on the tape.

materials in grades four through eight, and all have used the program with all or nearly all of their students because they felt that all would profit from the program no matter what their skill level was at the time.

4. Writing after listening to specific instructions on tape, then working from work sheets printed with words or groups of words which were part of the lesson.
5. Listening to information given on the tape and writing what was remembered, using a work sheet with clue words.

The time allotment had been determined previously by working informally with small groups of intermediate students. Assignments similar to the test items were given and response times were noted. Most students were able to respond in less than the time allowed. It was noted that no responses were made after a period of time and most students became restless. The final decision about time allowances was made to allow a few seconds less than the amount of time when most students began to show a lapse of attention.

INSTRUMENTATION AND EVALUATIVE DATA

Purpose of the Screening Instrument

The instrument for identification of subjects for the study was a test of written proficiency designed by the investigator, The McDonald Test for Written Proficiency. One aspect of the identification procedure which was expected to be a source of some ambiguity was the identification of "acceptable written work." Since, as discussed in Chapter 2, teachers vary in their standards, it was decided that, if either the teacher or the investigator considered the work to be unacceptable that judgment would

be accepted. It was agreed that acceptable written expression for purposes of the study were those which met minimal standards of clarity, completion, and compliance with directions for the task. The expected lack of agreement on standards did not prove to be a problem, possibly because the subjects being studied had such poor ability in the subject area of written expression.

The objectives of the test were:

1. To identify possible areas of deficiency in written expression.
2. To identify those students who are capable of doing acceptable written work.
3. To identify those students who would probably not profit from the type of instruction used in the system.

The teachers were asked to observe during the testing period and to make note of those who had obvious lapses in performance. These observations were considered as part of the diagnostic information.

The test includes the following tasks:⁷

1. Writing from dictation with no visual copy.
2. Writing with both a visual copy and specific dictation.
3. Copying without dictation but with specific instructions.
4. Writing sentences which include a phrase or group of words from the printed test form.

⁷See Appendix A, p. 204, for the complete McDonald Test for Written Proficiency.

5. Listening to a short informational passage, then writing, within a timed interval, what is remembered.
6. Writing a story about one of several large pictures which were visible to all of the students.

Description of Test 2

Test 2 was designed to be an evaluative instrument rather than a diagnostic one. The composition of the test was the same as for Test 1, except for the omission of the items involving writing from dictation with no visual copy. Those items were designed for diagnostic purposes only. The remainder of the items had the same content, but different words and sentences were used. Two items were exactly the same as on Test 1: (1) the item calling for the student to write as many words in one minute as possible, and (2) the test item directing the student to write a story about a picture. Test 2 was evaluated by comparison of each item to the corresponding item on Test 1. Deriving a total test score served no purpose for the present study.

Scoring the Screening Test

The scoring of the screening instrument was done by the experimenter. Each of the ten test items had a value of two points.⁸

A score of four or less was judged to be an indication that the student would possibly not profit from the

⁸A complete description of scoring procedures for each item can be found in Appendix A, p. 206.

treatment program. The rationale for this judgment was that the student who did this poorly should probably have an individually prescribed program, or instruction which did not rely so heavily on the auditory learning modality.

Those students scoring between fifteen and twenty points were considered to be proficient enough in the skills of written expression that the RSWE program would be of little value to them. This was an arbitrary judgment and has not been tested. No statement is made about the relative ability of these students in the area of written expression other than that they appear to have the rather simple skills being tested by the McDonald Test of Written Proficiency.

Students chosen to be subjects for the study were those who scored between five and fourteen points on the evaluative instrument. These students appeared to lack skills considered by the investigator to be important, and were able to respond to the multimodal approach which would be used in the program.

Validity of the Instrument

Prior to the 1972 study, concurrent validity had been established for the screening instrument by testing the students in three intermediate classrooms. Each teacher was asked to list the names of those students who usually did unsatisfactory written work. The names of the students who had unsatisfactory test scores were compared to those students named by the teachers. The

students named by the teachers and by the examiner were found to be identical in all three classes tested. The procedure of testing and teacher evaluation used during the pilot study had similar results.

Concurrent validity was established by comparison of test scores and teacher opinion for approximately 500 students. Results cannot be generalized, however, because ~~all teachers involved were known to have similar standards~~ and values as those of the investigator.

Content validity is built into the test because it was designed to test specifically those skills being taught with the test item being identical in form to items in the lessons. This was true except for those items which were exactly the same on both tests. Since the content of those items was not directly taught, they were added to the test as a way of determining whether the content of the lessons would improve skill in written work in general.

Reliability of the Instrument

Reliability was measured on tests given to one intermediate class with Test 2 being administered ten days after Test 1. Test 2 does not include the items which were designed for diagnostic purposes only, so reliability was measured for seven items tested on both forms of the test. Each of the test items on the pretest was compared to a similar item on the posttest. The difficulties involved in

establishing reliability for tests of written expression have been a major factor in the lack of definitive research in the field.⁹ The investigator recognized this difficulty from the beginning and relied on careful preparation of items for the test rather than reliability quotients.

One variable which was not foreseen was the teaching effect of the first test. This effect was noted by several of the participating teachers. Since no teaching effect for the test had been reported after the 1972 study, no provisions had been made to eliminate or measure this variable.

In order to test for reliability of The McDonald Test of Written Proficiency, pretests and posttests were compared for each of the designated tasks. Comparisons were made of tests taken by the control group for the study, the experimental group for the study, the total study group, and an external control group. The results are found in Table 1.

Statistically significant correlation coefficients were found on all four of the comparisons for five of the tasks. The total study group and the experimental group had significant reliability coefficients for every task measured. The McDonald Test of Written Proficiency appears to be a reliable instrument for measuring the tasks which were tested.

⁹Braddock, Lloyd-Jones, and Shoer, op. cit., pp. 5-12.

Table 1

Correlations for Reliability Comparing Pretests and
Posttests for Tasks Tested by The McDonald
Test of Written Proficiency

	External Control	Study Control	Study Experi- mental	Total Study
Total words in a story	0.79***	0.54***	0.46***	0.49***
Number of T-units in a story	0.44*	0.42**	0.48***	0.48***
Number of words per T-unit	0.16	0.14	0.32**	0.21*
Number of copying errors	0.06	0.13	0.58***	0.48***
Number of incomplete sentences completed	0.58***	0.48**	0.29**	0.36***
Number of words added to incomplete sen- tences	0.43*	0.33*	0.85***	0.77***
Number of graphic units not complete	0.07	0.63***	0.47***	0.51***
Number of words written per minute	0.45*	0.54***	0.67***	0.63***
Number of facts remembered and written	0.10	0.17	0.24*	.022**

* Significant at .05 level

** Significant at .01 level

*** Significant at .001 level

Pretest and Posttest Stories

The pretest consisted of the best of two stories written on consecutive days before the RSWE program began. The posttest was the best of the stories written on two consecutive days immediately following taped lessons.¹⁰ All four papers were written under the conditions discussed in the following paragraphs.

Five large colored pictures¹¹ were placed in the front of the room. All students had writing paper and a pencil. They were told that more paper and additional pencils were available if needed. Each story-writing period was timed for nine minutes and papers were collected at that time whether or not the child was finished. The following instructions were given for each story:

You will write a story about one of the large pictures you can see in the front of the room. Look at the pictures and decide which one you will write about. Now pick up your pencil and write the number of that picture near the top of the paper. You may write any kind of story you wish about the picture. Do not worry about your handwriting or spelling. Do the best you can. You will continue writing until you are told to stop. You will stop then even if you are not finished. Your directions are: Write a story about one of the pictures. Spell the best you can and do not

¹⁰ One story was written as part of the pretest and one was written the following day under similar circumstances. Following the treatment, one story was written as part of the posttest and the other test was written the following day.

¹¹ Most of the pictures used were from the kit: Schools, Families, Neighborhoods: A Multimedia Readiness Program by Ruth Grossman and John Michaelis (San Francisco: Field Educational Publications, 1969). Some teachers chose to use their own pictures.

worry if you are not sure how to spell a word correctly. Write until you are told to stop. Now pick up your pencil and begin writing.

The children were instructed to write only their names on the papers for identification purposes. Specific instructions were given that no dates were to be on the papers. Each story was subsequently identified with a number. The number was the same as the publisher's number ~~on the pictures if the pictures from the kit were used.~~ If some other source of pictures was used, the teachers assigned numbers to each picture. The picture identification number was put on any stories about that picture. If a subject had written more than one story about the same picture, a plus was randomly added to the identifying number, so that all pluses were not on pretest or posttest stories. This information was necessary in order for the judges to correctly identify each story.

At one school the teachers said that their school had pictures similar to those which the investigator had brought. They said that they would prefer to use their own pictures. The investigator agreed to this procedure because the size of the pictures makes storage difficult and there are many excellent sets of social science pictures available in individual schools. In retrospect, it is obvious that this led to another uncontrolled variable.

Choice of Judges

The method chosen for evaluation of the pre- and posttest stories was the blind ranking system.¹² One judge was asked to choose the better of the pretest stories and the best of the posttest stories. Four judges were asked to rank the stories selected by Judge A. The following criteria were used to choose the judges.

1. ~~Judges were to be teachers who had taught elementary school for several years.~~
2. They would have a particular interest in children's written work.
3. They would have knowledge about learning problems of elementary school children and would not be particularly distracted by lack of punctuation or inaccurate spelling.

Choice of the Best Stories

One of the suggestions made by Braddock, Lloyd-Jones, and Shoer was that two samples of writing be done for each judging period. The better of the two samples would then be chosen for the test sample for that aspect of the evaluation.¹³

The pretest samples were stapled together as were the posttest samples. Each sample was marked with the

¹²Braddock, Lloyd-Jones, and Shoer, Research in Written Composition, op. cit., p. 12.

¹³Ibid., pp. 12-14.

number randomly assigned to that student and names were blacked out. The designated judge was then asked to choose and mark the better of the two stories, using the standards found below.

Judging the Stories

The four judges who ranked the stories written for pretests and posttests had also ranked the stories for the 1972 study.¹⁴

The experimenter met with each judge and reviewed the instructions for judging and scoring the stories. The following instructions were given for judging the stories.¹⁵

1. Read through the stories quickly.
2. Rank the stories as quickly as possible. Try not to spend time rereading the stories several times.
3. Judge on the content of the story. Use criteria such as communication of an idea or series of ideas, logical presentation, interesting use of words, and other criteria which you consider important to content.
4. Attempt to use the same criteria for judging all stories.
5. Attempt to disregard poor handwriting or errors of punctuation or spelling. However, handwriting and

¹⁴McDonald, op. cit.

¹⁵All sources consulted agreed that stories should be read and ranked quickly for this judging method. The remainder of the instructions were decided upon by the author.

beside the numeral 1. If one story was far superior to the other, the numeral 2 was circled.

Judges were experienced with the previous study. They had similar stories to judge, and similar standards for judgment, although the ranking system was somewhat different than for the previous study. The interrater reliability was found to be too low to consider their judgments as reliable. It is ~~interesting to speculate as to why experienced judges who had~~ previously exhibited very similar judgments should have such dissimilar judgments on another occasion. One can refer to the discussion by Braddock, Lloyd-Jones, and Shoer in Chapter 2 or one of the many similar discussions of the unreliability of judgment for quality by human raters.

Objective Measurement of Stories

In addition to judging the stories for quality of improvement, the stories were judged for syntactic improvement, using an adaptation of the methods developed by Hunt.¹⁶ The stories were marked into T-units. The number of T-units was counted for each story and the mean number of words per T-unit was calculated. In addition, the total word count of the story was tabulated.

¹⁶ Kellogg Hunt and others, An Instrument to Measure Syntactic Maturity (Tallahassee, Florida: University of Florida, 1968), p. 10.

The method used deviated somewhat from Hunt's procedures¹⁷ and borrowed from Loban's method of evaluation of children's oral language.¹⁸ Hunt eliminated from his study all sentences which contained unintelligible or illegible passages. He defined a sentence as: "Whatever a student wrote between an initial capital letter and a period or other terminal mark."¹⁹

~~In the transcripts of children's language, Loban found that many times the words served no communicative purpose. He termed these utterances "mazes," and deleted them from the word counts of the communication unit.²⁰~~

Since many young students with difficulties with written expression include few, none, or a great many randomly-placed signals of capitalization and punctuation, it was felt by the investigator that Loban's use of the maze could be adapted and a more realistic evaluation could be made. Those words which served no communicative purpose or were unintelligible because of handwriting or spelling were deleted from T-unit counts, but were included in the

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Walter Loban, Language Ability: Grades Seven, Eight, and Nine (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, Office of Education, 1966), p. 6.

¹⁹ Hunt and others, op. cit., p. 10.

²⁰ Loban, op. cit., p. 6.

total word count. These words do not meet the major goal of writing which is communication, but do meet an important goal of this study which is to get the student to write something.

ANALYSIS AND STATISTICAL PROCEDURES

In order to test general improvement in the quality of the stories, a comparison was made of the total number of judgments correctly identifying pretests and posttests for experimental and control groups. The statistical test used was a Student's t test. Comparisons of pretest and posttest results on word count, number of T-units, and length of T-unit were made by use of the analysis of covariance statistical test of significance.

Other test items which were analyzed and compared utilizing the analysis of covariance procedures for control and experimental groups were:

1. Sentence completion.
 - a. Comparison of number of completed sentences on pretest and posttest.
 - b. Comparison of number of words added in order to complete the sentences.
2. Number of copying errors.
3. Number of words written in one minute.
4. Number of facts recalled and written down after listening to a brief passage of content material.

SUMMARY

A quasi-experimental pretest and posttest research design was used to test a treatment program designed to reteach the skills of written expression to middle grade students who have difficulties in this subject area. The accessible population was from Manteca, California, and Pittsburg, California. The type of program being tested made it necessary to use schools and teachers which were not randomly selected. All teachers who were involved had some in-service training, and some follow-up work with the investigator during the treatment period.

The treatment procedures involved use of a series of taped lessons designed to reteach the skills of written expression in the sequence learned in the primary grades. Pretests and posttests were administered to most of the students in the experimental and control classes. The tests were analyzed by several methods. The quality of the stories was judged by judges meeting specific criteria. The stories were also evaluated by objective counting measures as were other test items.

Chapter 4

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study was to determine if intermediate grade students who do unsatisfactory written work can learn to be more successful as a result of a program of pretaped lessons which reteach the skills of written expression.¹

A sample population of 132 subjects was selected from ten classrooms in the Manteca California Unified School District and the Pittsburg California Unified School District. The subjects were selected from students in the classrooms of teachers who had volunteered to take part in the study. The subjects were selected by means of teacher judgment and/or the score on The McDonald Test of Written Proficiency. At the completion of the study, complete data were available for 113 of the 132 subjects.

¹An additional goal of the study was to determine if the program could be used by many teachers who have had minimal in-service training. This goal will be discussed in Chapter 5.

The multimodal treatment program specifically taught toward improvement in the skills needed to score well on specific competencies. The test items involved similar content and the same skills on both the pretest and the post-test. Two items which were the same on both tests measured skills not specifically taught by the program. These items were included as an attempt to determine whether they would provide evidence of the presence or absence of a transfer of training effect.

Responses to each type of item on the test were analyzed by applying the analysis of covariance procedures, using the pretest item responses as covariates. The test item which asked that the subject write a story was subjected to three separate analyses, as well as a judgment of quality of improvement, using a Student's t test of the means of independent samples. All computations were accomplished through the Burroughs 6700 Computer facilities at the University of the Pacific.

PRESENTATION OF THE ANALYSIS OF DATA

In the following section, each of the hypotheses stated in Chapter 1 will be restated in the null form. An alpha level of .05 and a two-tailed test of the hypotheses were designated. This will be followed by a description of the item being tested, the descriptive tables, and a discussion of the findings. Whenever appropriate, the hypotheses

have been grouped according to the skills which seem to be involved in the specific task.

Hypotheses Related to the Analysis of Stories

Four hypotheses pertain to the test item, consisting of the task of writing a story about a picture within a specific time limit. This was one of the tasks which had not been specifically taught in the treatment program.

Hypothesis 1: Middle grade students who can read but do unsatisfactory written work, and who participate in the RSWE program write as effectively as do the control group students taught by ongoing classroom procedures.

In order to test this hypothesis four judges were asked to rate the pretest and posttest stories for quality. The judges used a rating system for which each rating was assigned a numerical rating as follows:

1. Pretest much superior to posttest.
2. Pretest superior to posttest.
3. No difference in quality between pretest and posttest.
4. Posttest superior to pretest.
5. Posttest much superior to pretest.

Table 2 shows the comparison between the combined ratings of the judges as they judged the experimental and control groups. The t test for independent samples was utilized to assess the significance of the difference between the mean scores.

Table 2

The Student t test Comparison for the Mean
Score of Judges as to the Quality
of Stories

	Experimental	Control
Mean	13.5 ^a	14.2
SD	3.88	6.08
N	80	38
t	t = .54 ^b	

a. Based on scores of the four judges.

b. $.975 t_{116} = 1.98$

Since the computed t ratio of .54 is less than the critical t value of 1.98 for 116 df the null hypothesis is retained as tenable. These data failed to show a significant difference in quality between the stories written by the experimental and control groups.

Hypothesis 2: Students taught by the RSWE lesson sequence write stories with equivalent number of words to those written by the control students taught by ongoing classroom procedures.

In order to test Hypothesis 2, the total words written in each story were counted. This included partial T-units, titles, and mazes as well as the body of the story. Partial T-units were groups of words which were not part of a meaningful unit, and were judged to be T-units which would have been completed if there had been sufficient time. The following are examples of partial T-units which were found in subjects' stories:

1. Pretty soon they will be in the
2. It is not fun going somewhere when

Mazes were groups of words which were illegible or unintelligible and were found within the body of the story. The following are examples from subjects' stories which were judged to contain mazes:

1. The town is shmol The ground is drawnd
The othese arle salms
2. then we came back to the Ranch and wen
hous back riding on bouniy and mickiy
and I was riding bouniy and we were
riding a bote zawrese

All written words on each paper were counted because for this study the goal of something written took precedence over the goal of communication. The communication content of each story is measured by the T-unit variable and discussed as hypothesis 3. Table 3 summarizes the data for the total number of words in a story.

Table 3

Summary Table for the Analysis of Covariance of the
Total Number of Words in a Story for the
Experimental and Control Groups

Source	SS	df	MS	F
Between groups	3,832.19	1	3,832.19	3.025 ^a
Error	141,851.69	112	1,266.53	
Total	145,683.88	113		

^a $.95F(1,112) = 3.92$

Since the computed F value of 3.025 is less than the critical F value of 3.92, the null hypothesis is retained as tenable. These data fail to indicate that there is any significant difference between the experimental and control groups on the total number of words in a story.

The mean scores were considerably higher for the experimental group than for the control group on both the pretest and the posttest as shown in Table 4. This may be partially the result of the lack of control of the picture variable at one school. This lack of control of the picture variable may possibly have affected the mean scores of the total group, inflating the pretest score and deflating the posttest score.

Table 4

Pretest, Posttest, and Adjusted Means of the
Total Number of Words in a Story for
Experimental and Control Groups

Groups	Pretest Mean	Posttest Mean	Adjusted Mean
Experimental	65.03	82.58	79.40
Control	47.17	59.58	66.56

Although the investigator realized that the pictures used for the pretest were not the type which had been suggested, she did not expect this variation to be of particular importance. No effort was made to control the type of picture used for the posttest at this school,

although the teachers were asked again if they had the large commercial photographs available.

A decision to examine the data for differences among the three experimental groups was made about midway through the treatment when the investigator realized that each school was working with the materials in a different way. This decision was made in accord with three members of the dissertation committee. Each of the schools also had a markedly different type of in-service program which was another factor which entered into the decision to further analyze the data.

Table 5

Summary Table for the Analysis of Covariance Among
Experimental Groups for the Total
Number of Words in a Story

Source	SS	df	MS	F
Between groups	21,054.55	2	10,527.88	7.90 ^a
Error	99,946.46	75	1,332.62	
Total	121,001.01	77		

^a $.95^F(2,75) = 3.16$

Table 5 indicates that there is a significant difference between the scores of two or more of the experimental groups when analyzed by school.

Table 6 shows the pretest, posttest, and adjusted means for the experimental and control groups at each school.

Table 6

Pretest, Posttest, and Adjusted Means for the
Total Number of Words in a Story for the
Experimental Groups in the Three
Participating Schools

Groups	Pretest Means	Posttest Means	Adjusted Means
School A	58.68	92.83	95.77
School B	78.78	69.48	60.82
School C	40.54	62.18	77.82

Table 7

Summary Table for the Scheffé-Multiple Comparison
Analysis of the Differences Among Experimental
Groups in the Three Participating Schools

School	A	B	C
A	-	23.35 $F = 3.35^a$	30.65 $F = 2.84^a$
B	-	-	7.3 $F = .15$
C	-	-	-

^a $.95F(2,75) = 3.12$

In an attempt to determine the source of the differences among the experimental groups, the Scheffé multiple comparison statistical test was used. A summary of the results of the Scheffé analysis is found in Table 7. Only the difference between School A and School B is significant at the .05 level.

The source of the differences between schools cannot be specifically determined. Two possibilities should be considered for possible further study. First, the lack of control of the picture variable must be considered as a possibility. However, the very low F ratio in the comparison with School B and School C is at least an indication that the picture variable may not be the total or even the most important source of the difference. A second possible source of the difference is the in-service program at each school. School A had the longest and most involved in-service program. Although not significant, the F ratio for Schools A and B does approach significance. This comparison gives further weight to the suggestion that the in-service procedures need further study.

Hypothesis 3: Students taught by the RSWE program write an equivalent number of T-units per story as do the control students.

Each story was divided into T-units which are main clauses, and any subordinate units which appear to be connected with it. The number of T-units for each story was counted, and the covariance statistical test was used

to determine significance. The data for the number of T-units are summarized in Table 8.

Table 8

Summary Table for the Analysis of Covariance of the Number of T-units in a Story for the Experimental and Control Groups

Source	SS	df	MS	F
Between groups	102.11	1	102.11	6.18 ^a
Error	1850.44	112	16.52	
Total	1952.55	113		

^a $.95^F(1,112) = 3.92.$

Since the computed F value of 6.18 is greater than the required F value of 3.92 the null hypothesis is rejected. The data indicate that the difference between experimental and control groups is significant for the number of T-units in a story.

Table 9

Pretest, Posttest, and Adjusted Means of the Number of T-units in a Story

Group	Pretest Mean	Posttest Mean	Adjusted Mean
Experimental	6.96	9.58	9.28
Control	5.52	6.58	7.20

A summary of mean scores is found in Table 9. Both the experimental and control groups had higher posttest

T-unit scores, but the gains of the experimental group exceeded those of the control group at a statistically significant level.

Hypothesis 4: Students taught by the RSWE program will write T-units with an equivalent number of words to those written by the control group students.

The mean length of the T-units in each story was computed to test this hypothesis. The results of the statistical comparison of mean length of T-units for pretests and posttests are shown in Table 10.

Table 10

Summary Table for the Analysis of Covariance of the Mean Number of Words in a T-unit for the Experimental and Control Groups

Source	SS	df	MS	F
Between groups	30.68	1	30.68	3.47 ^a
Error	990.24	112	8.84	
Total	1020.97	113		

^a $.95^F(1,112) = 3.92$.

Table 10 indicates that there is not a significant difference between the mean T-unit length for control and experimental groups. The null hypothesis is therefore retained as tenable.

Table 11 shows the pretest, posttest, and adjusted means for the experimental and control groups from the analysis of the mean T-unit length. The scores changed only slightly; the change was not statistically significant.

Table 11

Pretest, Posttest, and Adjusted Means for the
Mean Number of Words in a T-unit

Group	Pretest Mean	Posttest Mean	Adjusted Mean
Experimental	9.14	8.40	8.35
Control	8.43	9.36	9.47

Hypothesis Related to Copying

Hypothesis 5: Students taught by the RSWE lesson sequence make copying errors which are equal in number to those made by the control group.

Hypothesis 5 dealt with evaluation of all test items which involved copying of material from a printed text. Certain arbitrary decisions were made about how to count errors for this variable. Each incorrect letter or omitted letter in a word was counted as one error. If an entire word was omitted an error was counted for each letter of the omitted word. Transpositions of letters or words were each counted as a single error.

The data for Hypothesis 5 failed to meet the required underlying assumption of equivalent regression coefficients for covariance analysis. Therefore the pretest-posttest gain score data for this variable were analyzed via a t-test for independent samples. Table 12 summarizes the findings for the difference in copying errors between the experimental and control groups.

Table 12

Summary Table for the t-test of Independent Samples
Comparison of the Gain Scores for the Number
of Copying Errors Made by Experimental
and Control Groups

	Experimental	Control
Pretest Mean	5.35	11.31
Posttest Mean	1.90	3.29
Gain	-3.45	-1.02
N	78	35
SD	4.89	4.32
t	t = 2.68 ^a	

$$a \quad .95^t(111) = 1.96$$

The computed t test indicates that there is a significant difference between the number of copying errors made by the experimental and control groups. The null hypothesis is therefore rejected.

The ability to copy from a printed text is a skill which students often need in order to carry out their written assignments. The component skills involved in the performance of this task have not been carefully analyzed. The visual motor skills of handwriting are certainly included, but it would appear that other skills, such as visual tracking and memory for spatial relationships may also be involved.

The task of copying was specifically taught in the RSWE program. The program appears to have had a positive

effect in the development of skill for this task. The mean scores for both groups are found in Table 12, showing that the experimental group showed a decrease in copying errors on the posttest while the control group showed an increase.

The scores of the experimental groups at each school were evaluated to determine whether or not variables within the schools seemed to affect the results of the tests.

Table 13 summarizes the results.

Table 13

Summary Table for the Analysis of Covariance
of the Number of Copying Errors for the
Experimental Groups at Each School

Source	SS	df	MS	F
Between groups	51.23	2	25.61	1.59 ^a
Error	1211.66	75	16.16	
Total	1262.89	77		

^a $.95^F(2,75) = 3.16$

The computed F value fails to reach the level necessary for significance. Therefore, it appears that there is no significant difference in the performance of experimental groups in different schools in the task of copying.

None of the remaining variables showed significant differences when experimental groups in the different schools were compared. It appears that the differences in

in-service programs did not significantly change the effect of the treatment program.

Hypothesis 6: Students taught by the RSWE program complete equivalent numbers of the items to be copied as do the control group.

Hypothesis 6 also involved all items which included the tasks of copying from a printed text. Each letter at the end of the item, which had not been copied, was assumed to be unfinished and was counted as one graphic unit not completed. Table 14 shows the results of the data analysis.

Table 14

Summary Table for the Analysis of Covariance of the Number of Graphic Units not Completed for the Experimental and Control Groups

Source	SS	df	MS	F
Between groups	608.14	1	608.14	4.63 ^a
Error	14,711.27	112	131.35	
Total	15,319.41	113		

a $.95^F(1,112) = 3.92$

The computed F ratio for the difference between experimental and control groups for the number of graphic units not completed was significant. The null hypothesis is therefore rejected.

The variable tested for this hypothesis has to do with efficiency in copying printed material. The specific

component skills involved in this task have not been identified. It appears that ease of handwriting, understanding the task, and time management are all skills needed for success in this copying task.

Teachers who have used the tests without also using the program have commented on a "teaching effect of the test." These teachers stated that students appeared to remember some tasks and seemed to better understand how to proceed on the second test. The mean scores of both groups, as shown in Table 15, indicate that there may indeed be a test effect on this copying task.

Table 15

Pretest, Posttest and Adjusted Means for the
Experimental and Control Groups for the
Number of Graphic Units not Completed

Group	Pretest Mean	Posttest Mean	Adjusted Mean
Experimental	22.68	6.09	6.05
Control	22.77	11.03	11.01

Hypotheses Related to School Assignments

Hypothesis 7: Students taught by the RSWE lesson sequence complete equivalent numbers of incomplete sentences to those completed by the control group.

Hypothesis 7 dealt with the task of copying incomplete sentences from the test worksheet, then adding words which would complete the sentence. Table 16 summarizes the data available for this variable.

Table 16

Summary Table for the Analysis of Covariance
of the Number of Incomplete Sentence
Forms Completed

Source	SS	df	MS	F
Between Groups	3.22	1	3.22	6.38 ^a
Error	56.52	112	0.05	
Total	59.75	113		

^a $.95^F(1,112) = 3.92$

The F value computed is significant for the difference between sentence forms completed by the experimental group and those completed by the control group. The null hypothesis is therefore rejected.

The sentence completion task was one of the test items which appears to have a direct relationship to regular school assignments. The skills for this task include understanding the concept of what a sentence is as well as all of the specific writing and spelling skills necessary for thinking of and writing the words to complete the sentence.

There were two items on the test included in this task. Table 17 shows the mean scores for the sentence completion task. Both the experimental and control groups showed gains, but the gain for the experimental group significantly exceeded that of the control group.

Table 17

Pretest, Posttest, and Adjusted Means for the
Number of Incomplete Sentence
Forms Completed

Group	Pretest Mean	Posttest Mean	Adjusted Mean
Experimental	1.06	1.66	1.65
Control	1.00	1.28	1.29

Hypothesis 8: Students taught by the RSWE lesson sequence add an equivalent number of words to incomplete sentence forms as do the control students.

Hypothesis 8 involved the number of words added to the incomplete sentence forms which constituted the variable tested as Hypothesis 7. Table 18 summarizes the data for this variable.

Table 18

Summary Table for the Analysis of Covariance
of the Number of Words Added to
Incomplete Sentence Forms

Source	SS	df	MS	F
Between groups	20.13	1	20.13	3.07 ^a
Error	733.26	112	6.55	
Total	753.39	113		

^a $.95^F(1,112) = 3.92$

The computed F ratio approaches but does not reach the necessary level for statistical significance. The null hypothesis is therefore retained as tenable.

In computation of the number of words added to incomplete sentence forms, no distinction was made as to whether or not the sentence was completed by the words added. In view of the significant F score for the number of sentences completed and the lack of significance for the number of words added, it would appear that additional information would have been provided if the count had been more specific. Provision for counting separately those words which actually completed sentences would have provided additional information of interest about the difference or lack of difference between experimental and control groups in the way words were used to complete sentences.

Table 19 shows the mean scores for the experimental and control groups. The experimental group added more words to incomplete sentence forms on both the pretest and the posttest, but the difference was not great enough to be statistically significant.

Table 19

Pretest, Posttest, and Adjusted Means
for the Number of Words Added to
Incomplete Sentence Forms

Group	Pretest Mean	Posttest Mean	Adjusted Mean
Experimental	3.81	5.18	5.07
Control	3.28	3.94	4.17

Hypothesis 9: Students taught by the RSWE program recall and write equivalent numbers of facts remembered from a taped informational passage as do control students.

Hypothesis 9 involved the analysis of data for a task to recall and write the facts remembered. The data are summarized in Table 20.

Table 20

Summary Table for the Analysis of Covariance
for the Number of Facts Recalled
and Written

Source	SS	df	MS	F
Between groups	54.00	1	54.00	5.88 ^a
Error	1,028.08	112	8.18	
Total	1,082.09	113		

^a $.95^F(1,112) = 3.92$.

The F value computed is significant for the difference between experimental and control groups for the number of facts recalled and written. The null hypothesis is therefore rejected.

The task of listening to a taped informational passage, then writing what was remembered involved many skills. No attempt has been made to analyze what component skills are needed for this task. This task appears to be both the most difficult and the most nearly like regular school assignments of the test items.

Teachers of the control groups stated that this test item appeared to have a "teaching effect." The mean scores as shown in Table 22 indicate that a test effect is possible for this variable.

Table 21

Pretest, Posttest, and Adjusted Means for the
Number of Facts Recalled and Written

Group	Pretest Mean	Posttest Mean	Adjusted Mean
Experimental	1.99	4.84	4.82
Control	1.75	3.31	3.34

The Hypothesis Dealing with Words Written in One Minute

Hypothesis 10: Students taught by the RSWE program write an equivalent number of words in one minute to those written by the control students.

Hypothesis 10 dealt with the number of words a student could write in one minute without any specific reference. This item did not test any skills taught in the program. It was included to attempt to assess any transfer effect to tasks of written expression which were not specifically taught.

The examination of test papers and discussions with teachers indicated that the test item does not provide the information desired. The investigator believes that in the past she has successfully used this item to gain information about a student's ability to begin a task immediately and to use the information about words which he has available. However, the information was obtained individually or from ~~closely monitored test situations. Many students in the~~ less closely supervised situation of the regular classrooms did exactly what could be expected when taking this test. They wrote more words whenever they had time to spare during the remainder of the test. The test item does not appear to fulfill any valid purpose in a test designed to be used with classroom-sized groups. It is recommended that this item be omitted from the test.

INTERCORRELATIONS BETWEEN THE VARIOUS MEASURES OF WRITTEN EXPRESSION

The Pearson correlation coefficient between the variables tested is presented in Table 22. A perusal of this table reveals that the majority of the correlations are very small. While a number of items have correlation coefficients high enough to be statistically significant, most are not sufficiently high as to warrant further discussion of their relationships. There appears to be little overlap between skills tested in each item when compared to most other items. Also to be considered is

Interrelations Between the Pretest Scores of Each Variable Tested
Compared to Each of the Other Variables Tested

	No. of Words No. of T-units	No. of Words per T-unit	No. of Copy- ing Errors	No. of Incomplete Sentences Completed	No. of Words Added to Sentences	No. of Words Written in One Minute	No. of Facts Remembered and Written	No. of Graphic Units not Completed	Judges Total Quality Score
Total Number of Words	0.87	0.16	0.27	0.22	0.16	0.31	0.17	0.37	0.28
Number of T-units	1.00	0.18	0.20	0.24	0.21	0.34	0.21	0.35	0.24
No. of Words per T-unit		1.00	0.11	0.02	0.03	0.08	0.02	0.04	0.06
No. of Copying Errors			1.00	0.16	0.32	0.15	0.45	0.17	0.11
Number of Incomplete Sentences Completed				1.00	0.41	0.11	0.14	0.30	0.04
No. of Words Added to Incomplete Sentences					1.00	0.73	0.76	0.14	0.03
No. of Words Written in One Minute						1.00	0.75	0.21	0.22
No. of Facts Remembered and Written							1.00	0.19	0.13
No. of Graphic Units not Completed								1.00	0.02
Judges Total Quality Score									1.00

the fact that the relatively low reliability coefficients for some tasks may preclude large computed coefficients.

The correlation coefficient of the total number of words in a story and the total number of T-units in a story was .87. A high correlation was expected for these two variables because of the obvious relationship of one to the other. A correlation coefficient of .76 between the number of words added to a sentence and the number of facts recalled and written is also of interest. The relationship between the two variables is not an obvious one. However, the two items were among the three considered to be most nearly like typical school assignments. Further investigation may lead to a better understanding of the relationship of these two variables.

The low intercorrelation between the remainder of the pairs of variables may indicate that each type of task tested primarily involves skills which are not tested in other tasks. If so, this still does not give any information about whether or not that task is essential to attaining competence in written expression. Information is needed on the component skills of each task and the relationship of each of these component skills to proficiency in written expression. Much more study is needed before The McDonald Test of Written Proficiency can be critically examined as a diagnostic instrument.

SUMMARY

The fourth chapter presented the data and data analyses for the study. Ten hypotheses were tested and evaluated.

Four hypotheses related to the stories written as test items on both pretest and posttest. Significant differences between experimental and control groups were found for the number of T-units in a story with the experimental group showing greater gains. No significant differences were found between experimental and control groups for (1) the quality of stories, (2) the total number of words, and (3) the number of words per T-unit. A significant difference was found between experimental groups in different schools on the total number of words. This difference may be related to the uncontrolled picture variable at one school or to the difference in in-service training received by the teachers at the different schools.

Tests of both variables related to tasks of copying from a printed text were found to show statistically significant differences between experimental and control groups. The experimental group copied more of the text but made fewer errors. Two of the three variables which seem to be most clearly related to typical school assignments also met the tests for significant differences between experimental and control groups. These were:

- (1) the items relating to the completion of sentences and,

(2) recall and writing of facts remembered from a short informational passage to which the subjects had listened. The experimental group made significantly greater gains on both variables. The variable of number of words added to a sentence did not meet the test for significant difference between experimental and control groups.

The test item for the number of words written in one minute was found to be an inappropriate test item for a large group administered test. It is recommended that the item be omitted from the test.

A comparison of each variable with each of the other variables was made, using Pearson correlation coefficients. Most of the correlations were low. The correlation between the number of T-units in a story and the total number of words in a story was high as was the correlation between the number of words added to a sentence and the number of facts recalled and written. As a whole, little relationship between variables was found.

Chapter 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

INTRODUCTION

This study was initiated in order to investigate whether students who do unsatisfactory written assignments can learn to be more successful in written work as a result of a prerecorded program which reteaches them the skills of written expression. The study was designed to determine whether teachers with varied backgrounds and educational philosophies could use the taped program with a minimum of in-service instruction.

Presented in this chapter are: (1) a summary of the study, (2) limitations of the study, (3) conclusions relating to the hypotheses, (4) conclusions regarding the use of the RSWE program by teachers with varied backgrounds, (5) other observations from examination of the data, (6) implications of the study, and (7) recommendations for further research.

SUMMARY OF THE STUDY

The study is summarized under three major headings: (1) the setting and selection of the participants, (2) the

procedures, and (3) analysis of the data.

The Setting and Selection of Participants

The study was accomplished with a sample comprised of 113 middle-grade students in Manteca, California, and Pittsburg, California. A total of ten teachers from three schools took part in the study. Each school had at least one experimental and one control group. The principals of each school expressed an interest in the program and obtained teachers who were interested in participating.

Each school had an in-service program to introduce the investigator and the materials to be used with the experimental group. The in-service programs were arranged by the principals and were different at each school. In addition to the in-service program, the investigator visited each school weekly for five weeks during the study.

The subjects for the study were intermediate grade students who had problems with written expression. Subjects were selected by teacher judgment and by analysis of each test item of The McDonald Test of Written Proficiency. Children who had been diagnosed as having specific learning disabilities were excluded from the study. The analyses were based on the responses of seventy-eight experimental subjects, and thirty-five control subjects.

The Procedures of the Study

The research design specified several classrooms to be within treatment groups. The classrooms were randomly assigned to the experimental or control groups. The experimental group received a pretest, a series of ten two-part prerecorded lessons, and a posttest. The control group was given both a pretest and a posttest, but continued in the regular classroom procedures. The instruments used were two forms of The McDonald Test of Written Proficiency.

CONCLUSIONS RELATING TO HYPOTHESES

The primary objective of the study was to attempt to determine whether or not the use of the program, "A System for the Multimodal Reteaching of the Skills of Written Expression by the Use of Taped Instruction," would bring about significant differences in the written performance of the group receiving the treatment as compared to the control group.

Hypotheses Relating to a Story Written About a Picture

Four hypotheses were tested which related to the stories written as part of the test. The stories were of special interest because the lessons in the RSWE program do not teach specifically toward improving the skills of story writing. Several analyses of the stories were made in order to determine whether or not there was any

transfer effect from the lessons on written expression.

Hypothesis 1 stated that students taught by the RSWE program showed greater improvement in written expression than did students taught by ongoing classroom procedures. The hypothesis was tested by having four judges rank the pretest and posttest stories as to quality. The results of the combined ratings of the judges showed no significant difference in the quality of the stories written by the experimental and control groups. The null hypothesis was accepted for this variable.

A comparison of the ratings of the judges showed that their ratings of quality varied considerably and the interrater reliability correlation was extremely low. The unreliability of ratings of written expression has long been a variable encountered by researchers in the field. There do not appear to be any consistently reliable methods to evaluate the quality of written expression.

Hypothesis 2 stated that the experimental group showed a greater increase in the total number of words written in their stories than did the control group. The statistical analysis of the total number of words in a story for each group approached but did not reach significance. The evidence did not support the hypothesis that the experimental group would write longer stories than the control group, therefore the null hypothesis was accepted.

Additional analysis showed that there was a statistical difference between experimental groups. The evidence

suggests that further study of this variable is indicated. Any further study should include rigorous control of the stimulus for the story to be written.

Hypothesis 3 stated that the students in the experimental group showed a greater increase in the number of T-units in their stories than did the control group. This hypothesis was confirmed by statistical analysis. The experimental group did write significantly more T-units than did the control group. The null hypothesis was rejected for this variable.

The significant increase in the number of T-units indicated that the treatment may teach skills which have a transfer effect. Further study of this possibility should be considered.

Hypothesis 4 stated that the experimental group showed a greater increase in the mean number of words per T-unit than did the control group. The statistical test for this variable failed to reach significance and the null hypothesis was accepted.

The mean length of T-unit has been shown to increase with age and is considered to be an important index of syntactical maturity. However, when students at the intermediate grade level are divided by ability, the low groups do not show much of an increase. Since the students in this study are all low, the mean T-unit length may not be an appropriate measure of progress in written expression at this level.

Hypotheses Related to Copying from a Printed Text

Hypothesis 5 stated that students taught by the RSWE program showed a greater decrease in copying errors than did the control students. Every test item which involved copying from the printed text was included in the computation of copying errors. The statistical analysis indicated that the experimental group had a ~~significantly greater decrease in copying errors than the~~ control group did. The null hypothesis was rejected for this variable.

Most students who have mastered the skills of handwriting had little difficulty with the task of copying, indicating the high degree of visual motor skill involvement. However, some students with clear legible handwriting made the same types of errors that were made by students with less skill in handwriting and some students with poor handwriting made no errors. There appears to be more to the skill of copying than being able to form the letters accurately, but this study has not analyzed the component skills involved in the assigned tasks.

Hypothesis 6 stated that the students in the experimental group completed more of the items to be copied than did the control students.

Every item of the test which involved copying from a printed text was used in the computation of the score for this item. The statistical analysis for this variable

indicated that the experimental group copied significantly more of the items on the test than the control students did. The null hypothesis was therefore rejected.

The task of copying a sentence or phrase within a timed interval appears to involve skills of attending and those of time management. Both experimental and control groups showed definite improvement in items copied, indicating a teaching effect of the test. One possible explanation for the "teaching effect" is that some of the subjects may have internalized the time structure provided by the test so that they could use their energy for the assigned task rather than for time structuring.

The Hypotheses Most Nearly Related to School Writing Assignments

Hypothesis 7 stated that the experimental group showed a greater increase in the number of sentences completed than did the control group. The statistical analysis of the data indicated that the experimental group completed a significantly greater number of sentences than the control group did. The null hypothesis was therefore rejected.

Hypothesis 8 stated that the experimental group showed a greater increase in the number of words added to sentences than did the control group. Statistical tests showed that there was no significant difference between the groups. The null hypothesis was accepted for this variable.

All words added to the incomplete sentence forms were counted for this variable. The conclusion of the investigator is that the words should have been separated into two categories--those which completed the sentence and those which did not. Separation into categories would have made it possible to evaluate whether students taught by the RSWE program had a better concept of "sentence" than did the control group. ~~The data, as evaluated, do not provide~~ that information.

Hypothesis 9 stated that the experimental group remembered and wrote more facts after listening to a taped passage than did the control group. The statistical analysis indicated that the experimental group made significantly higher scores on this task than did the control group. The null hypothesis was rejected for this variable.

The task was to listen to a taped passage about a familiar subject, then to write everything about the subject which was remembered. This item tested the most complex task taught during the treatment phase of the study. Among the skills involved are those needed for attending to a lecture, remembering what was said, and organizing thoughts. Most of the other skills of written expression may also be needed for successful completion of this task. In addition to expressing himself in writing, the student was expected to screen out what he already knew or believed about the subject of the lecture.

Although the experimental group made significantly more progress on the task than the control group did, the mean scores of the control group showed a substantial gain. This gain was in keeping with the observation of the control group teachers who reported a "teaching effect" from the pretest.

The Hypothesis Concerning the Number of Words Written in One Minute

The hypothesis stated that the experimental group wrote a greater number of words in one minute than did the control group. The statistical test showed no significant difference between the two groups. As a result of teacher comments and observations made of students' papers, the investigator has concluded that this task did not provide the information desired.

Summary of Conclusions about the Hypotheses

The scores indicating significant differences between the experimental and control groups on the items regarding the number of T-units in a story, the copying tasks, and two of the tasks most nearly like school assignments reaffirm the results of the earlier study done by the investigator. The RSWE program does seem to make a difference in the written work of students with serious problems in learning to use the skills of written expression.

While the investigator is indeed encouraged, it is believed that this program is a point of departure for

further work rather than a finished product. All of the tasks need further specific evaluation as to the specific skills involved. Each task also needs to be evaluated as to its importance in the overall process of the acquisition and improvement of the skills of written expression.

CONCLUSIONS REGARDING THE USE OF THE RSWE PROGRAM
BY TEACHERS WITH VARIED BACKGROUND

An important part of the study was to discover whether or not teachers with different backgrounds and educational philosophies, could successfully use the RSWE program after a brief in-service training period. Evaluation of this aspect of the study was somewhat subjective and based upon teacher comments and student achievement. Although this evaluative method may be less objective than might be desired, it is probably quite reliable.

One variable which had not been anticipated and may have been of some importance was that each school had a different type of in-service program. Evaluation of the in-service effect is difficult because of the many variables involved. However, questions are raised because the major differences in the way the program was used were found among schools rather than among teachers, as had been expected. The investigator recommends that the various in-service methods be studied under controlled conditions.

Teacher commitment to the use of the program as suggested and the incorporation of the program into the curriculum was related to the amount of time spent in in-service training. The differences in results were statistically significant only on the story. This task was one which was not directly taught in the RSWE program. There was no significant difference in results on any tasks directly taught by the program. While not statistically significant, there appeared to be greater improvement on all tasks for the students from the school with the most extensive in-service program.

The evidence from this study indicates that the RSWE program can be used successfully by many teachers who have had a minimum of in-service instruction. There is some evidence that the type of in-service training may affect the attitudes of the teachers which, in turn, may affect the achievement of their students.

OTHER OBSERVATIONS FROM EXAMINATION OF THE DATA

During the preparation and field testing of the RSWE program and the two studies involving the use of these materials, the investigator read several thousand stories written by students in grades four through eight. The judges for these two studies and the investigator agreed that most of the stories were incredibly bad.

Certain patterns seem to emerge from these "bad" stories which seem worthy of comment, although they were not being investigated in either of the reported studies. No specific counting or systematic analysis has been made of any of the apparent patterns to be discussed, but such investigation may be desirable.

Handwriting

Handwriting confusion was present to a large degree in the stories which were examined. Most of these students used some variation of manuscript writing. Those who did use the cursive writing style often carried over their b-d, p-g, and similar confusions from manuscript and added to these the m-n, q-g and b-f confusions which occur for some when they learn cursive script. There was also evidence of great confusion about upper and lower case letters. At this level, middle grades in public schools, handwriting appeared to be interfering with communication.

Spelling

Unique and unusual spelling made story-reading somewhat like a treasure hunt with a map that is wrinkled, torn, and faded. Much of the misspelling involved phonetic spelling of the word. However, this became quite complex because, at least for spelling, many of these students did not differentiate between voiced and unvoiced consonants, and appeared to hear few differences in vowel sounds.

Although the writing vocabularies of these students were often limited to short words, when they did spell multi-syllabic words, they often omitted one or more syllables.

When a student who spelled in the manner described also manifested the handwriting confusions delineated above his entire story took on the appearance of a maze. Only a most determined reader could decipher the story, and sometimes there was no meaning discerned in spite of the persistence of the reader.

Both spelling and handwriting had an effect on the student's ability to communicate in writing. It is probable that some students were inhibited in their attempts at communication because of the way they felt about their poor spelling and handwriting. Yet, Braddock, Lloyd-Jones, and Shoer¹ stated that in their evaluation of research in written language, they eliminated studies of handwriting and spelling because they had so little effect on written communication.

There appears to be a paucity of research dealing with the written expression of elementary school children or with emphasis on the poor student of any age. The limited research in these areas may have been a factor leading to the conclusion that spelling and handwriting do not have a significant effect on written communication.

¹Richard Braddock, Richard Lloyd-Jones, and Lowell Shoer. Research in Written Composition (Champaign, Illinois: National Council of Teachers of English, 1963), p. 50.

Those students with spelling and handwriting difficulties may outgrow the problems described. However, this seems unlikely if Havighurst² was correct when he stated that little progress is made in attaining skills of reading and writing after a student reaches the early teen-age years. It may be that the information available at this time does not provide complete information on spelling and handwriting as they relate to the skills of written communication.

Students with the problems discussed may outgrow their difficulties; they may drop out of school; they may quit doing any written assignments; they may compensate for lack of proficiency in written expression by developing other skills; or they may do none of these. These are some of the possibilities which should be investigated.

Multiple Predication

Multiple predication is so frequent in the stories for this study as to merit further investigation. Although multiple predication definitely contributes to the mean T-unit length, this investigator does not feel that any particular degree of syntactic maturity is evident in these sentences. The use of multiple predicates does not appear to have been done for specific effect as it might be by more sophisticated writers. Rather, what was written

²Robert J. Havighurst. Human Development and Education (New York: Longman, Green, and Company, 1953), p. 33.

was a string of predicates which all had the same subject, and would have been a string of short T-units or main clauses connected with "ands" if the subject were reinserted before each verb. This type of multiple predication is similar to that found in the work of primary students when they are just learning to write independently.

The use of multiple predication of the type described lengthens the mean number of words per T-unit in a story. In such cases, the longer T-units may not be indicative of greater syntactic maturity as Hunt³ has shown it to be. Perhaps different standards of evaluation are needed for students who lack proficiency in written expression.

In order to better evaluate written syntactic maturity of elementary school children two suggestions are made for further research: (1) to study the development of skill in written expression in relation to the developmental stages of Piaget, and (2) to study the possibility that multiple predication may be a stage in the process of written language becoming thought put on paper, using the theories of Vygotsky as a basis for study.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

The implications of this study are that in spite of all the limitations, problems have been identified which

³Kellogg Hunt and others An Instrument to Measure Syntactic Maturity (Tallahassee, Florida:University of Florida, 1968), p. 87.

need to be studied, and methods which have been studied and described in this study may provide direction for future study. Determining both research designs and methods of teaching to be used would be complex, but this complexity does not alter the fact that research-based information is needed.

The improvement made by the subjects of this study is considered by the investigator as an indication that something can be done to help those students who are "seriously retarded" in the area of written expression. There seems to be no reason why different pragmatic approaches cannot be tried while psychologists, researchers, and curriculum experts work together to see what can be learned. In this way eventually the teaching of written communication will be based on something besides many years of experiences of teachers.

Implied, but not investigated in this study, is the possibility that cognitive functioning may be as essential a part of the process of written communication as is some method of graphic symbolization. The entire theoretical aspect of the relationship of thought and language, and what is really involved in the interrelationship of the language arts, and how written language fits into the developmental pattern of the child needs to have continued study.

The last of the implications which will be directly discussed is the need for teacher preparation to teach the skills of written expression. There seem to be many questions about how teachers are taught to teach or should be taught. No teacher involved in this study felt that he or she knew how to teach the skills of written language or even what the skills were which needed to be taught.

~~As indicated by the literature reviewed in~~
Chapter 2, the lack of skill for teaching written expression is general and not confined to the teachers who took part in this study. No part of this study gives any direction for the teaching of teachers, merely a hint that some direction is needed.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

Throughout Chapters 4 and 5 the investigator has referred to the need for further study in certain areas having to do with written expression. These suggestions will not be repeated here unless they are specifically related to the procedures or data analysis from this study. Some recommendations for further study which result directly from this study follow:

1. After some anticipated revisions, The McDonald Test of Written Proficiency should be given to a sample large enough to determine reliability. This recommendation is made with reservations because the test was

designed to be diagnostic only, but the lack of any standardized instrument makes research difficult.

2. The study should be replicated with retesting after several months.
3. Each type of task in the lessons should be tested and evaluated in some way in order to determine the need for, and the place of, that type of lesson.
4. ~~Other remedial programs should be developed and compared to the program, "A System for the Multimodal Reteaching of the Skills of Written Expression by the Use of Taped Instruction," as a way of helping to determine the essential skills to be taught.~~
5. The study should be replicated with at least as large an N using the Solomon Four Way Design to determine the pretest effect.
6. A thorough study of the writing of young children should be conducted to determine the developmental aspects, if any, of written language and how they compare to the acquisition of oral language.
7. Further study is needed in the area of diagnostic techniques in written expression for the student who functions within a normal range of achievement in areas other than written language.
8. A longitudinal study of written language needs to be done to help determine such factors as the possible hierarchial development of skills, when remediation

should be initiated, and when specific skills are needed.

SUMMARY

In Chapter 5 the investigator summarized the procedures for a study of a program for remedial instruction for intermediate grade students with difficulties in the area of written language. The program was evaluated by the comparison of pretests and posttests given to both experimental and control groups.

The experimental group showed significant improvement over the control group on one variable related to a story written about a picture, two variables which involved copying skills, and two variables which appear to be related to written assignments students are asked to do in school.

This study provides some information about the need for, and possible ways to help provide remedial instruction in the written language program of elementary schools. Suggestions have been made for further studies in the area of written expression and remedial instruction in written language.

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APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A

THE MCDONALD TEST FOR WRITTEN PROFICIENCY

Purpose of the Test

The McDonald Test for Written Proficiency is designed to be used as a supplement to teacher judgment in order to test for serious difficulties in the skills of written expression. The test may also provide clues in the diagnosis of problems with auditory and visual discrimination. This test is designed to be used in the intermediate grades with students between the ages of nine and twelve years.

Materials Needed

The taped-test

A tape recorder

Five large pictures to be used to stimulate story-writing.

For each student:

A test form

A pencil

Two sheets of writing paper

Administration of the Test

Each student should have a pencil, two pieces of paper and the test form. The large pictures should be displayed so that they are visible to every student. The

volume of the recorder should be checked to make sure it can be heard without strain. The taped test will last for thirty minutes.

Students should be told:

that they are taking a test,
that they must not talk during the test,
that listening carefully is important
~~if the test is to be accurate,~~
that additional pencils and paper are available as needed,
that the tape will not be stopped except for grave emergencies,
the reasons the test is being given.

Any questions should be answered before the test begins since it is important that the tape not be stopped once it is started. All of the time intervals, including the total times, are considered to be important to the diagnosis. If, for some reason the tape must be stopped, it should be done at the end of a test item when the directions say to stop. If the interruption is for more than five minutes, it may be desirable to begin again on another day.

During the test period, the examiner should observe the students, and make note of those who: (1) become restless, (2) seem to lose track of where they should be, (3) are distracted by external events, or (4) do not

attempt some test items.

Scoring the Test

Each item on the test has a score of two possible points. Some of the scoring is necessarily subjective, particularly on items 9 and 10. These require judgment about thought units (T units) which are clauses, sentences, or commands. Since this test is designed to aid in diagnosis of a learning disability the author is of the opinion that it is best to give no score to doubtful items.

A score of 4 or less indicates a need for further diagnosis. It probably also indicates a lack of readiness for work in the area of written expression. A score of fifteen or more indicates that the student does not need a remedial program such as the RSWE program except as noted in the section on interpretation.

<u>Item</u>	<u>Points</u>
1. a. No errors	2
b. 2 errors or less which could be attributed to not hearing the letter name or not knowing the letter symbol. Each letter is counted.	1
c. More than two errors of any type	0
2. a. All problems written correctly	1
b. Problems written in vertical notation. (No importance is attached to answers for this item, so wrong answers or no answers do not detract from credit given.)	1

<u>Item</u>	<u>Points</u>
3. a. No copying errors (If the item is incomplete but every- thing which has been completed is correct, credit is given.)	1
b. Item completed (Credit is given for 3b whether or not there are copying errors. Com- pletion is the criterion for credit.)	1
4. a. All problems copied without error	1
b. Vertical notation with at least two answers attempted. (Answers need not be correct.)	1
5. a. Copied without error	1
b. Sentence completed (Spelling of words not copied and/or punctuation should not be considered.)	1
6. a. Copied without error	1
b. Sentence completed	1
7. a. Fourth grade - 10 words Fifth grade - 12 words Sixth grade - 14 words (Words need not be spelled correctly, but examiner must be able to recognize words as opposed to collections of letters.)	1

<u>Item</u>	<u>Points</u>
7. b. Fourth grade - 12 words or more	
Fifth grade - 14 words or more	
Sixth grade - 16 words or more	1
8. a. Fourth grade - 4 T-units	
Fifth grade - 5 T-units	
Sixth grade - 6 T-units	1
b. Fourth grade - 5 or more T-units	
Fifth grade - 6 or more T-units	
Sixth grade - 7 or more T-units	1
9. a. Fourth grade - 5 T-units	
Fifth grade - 6 T-units	
Sixth grade - 7 T-units	1
b. Fourth grade - 7 T-units	
Fifth grade - 8 T-units	
Sixth grade - 9 T-units	1

Interpretation of the Test

Items one and two are designed to help in the diagnosis of those students who are weak in the auditory learning modality. They should probably be given some type of instruction other than the RSWE program which has a strong auditory emphasis.

Items three and four are designed to help diagnose those students with visual discrimination difficulties, or motor difficulties or both. If a student does poorly on these items, he probably needs visual-motor training

before going on to work in written expression. Further diagnosis is suggested for a student who makes more than three transposition errors or more than two omission errors or three or more combined transpositions and omission errors on items three through seven.

Some students will have nearly everything correct except the ninth item. These students may have problems with listening, memory, organization, or ability to work independently. If they also missed item eight, the latter should be explored. Further diagnosis is warranted for these students. Some of them may profit from the RSWE program, even though their overall score is high for the practice in organization and the gradual shift from completely directed activity to largely self-directed activity.

Summary

The McDonald Test of Written Proficiency is designed as a diagnostic tool to be used as a supplement to teacher judgment and other diagnostic instruments. The test is concerned with the beginning skills of written expression as they are learned by most students during the early school years, and does not attempt to diagnose all of the skills needed for written communication.

FOCUS ON WRITTEN EXPRESSION

TEST 1

Tapescript:

This is a test to see how well you listen. It is also a test to see whether you can do written work in a reasonable amount of time. Like many other tests it begins with some very easy things to do. Please do the entire test without talking. If you talk, it will interfere with the people around you. If you do not finish an answer do not worry about it. Go on when the taped directions go on. If you do not understand what to do, skip that item. If you listen carefully, you will probably understand what to do. You will not understand unless you listen carefully because the tape will not repeat or stop to answer questions.

You should have a pencil, two sheets of paper and a test paper. Do not write on the test paper. Do write your name on the top left hand corner of one of the writing papers and write the date on the top right hand corner of the paper. Do that now. (45 seconds)

Now you are ready to begin the test. Do not worry about the other sheet of paper at this time. You may write on both sides of the paper if you need that much space. Skip one space under the one where you wrote your name. Write the numeral 1 in the next space. Put your pencil down. I will read a sentence to you. Then you will write the sentence on your paper one word at a time as I say and spell each word for you. Do not talk and do not erase. If you make a mistake draw one line through it and go on with the correct letters. Do not worry about doing your best writing. Get ready to listen carefully.

(1) The first sentence is: Very few men grow to be seven feet tall. I will say each word, then I will spell it. Write each letter as I say it: Very few men men grow grow to to be be seven seven feet feet tall. tall. Put a period at the end of the sentence.

(2) Skip one space after that sentence and write the numeral 2 in the next space. Put your pencil down. For number 2, some math problems will be read to you. There are two addition problems and two subtraction problems. These problems should be written in vertical notation. Vertical notation means that one numeral is written under the other numeral and the plus or minus sign is written to the left of the bottom numeral. Pick up your pencil. Listen carefully: write twelve (2 seconds) plus (2 seconds) seventeen (2 seconds). Do this problem. (5 seconds)

The second problem is: twenty-eight (2 seconds) plus (2 seconds) seventeen (2 seconds). Do this problem. (5 seconds)

The third problem is: forty-six (2 seconds) minus (2 seconds) twenty-three (2 seconds). Do this problem. (5 seconds)

The fourth problem is: sixty-two (2 seconds) minus (2 seconds) forty-eight (2 seconds). Do this problem. (5 seconds)

(3) Skip one space and write the numeral 3 in the next space. Put your pencil down. Look at your test sheet. Find number 3. The sentence says: No one likes to make mistakes. You will copy each word as I say it. When you have finished writing each word, check to make sure you have copied it correctly. Pick up your pencil. Write: No one likes to make mistakes. Put a period at the end of the sentence. (5 seconds for each word except mistakes; 7 seconds allowed for mistakes.)

(4) Skip one space. Write the numeral 4 in the next space. Look at the test page. Find number 4. Copy and do the problems for number 4. When you have finished, check to make sure you have copied and done the problems correctly. Pick up your pencil and do number four now. (1 minute)

(5) Stop. Skip one space. Write the numeral 5 in the next space. Put your pencil down. Find number 5 on the test sheet. The sentence says: It takes many years for a pine tree to grow to be thirty feet high. You will copy this sentence. When you have finished, check your work to make sure you have copied correctly. Pick up your pencil. Begin. (45 seconds)

(6) Stop. Skip one space. Write the numeral 6 in the next space. Put your pencil down. Look on the test sheet and find number 6. It says: The brown and white dog ran to. You will copy this group of words and add a word or group of words to make a sentence. Pick up your pencil and do it now. (45 seconds)

(7) Stop. Skip one space. Write the numeral 7 in the next space. Put your pencil down. Find number 7 on the test sheet. It says: high up on a mountain. This group of words is not a sentence. Write a sentence with this group of words in the sentence. Pick up your pencil. Begin. (1 minute)

(8) Stop. Skip one space. Write the numeral 8. Put your pencil down. After the 8 you will write as many words as you can. You will write until you are told to stop. It does not matter what words you write, just do not write the same word more than once. Pick up your pencil. Begin. (1 minute)

(9) Stop. Skip one space. Write the numeral 9 in the next space. Put your pencil down. You will listen now to some information about horses. Then you will write down everything you can remember. You will write until you are told to stop. You will spell the best way you can and do not worry about using your best handwriting. Get ready now to listen carefully.

HORSES

Men have been using horses for work and play for thousands of years. People used horses to carry heavy loads and to pull carts, wagons and plows. Riding horseback was the fastest way to travel over land until the invention of trains and automobiles.

Now, in our country, many people own horses for the pleasure of riding. Horses make good pets and companions because they are eager to please their masters. Most horses have good memories and are easily trained to obey commands.

Saddle horses are horses bred for riding. There are several breeds which are very popular in the United States. Among these are the American Saddle Horse, the Tennessee Walking Horse, the Morgan, the Quarter Horse, the Arabian and the Thoroughbred. Most race horses are either Thoroughbreds or Quarter Horses.

Horses have larger eyes than any other land animal. They see well in both the dark and the daylight. A horse can see forward with one eye and backward with the other eye. A horse's ears are short and point upward. He can turn his ears to hear sounds coming from almost any direction. Horses have sharp hearing and can often hear noises which people cannot hear. When a horse points his ears forward, it means he has seen or heard something which has frightened him.

Pick up your pencil. Write until I tell you to stop. Do not worry about spelling. Write everything you remember about horses. Begin. (4 minutes)

(10) Stop. Put your pencil down. Take another sheet of paper. On this piece of paper you will write a story about one of the large pictures you can see in the front of the room. Look at the pictures and decide which one you will write about. (15 seconds) Now pick up your pencil and write the number of that picture near the top of your paper. Then write your name in the top left hand corner of the paper. Do not write the date. Put your pencil down. You may write any kind of story you wish about the picture. Do not worry about your handwriting or spelling. Do the best you can. ~~You will continue writing until you are told to stop.~~ You will stop then even if you are not finished. Your directions are: Write a story about one of the pictures. Spell the best you can, and do not worry if you are not sure how to spell a word correctly. Write until you are told to stop. Now pick up your pencil and begin writing. Your teacher will give you more paper or another pencil if you need them. (9 minutes)

Stop. Put your pencil down and wait for the teacher's instructions.

FOCUS ON WRITTEN EXPRESSION

WORKSHEET
TEST 1

3. No one likes to make mistakes.

4. 25 16 75 910 4264
 +25 +33 +26 -851 -2938

5. It takes many years for a pine tree to grow
to be thirty feet high.

6. The brown and white dog ran to

7. high up on a mountain

FOCUS ON WRITTEN EXPRESSION

Tapescript: Test 2

This is a test to see how well you listen. It is also a test to see whether you can do written work in a reasonable amount of time. Please do the entire test without talking. If you talk, it will interfere with the people around you. If you do not finish answering a test item, do not worry about it. Go on when the tape goes on. If you do not understand what to do, skip that item. If you listen carefully, you will probably understand what to do. You will not understand what to do unless you listen very carefully because the tape will not repeat or stop to answer questions.

You should have a pencil, 2 sheets of paper and a test paper. Do not write on the test paper. Do write your name at the top left-hand corner of one of the writing papers and write the date at the top right-hand corner of the paper. Do it now.

(30 seconds)

Now you are ready to begin. Skip one space under the one where you wrote your name. Write the numeral 1 in the next space. Put your pencil down. Now look at number 1 on your test sheet. The sentence says: Most people like to eat ice cream. You will copy each word as I say it. When you have finished copying each word, check it to make sure it is spelled correctly. Pick up your pencil. Begin. Most people like to eat ice cream. Put a period at the end of the sentence.

(Allow 5 seconds for each word except people--allow seven seconds)

Stop. Skip one space. Write the numeral 2 in the next space. Put your pencil down. Look at the test page. Find number 2. Copy and do the problems for number 2. Then, when you are through, check to make sure that you have copied correctly. Pick up your pencil and do it now.

(1 minute)

FOCUS ON WRITTEN EXPRESSION

WORKSHEET
TEST 2

1. Most people like to eat ice cream.

2. 34 14 63 820 4263
 +34 +55 -14 -741 -2937

3. The house on the hill does not have anyone
 living in it.

4. A black and white pony looked at

5. way out in the country

34	14	63	820	4263
<u>+34</u>	<u>+55</u>	<u>-14</u>	<u>-741</u>	<u>-2937</u>

Stop. Skip one space. Write the numeral 3 in the next space. Put your pencil down. Find number 3 on the test sheet. This sentence says: The house on the hill does not have anyone living in it. You will copy this sentence. When you have finished copying the sentence, check it to make sure it is copied correctly. Do it now.

(45 seconds)

Stop. Skip one space. Write the numeral 4 in the next space. Put your pencil down. Look at your test sheet and find number 4. It says: A black and white pony looked at. Copy this group of words and add one word or a group of words to make a complete sentence. Pick up your pencil. Do it now.

(45 seconds)

Stop. Skip one space. Write a numeral 5 in the next space. Put your pencil down. Look at your test sheet and find number 5. It says: way out in the country. This group of words is not a sentence. You will write a sentence using the words way out in the country. Pick up your pencil. Do it now.

(45 seconds)

Stop. Skip one space. Write a numeral 6 in the next space. When you are told to begin you will write as many words as you can. You will write for one minute. Do not write the same word more than once. Begin.

(1 minute)

Stop. Skip one space. Write the numeral 7 in the next space. Put your pencil down. For this part of the test you will listen carefully to some information about dogs. When I have finished reading, you will write down everything you can remember about dogs. You will write until I tell you to stop. Get ready to listen.

Dogs

The dog has been "man's best friend" for thousands of years. All over the world people have dogs as pets or helpers. Dogs are good pets and companions, but many dogs also work for men. Dogs help herd sheep and cattle, they work with policemen, they guard people's homes and property, and help find people who are lost.

There are more than one hundred breeds of dogs such as German Shepherds, Labrador Retrievers, Beagles, and Poodles. Many other dogs have several breeds of dogs among their ancestors. These dogs are

called mongrels. The largest dog is the Irish Wolfhound, the heaviest dog is the Saint Bernard, and the smallest dog is the Chihuahua.

Dogs have very sensitive ears and can hear noises that men cannot hear. They can hear sounds that are much higher pitched than human ears can hear. Dogs also have a keen sense of smell and often recognize objects and people by their smell rather than their appearance. Dogs do not see as well as men do and most authorities believe that dogs are color blind.

Baby dogs are called puppies. They are blind and helpless when they are born. Their eyes open when they are from 10 to 14 days old. Some dogs are full grown when they are 8 months old but some large dogs take two years to become full grown.

Pick up your pencil and write down everything you can remember about dogs. Begin.

(4 minutes)

Stop. Put your pencil down. Take another sheet of paper. On this piece of paper you will write a story about one of the large pictures you can see in the front of the room. Look at the pictures and decide which one you will write about.

(15 seconds)

Now, pick up your pencil and write the number of that picture near the top of your paper. Then write your name in the top left-hand corner of the paper. (3 seconds) Put your pencil down. Do not worry about your handwriting. You will stop when you are told even if you are not finished. Your directions are: Write a story about one of the pictures. Spell the best you can and do not worry if you are not sure how to spell a word correctly. Write until you are told to stop. Now pick up your pencil and begin writing. Your teacher will give you more paper or another pencil if you need them. Begin.

(9 minutes)

Stop. Put your pencil down even if you are not finished. Wait for your teacher to give you instructions about what to do with the papers.

Turn off the recorder.

APPENDIX B

SAMPLE LESSONS FROM THE RSWE PROGRAM

Ten lessons were used in the treatment program. Each group had two sections. Each student in the experimental group did Part 1 of each lesson. Part 2 was a follow-up lesson if the student experienced difficulty with the first lesson.

The tapescripts and worksheets for two lessons are included as examples. The title "Focus on Written Expression" was used on all of the material since some title seemed to be necessary for a reference point.

FOCUS ON WRITTEN EXPRESSION

Tapescript: Lesson 3-A

Today you will need a pencil, paper and worksheet 3 from the Lesson 3 box. Get those now. (30 seconds) Write your first and last names on the left and the date on the right. (30 seconds) You will write words in vertical columns just as you did in Lesson 1. I will say a word; you will find it on the worksheet and then write it down. Do not erase. If you make a mistake, draw a line through it and write the word again. Do not worry about little mistakes in handwriting. Right now we are not concerned with how your paper looks. We are concerned about your getting everything on your paper.

We will begin with column I. The first word is:

<u>red</u>	Write the word <u>red</u> . (Allow five seconds
<u>blue</u>	then say the next word. Allow five
<u>yellow</u>	seconds after each word.)
<u>green</u>	
<u>purple</u>	
<u>black</u>	
<u>brown</u>	
<u>white</u>	

That is the end of the first column. The directions are different for the other two columns. Look at column II. You will copy all of the words in column II. Stop when you have finished. Begin. (1 minute)

Stop. Look at column III. You will copy this column in the same way that you did column II. Copy column III now. Begin. (45 seconds)

Stop. That is the end of Lesson 3. Check your paper carefully. Check each letter of each word. Be sure the letters are in the right order. If you have more than three errors in spelling or if you left out or did not finish three or more words, you should do Lesson 3-B. Stop the tape.

FOCUS ON WRITTEN EXPRESSION

LESSON 3-A
WORKSHEET

I	II	III
1. red	1. big	1. run
2. blue	2. little	2. walk
3. yellow	3. small	3. hop
4. green	4. large	4. jump
5. purple	5. huge	5. skip
6. black	6. tiny	6. swim
7. brown	7. weak	7. ride
8. white	8. enormous	8. sleep

FOCUS ON WRITTEN EXPRESSION

Tapescript: Lesson 3-B

If you are doing this lesson it probably means you had problems with the first part of the lesson. This part of the Lesson 3 will be done in the same way. The first column will be read to you; the other two columns you must do within a time limit. If you had trouble with the first column, it was probably because you did not keep your place or you did not think of each letter and write the letters in sequence. You may want to use a card or piece of paper as a marker if that is a problem. If you had problems with the second and third columns your problem is probably one of using time well. This is very hard for some people to do. Here are some hints about doing it better.

Don't think about anything else but what you have to do.

Look at the word, think about the order of the letters, write it as quickly as you can, then quickly check the word to see if it is right. After you check the word, quickly move your eyes back to the worksheet. Do not look anywhere else.

Then do the same thing with the next word.

Make your eyes and hand work quickly even if it isn't terribly neat. Right now we are not concerned about neatness.

Now we are ready to begin the lesson. You will need a pencil, paper, and worksheet 3-b. Get those now. (30 seconds) Write your first and last names in the top left hand corner of the paper and the date in the top right hand corner. (30 seconds)

You will write words in vertical columns just as you did in Lesson 1 and the first part of Lesson 3. I will say a word; you will find it on the worksheet and then copy it. Do not erase. If you make a mistake, draw one line through it. Do not worry about handwriting. Just try to get everything finished.

We will begin with column I.

The first word is laugh

The second word is smile

The third word is yell

The fourth word is shout

The fifth word is talk

The sixth word is eat

The seventh word is chew

The eighth word is grin

(Allow five seconds after each word, then say the next word.)

That is the end of the first column. The directions are different for the other two columns. Look at column II. You will copy all of the words in column II. Stop when you have finished that column. Begin. (75 seconds)

Stop. Look at column III. You will copy this column in the same way you did column II. Copy column III now. Begin. (1 minute)

Stop. That is the end of Lesson 3-B. Check your paper carefully. Check each letter of each word. Be sure the letters are in the right order. If you have more than three errors in spelling or left out or did not finish 3 or more words, take your paper to the teacher. If you had 3 errors or less, put your paper in the Lesson 3 box. Put the worksheet in the envelope.

Stop the recorder.

FOCUS ON WRITTEN EXPRESSION

LESSON 3-B
WORKSHEET

I	II	III
1. laugh	1. cat	1. swim
2. smile	2. dog	2. dive
3. yell	3. horse	3. race
4. shout	4. pony	4. jump
5. talk	5. goat	5. throw
6. eat	6. fish	6. pass
7. chew	7. turtle	7. catch
8. grin	8. hamster	8. climb

FOCUS ON WRITTEN EXPRESSION

Tapescript: Lesson 6-A

You will need a pencil, paper, and the worksheet for Lesson 6. Get these now and write your name on the paper. Put your pencil down. (30 seconds)

You have had some lessons during which you copied words or sentences at the exact time you were told to do so. During ~~this lesson you will copy sentences in the same way that you did in Lesson 5, but you will also write one or two sentences of your own.~~ Do not worry about spelling or your handwriting. At this time the correct spelling in the sentences you write by yourself is not an important part of the lesson. It is important that you copy each sentence correctly. The most important part of this lesson is for you to complete everything you are told to do. When you have completed copying each sentence, check it over to see if it is correct.

Skip one space under your name. In the next space, write the numeral 1. Put your pencil down. Look at sentence number 1. The first sentence says: Fred is a small orange cat who lives at our house. Copy that sentence now. (1 minute) Put your pencil down.

Skip one space. In the next space, write the numeral 2. Put your pencil down. Look at sentence number 2. The second sentence says: Like most cats, Fred does not like to get wet. Copy this second sentence now. (1 minute) Stop.

Skip one space. Write the numeral 3 in the next space. Put your pencil down. Look at sentence number 3. The third sentence says: Like most cats, Fred loves to eat fish. Copy the third sentence now. (1 minute) Stop.

Skip one space. Write the numeral 4 in the next space. Put your pencil down. Look at sentence number 4. The fourth sentence says: Not long ago, we put three fish in our fishpond. Copy this fourth sentence now. (1 minute) Stop.

Skip one space. Write the numeral 5 in the next space. Put your pencil down. Look at sentence number 5. The fifth sentence says: Now we know that Fred loves fish more than he hates water. Copy the fifth sentence now. (1 minute) Stop. Put your pencil down.

You should have all five sentences from the worksheet copied. Now you are going to add one or two sentences to the story. You may want to write about how we know the last sentence is true. You may want to write about Fred getting the fish. You may want to write about how you would feel if Fred were your cat. You may finish the story in any way that you wish. Do it now. (3 minutes).

Stop. Put your pencil down. Check each of the sentences you copied to see if there are mistakes. If you have more than three mistakes you will do Lesson 6-B. If you did not get any sentences of your own written or if you did not finish your sentences you will do Lesson 6-B. Do not put the paper for this lesson in the folder. Give your paper to the person in charge of the recorder so this paper can be given to the teacher. The teacher will tell you if you should do Lesson 6-B, if you are not sure. Remember: Check your paper carefully.

Stop the recorder.

FOCUS ON WRITTEN EXPRESSION

LESSON 6-A
WORKSHEET

1. Fred is a small orange cat who lives at our house.
2. Like most cats, Fred does not like to get wet.
3. Like most cats, Fred loves to eat fish.
- ~~4. Not long ago we put three fish in our fishpond.~~
5. Now we know that Fred loves fish more than he hates water.

FOCUS ON WRITTEN EXPRESSION

Tapescript: Lesson 6-B.

You will need a pencil, paper and the worksheet for Lesson 6-B. Get these now and write your name and date on the paper. (30 seconds) Put your pencil down.

This lesson is just like the first part of Lesson 6. You will copy the sentences from the worksheet than write one ~~or two sentences to finish the story.~~ Look at the worksheet now. I will read the sentences to you as if it were a story, then I will talk about how to finish the story. Look at the worksheet while I read.

Jack's dog Spot likes to go swimming with him. Jack and Spot stand on the dock at the edge of the lake and get ready to dive into the lake. Jack says, "Ready, Spot? One! Two! Three! Go!" Then they both dive into the lake. One day, Jack said all of the usual things and Spot jumped into the water, but Jack stayed on the dock.

This story could end here, but I want you to add more to the story. What did Jack do next? Did he laugh? Did he dive into the water later? What do you think Spot did? How did he feel? What will happen the next time Jack wants Spot to go swimming? You won't answer all of these questions. You do not need to answer any of them if you think of some other way to end the story. The questions are to help you with your thinking. After you have copied the sentences we will go over these things again. Now we are ready for you to begin writing.

Pick up your pencil. Skip one line after your name. Write the numeral 1. The first sentence is: Jack's dog, Spot, likes to go swimming with him. Copy the first sentence. (45 seconds)

Stop. Skip one space. Write the numeral 2. The second sentence is: Jack and Spot stand on the dock at the edge of the lake and get ready to dive into the lake. Copy the second sentence. (1 minute)

Stop. Skip one space. Write the numeral 3 in the next space. The third sentence is: Jack says, "Ready, Spot? One! Two! Three! Go!" Copy that sentence. Remember all the punctuation marks. (45 seconds)

Stop. Skip one space. Write the numeral 4 in the next space. The fourth sentence is: Then they both dive into the lake. Copy the fourth sentence. (45 seconds)

Stop. Skip one space. Write the numeral 5 in the next space. The fifth sentence is: One day, Jack said all of the usual things and Spot jumped into the water but Jack stayed on the dock. (90 seconds)

Now you will finish the story. You may want to write about what Jack did or how he felt or maybe you will want to write about what Spot did or how he felt. Begin writing. (3 minutes)

~~Stop. Put your pencil down. Check each of the sentences you copied to see if you have made mistakes. If you had trouble getting this lesson finished or done correctly, talk to your teacher about it.~~

Stop the recorder.

APPENDIX C

JUDGING THE STORIES

1. Go through and judge as quickly as possible. Try not to stop and think about the good or bad qualities of the stories or the obvious problems that child exhibits.
2. Judge on such qualities as coherence, logical sequence, use of vocabulary and other aspects of written language which you consider important.
3. Try not to be influenced by handwriting, spelling or mechanics although you cannot help be influenced when these factors make the story unreadable.

Scoring

Each card is marked with a 1. and 2. You will write the story identification number after these numbers. If you can see no difference in quality, put both ID numbers after 1. If one story is really superior to the other, circle the number for 2.

Examples:

No difference

1. 17 and 3

2.

One story much superior

1. 42b

2. (7)