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A STUDY OF TECHNIQUES FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF WRITTEN
COMPOSITION IN THE O. L. PRICE SCHOOL, TAYLOR, TEXAS

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A STUDY OF TECHNIQUES FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF
WRITTEN COMPOSITION IN THE O. L. PRICE
SCHOOL, TAYLOR, TEXAS

By

Lueanna G. Sims

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Arts

In The

Graduate Division

Of

Prairie View Agricultural and Mechanical College

Prairie View, Texas

August, 1953

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Lueanna G. Sims

Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my daughter, Mayethel.

L. G. S.

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College teachers have found that students are not given enough writing experiences to write adequately. Some colleges are offering courses in elementary composition for credit and non-credit.² Since one learns to write by writing, the student should have sufficient writing experiences to develop skill. Many educators realize that English is the core of the curriculum; the

¹Lou LeBrant, "The Individual and His Writing," *English Journal*, XXXII (April, 1950), 185.

²C. W. Norton, "Accent on Living," *Atlantic Monthly*, CXXXIX (April, 1952), 87-88.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Nature of the Problem

Changes in society in this Atomic Age call for reconsideration of the teachers' techniques in teaching composition. Lou LaBrant states:

It was often sufficient that a man should write his own name, and reading requirements were almost equally elementary. In the recent war before acceptance, prospective soldiers had to demonstrate what were roughly considered "fourth grade language skills." Those who passed were considered "literate."¹

College teachers have found that students are not given enough writing experiences to write adequately. Some colleges are offering courses in elementary composition for credit and non-credit.² Since one learns to write by writing, the student should have sufficient writing experiences to develop skill. Many educators realize that English is the core of the curriculum; the

¹Lou LaBrant, "The Individual and His Writing," English Journal, XXXIX (April, 1950), 185.

²C. W. Morton, "Accent on Living," Atlantic Monthly, CXXXIX (April, 1952), 87-88.

social foundation of all education, including social studies.¹ A revelation as this makes the English teacher aware of growing needs for improving written composition, and students at Price School in Taylor, Texas, have many deficiencies. Every workable technique should be used. No technique will be successful unless the students have an idea to express and a desire to express it. Therefore, there is a necessity for making clear to the student specific objectives and requirements.² According to Cross and Carney,³ the teacher should arrange situations through which pupils may develop the power to express themselves clearly. The pupils should be led to think logically and to weigh and investigate experience.

The student's concept of composition should be that he is writing and speaking little compositions every day in his daily activities. These activities include those in his home, school and community. The following points should be emphasized:

¹Mark Neville, "The Art of Plain English," English Journal, XXXIX (February, 1950), 75-76.

²Dora V. Smith, "Report on Instruction in English," National Survey of Secondary Education, Bulletin No. 17, 1932.

³E. A. Cross and E. Carney, Teaching English in High Schools (New York, 1950), p. 261.

1. Organization
2. Clear expression
3. The value of having something worth saying and of saying it well.¹

Instruction should be close to community life so students will practice that which is socially correct. If the English teachers are to follow the principles set forth by the Experience Curriculum, they will eliminate any unnatural situation and change to such activities as sharing personal experiences. In practicing that which is socially correct, usage and good form become every day experiences. Whether pupils want to write or not will depend upon the skill of the teacher. Adolescent boys and girls love to share ideas, and in sharing ideas each broadens his own outlook. The teacher by studying and learning with the students will soon find their interests. In this age, dominated by scientific knowledge, it is necessary that the teacher study and learn the interests of the students.

Mirrielees suggests that teachers do the following:

1. Discover the scientific knowledge of the group.

¹Texas Education Agency, Suggestions for Teachers of English, Bulletin 528, (Austin, 1952), p. 6.

2. Profess keen interest in what they know.
3. Attempt to stimulate them so that they will supplement their knowledge by simple readings, questions and observations.
4. Increase the scope of their interest by suggesting or by professing your ignorant curiosity about some related topic.¹

There is a tendency to anchor literature and composition. The English teacher must keep constantly in mind these two ideas: (1) literature is a great textbook on the fine art of living, and (2) composition is the art of communication. The teacher teaches not only the art of living, but develops skill in communication. Writing demands skill in spelling, punctuation and capitalization. It is more than conformity to correct usage and approved diction.² All during the literature semester, composition should be used. This is one way of providing more opportunity for writing. Short stories and novels about people that students can picture as themselves suggest solution to personal problems and clarify ambitions and ideals.

¹ Lucia B. Mirrielees, Teaching Composition and Literature (New York, 1947), p. 285.

² The Commission on the English Curriculum, The English Language Arts (New York, 1952), p. 303.

Literature is rich in situations that are similar to the personal experiences of the pupils. The problem is locating situations in novels, plays and biographies. The National Council of Teachers of English bulletins, Home Reading and Books for You, list books which represent experiences from all walks of life and deal with thoughts and actions of men in a variety of circumstances. For many youths the world of books is an opportunity to find companionship with others who have problems comparable to their own.¹

Each individual needs the desire and ability to write what he has to say; an understanding of the difficulties of communication; and a sense of responsibility for what he says or writes. The school should offer enough writing experiences, and the teacher should employ many techniques to enable boys and girls to improve in composition which will help them meet all writing needs.

Scope of the Problem

The idea of making such a study as this one was conceived after a short study was made in the course "Research in English" at Prairie View College during the

¹John J. DeBoer, "Literature and Human Behavior," English Journal, XXXIX (February, 1950), 81.

summer school, 1952. Students at Price School were careless in correcting errors in grammar. The papers revealed the tendency to follow a set pattern or illustration as given in the workbook or textbook. The writer found the themes uninteresting and revealing nothing about the student. There was a need for motivation. Literature courses offered more interesting things for composition, but the writer felt that there should be some techniques that could transfer the classroom into a laboratory where student writing would be used in the life of the school. Such a program would improve the writing of the students. Questions arose such as: Should more time be spent on literature? How can interest be increased? What techniques can be used? How can one improve the sentence structure, punctuation, spelling and sane thinking in written composition? How should the matter of book reports and outside reading be handled to offer writing experiences that the pupils would enjoy doing? These questions must be faced by English teachers, not only in Price School, but in many of the high schools.

Teachers in other departments of the Price School reported that students showed no interest in the organization of their written work.

Colleges and universities continually complain of poor showing made in English and literature by many of the

students in the freshman year, and perhaps their complaints are made with just cause.

The National Council of Teachers of English reports that letters flow into the office asking for methods and devices for improving the communication habits of pupils. Since deficiency in writing skills is more of a national picture, English teachers everywhere are trying various means for improvement. An understanding of these published techniques should prove helpful to the teacher in planning teaching procedures that will aid in improving the writing ability of the Price High School students.

Purpose of the Problem

Students in the English classes in the Price High School showed little or no interest in written composition. There was a tendency merely to meet theme requirements. The chief purposes of this study are:

1. To list some techniques from magazines, journals and books which English teachers have used.
2. To apply some of these techniques in the Price School in order that the students may be motivated and enjoy writing.
3. To aid the students to develop proficiency in language skills and an understanding about the way language works through many writing experiences.

The writer purposes to modify the techniques selected to fit the ability and needs of the Price School students, and to apply these techniques in directing many writing experiences that make up the daily life of the student.

The aim of this study, briefly, then, is to set forth a few techniques that English teachers use, and make adaptation to student needs in the Price School. Each technique is a tentative workable one, because different teachers in different schools and environment will find entirely different situations to deal with.

Hypothesis

This study is based on the hypothesis that students, when given an opportunity for written experiences which are kept close to everyday life, will show improvement in written compositions, and that authoritative techniques can prove helpful after adaptation to environment and student needs.

Assignments growing out of experiences in school curriculum result in longer, and more vivid themes than those written on assigned topics.¹ Students should not

¹Clifford P. Archer, "English Composition," Bibliography Review of Educational Research, XIX (April, 1949), 135-51.

be taught about language, but rather should be given extensive experience in using language for purposes of communication.

Sub-Problems

Writing, in addition to the many difficulties which it shares with speech, demands skill in handwriting or typing, spelling, punctuation, capitalization, and in meeting the misunderstanding of an absent and often unknown audience--skills more difficult, more meticulous, and less likely to be mastered without classroom help than those of speaking.¹

1. Students' needs and interests are met when their writing is based on everyday experiences.

2. Environment provides writing content.

Lou LaBrant states that:

Basic to the writing program throughout the junior and senior high schools is a constant and consistent place for personal writing from observation, firsthand experience and opinion, and for imaginative writing.²

Significance of the Problem

A study of this kind is important to the writer in securing techniques for teaching written composition

¹The Commission on the English Curriculum of the National Council of Teachers of English, The English Language Arts, (New York, 1952), p. 303.

²Lou LaBrant, We Teach English (New York, 1951), p. 148.

that are helpful in aiding the students at Price School to write better themes.

Techniques applied at Price School should be helpful to teachers in the county who are in the same type of environment, and whose problems are similar.

It is hoped that the results of this study will prove helpful to teachers in the state who are faced with writing problems of adolescent boys and girls. These boys and girls should be eager to write and improve in mastery of technical skills.

Delimitation

This study is limited to the personal experiences and creative work of the students on the ninth, tenth, and eleventh grade levels of the Price School in Taylor, Texas, during the year 1952-1953. This study does not attempt to include the oral composition of the students involved.

Related Studies

Jack William McGlyn submitted a thesis to the Colorado State College on Some Problems in Teaching English and Literature in Small High Schools in Colorado. This touched on written composition and methods of teaching. He concluded from his findings that Formal English

grammar does not have definite aims or objectives. Drills on fundamentals and essentials should be given. Book reporting as a whole, seems to be a waste of time. Since the schools require it, new devices and means of motivating were necessary. In his recommendations he advised a closer supervision of English teachers and better facilities for teaching. Teachers should use the Elementary English Journal and other available literature in the elementary department.

Lillian M. Johnson Shepard submitted a thesis to the Graduate School of Prairie View College, Prairie View, Texas, on the Written Compositions of One Hundred Students in the O. J. Thomas School for the Year 1951-52. The introduction and Chapter I dealt with the importance and difficulty of written composition. A part of Chapter IV dealt with English essentials and mechanical errors as revealed in a testing program. These errors gave her a starting point on what to stress to help the student express himself in acceptable English.

The Commission of English Curriculum of the National Council of Teachers of English published in 1952 The English Language Arts which gives an overall picture of the English program from grade one through college level. In Chapter VI emphasis is placed on broad units

of instruction growing out of experiences of the pupils. When instruction is given to meet genuine needs, verbalizing of rules and principles have no place. Letters could be written to leading local citizens requesting an interview or inviting a visit to the class. Every letter written should have a real life purpose. The radio, motion picture and television should be considered in the communication program. These will offer motives for creative work. The study reveals the tendency to keep all activities close to life in both oral and written composition. Interests of boys and girls are recognized as basis for speaking and writing. Careful attention is given to improvement of grammatical usage, of spelling, and of punctuation as tools for the expression of ideas. Pupils learn punctuation through a series of their own sentences.

Marian Zollinger, supervisor of language arts, Seattle, Washington, reported an interesting study on Developing Competence in Writing. This study revealed how the teachers with their students defined their goals for good writing, worked out an evaluation plan to measure their accomplishment, and took steps to strengthen instructional program wherever needs became evident. The major characteristics of good writing were listed as

Marian Zollinger, "Developing Competence in Writing," Reading Journal, III (October, 1952), 411-15.

goals. These were to be flexible, permitting additions for advanced students and deletions for the slow. In content and organization emphasis was placed on using topic sentences to develop the paragraph, presenting enough material, using exact words and showing maturity of thought and expression. The theme should be neat and written in ink. Attention is called to margins, indentions, indorsements and bibliography. Ten technical skills are listed with formulating complete sentences as number one and using correct verb forms as the second skill. Individual folders for written work of the student serve in diagnosing needs and watching improvement. The key to better writing is constant writing. Students are encouraged to check their own achievement by their written work on file. The appraisal was based on test results and observation. When the student begins to see improvement, he develops a new pride in his work. The program in writing to be effective must cover a long period.¹

David Mallery of Germantown Friends School, Philadelphia, made an interesting study on A Human Relations Approach to Writing. This study revealed how students were guided to discuss and write about matters close to themselves. As an outgrowth of a discussion

Approach to Writing. English Journal, XXXIX (October, 1950), 428-34.

¹Marian Zollinger, "Developing Competence in Writing," English Journal, XLI (October, 1952), 411-15.

on basic ideas of democracy, students were asked to recognize something special in themselves. The general theme was "A Moment of Special Awareness of One's Self as an Individual." The class was given a week to work on their papers. During these periods the teacher moved about the room and worked with whoever wanted his help. The students were writing to read their papers to the class. Desks were arranged in a kind of double horse-shoe, so there would be no formal standing for reading the themes. Subjects varied from experiences on the football game to relationship in the family. Students began to know each other and developed a willingness to discuss matters close to themselves. This set an atmosphere for sympathetic understanding among members of the class.¹

David C. Leek, a teacher in Eleanor J. Toll Junior High School, Glendale, California, reveals that students assimilate more, improve in sentence structure and word usage, and assume responsibility when they have a hand in finding and correcting the errors. Plans for the group work are given in his article on Committee

¹David Mallery, "Release: A Human Relations Approach to Writing." English Journal, XXXIX (October, 1950), 429-35.

Study Improves Writing. Captains are chosen at random to serve as chairman of a group of four or five students. The group elects the secretary.¹

Suggestions for Teachers of English, Bulletin 528, by the Texas Education Agency gives a survey of trends in literature, composition, grammar and usage, and the use of the library and community resources. It suggests that outlining be carried on in the classroom so there will be a minimum loss of student effort and interest. The best type of composition activity is that type carried on in the classroom. This permits students to pass their draft to classmates for comments. His revision can be made on the basis of his classmates' and teacher's suggestions. Grammatical usage, good diction and well-constructed sentences assume reality for the student. There should be five to ten written compositions with attention to simple outlining for the ninth and tenth grades in a semester, and six to twelve written compositions with attention to full outlining, simple footnotes and short bibliography for the upper grades. The trend is toward drill on the few types of errors that are made with the greatest frequency. The pupil's own writing is emphasized as a basis for teaching grammar.

¹David C. Leek, "Committee Study Improves Writing," English Journal, XXXIX (October, 1950), 455.

CHAPTER II

DISCUSSION OF TECHNIQUES

The old textbook methods of discussing a model or two in composition, and telling the student to write a theme on an assigned subject for the next day is boring to both teacher and pupil. The daily activities and interest of the pupils provide subject matter for themes. Students must have a thorough understanding of sentences. They must be led to see that combining sentences about the same thing makes the paragraph, and writing in paragraphs makes the theme. Besides well-organized contents, the technical skills must be mastered to make the meaning clear to the reader. Sometimes students think they have done well if there are few errors in spelling, punctuation or sentence structure, but the teacher is teaching boys and girls to think in an orderly, effective way, and the themes should show this. The teacher and pupils should keep in mind the following:

1. Is there evidence of good thinking?
2. Has the pupil presented convincing proof?
3. Has he furnished specific examples?

4. Has he arranged his ideas in the best possible order?
5. Does he have a topic sentence and a clincher sentence?
6. Has he managed his transitions between various phases of his thought effectively and gracefully?
7. Is his vocabulary adequate? Does he avoid the too flowery diction? Does he use words in approved connotation? Does he avoid slang and colloquialism?¹

In teaching composition, specific objectives and requirements should be made clear to the students. The teacher must keep in mind that the aim of composition is to promote skill in organizing the materials of thought, experience, and reading. Dora V. Smith lists the following aims of composition:

1. To give pupils a mastery of the fundamentals of grammar and mechanical accuracy.
2. To give pupils command of the tools of language.
3. To eliminate common errors.

¹Ruth M. Barnes, "An Approach to Composition in the High School," English Journal, XXXV (November, 1946), p. 485.

4. To promote among pupils ability to express their thoughts clearly and fluently, and to increase the pupil's vocabulary and power of discrimination in the use of words.
5. To motivate the pupil to a sense of the value of adequate expression, includes such factors as creating among pupils a desire to speak well, giving them a sense of individual responsibility for the use of good English, and helping them to see clearly the goal toward which they are striving.
6. To stimulate keen judgment and the habit of clear, orderly thinking.
7. To develop an understanding of and an ability in writing various forms of discourse or types of writings.
8. To teach pupils to write effective sentences and to recognize sentences of different types.
9. To promote habits of courteous interchange of ideas.
10. To widen the pupil's interest in social and civic affairs, and to awaken him to a sense of responsibility concerning them.
11. To fit pupils for the oral and written activities of everyday life.
12. To develop the ability to organize materials and gather and evaluate materials from observation, experience and reading.
13. To develop the ability to appreciate the value of success in composition writing.
14. To develop the ability to observe and interpret the life about one.¹

¹Dora V. Smith, "Report on Instruction in English," National Survey of Secondary Education, Bulletin No. 17, 1932.

For motivating and choosing something to write, Elizabeth Rose, teacher in the Department of English in the School of Education, New York University, uses the technique of relating her daily experiences or those that happened to her when she was the age of her pupils. The teacher must tell about it in a way to encourage the pupils to talk. As teacher and pupils talk, the pupils become trustful of the guidance and will write. One child wrote a description of her first blister which she called "Discovery."¹

Students should be discouraged from writing for the teacher, but encouraged to see writing as a means of communication. There should be a reader or group of readers to whom he is directing his writing. George S. Wykoff, in charge of English at Purdue University, suggests one paper a week of moderate length or two or three short paragraphs.²

Mirrielees suggests that composition range in length from one to five paragraphs. These will be descriptive, narrative and argumentative, but the general pattern of organization will be expository. Emphasis should be placed on good organization, which means a

¹ Elizabeth Rose, "Let Them Write What They Know," English Journal, XLI (November, 1952), pp. 496-97.

² George S. Wykoff, "Practical Helps in Teaching Written Composition," English Journal, XLI (June, 1952), p. 310.

good outline. This should include general statement of theme, topic sentence, transition, and clincher sentence. Many examples of time sequence should be given. The teacher should discuss with the student how easy it is to follow, how easy it is to write, and how useful it is as an aid for organization. To teach logical sequence she suggests the B. M. E. She leaves this formula on the consultation board during the writing unit:

Look at Your B. M. E.

1. Is the Beginning immediate and interesting?
2. Is the Middle clear? Are all statements necessary for the reader's complete understanding or realization?
3. Is the End brief? Has it a clincher sentence?¹

Cathleen Burns in a series of articles on composition says that the outline is the framework on which the composition is built, and explains it as a brief logical arrangement of ideas according to main topics and sub-topics. If it is well thought out, it may include a few details, but not so detailed that it leaves you nothing else to say. Regardless to the advancement of the student, the teacher must continue to draw attention to the use of

¹Ibid., p. 189.

Roman numerals for main topics, capital letters for the first group of subtopics, Arabic numerals for the second group of subtopics. Every letter or number is followed by a period, and subtopics are always indented. Attention is drawn to the fact that there may be a number of subtopics, but never just one, as "A". There must be at least "A" and "B". After drill is given on outlining, hints on paragraph building should follow. The fundamental rule of all composition should be observed. That is, write about something you know, or a topic that is not altogether unfamiliar. The library should be made a pleasant place where additional information can be found, and emphasis placed on the use of the Reader's Guide.¹

Mirrielees makes this suggestion:

Pupils must be made to realize that every sentence has to win its place in composition, either by making the facts of the theme more understandable to the reader, or by making the reader enter more fully into the sensations under consideration. I offer this B.M.E. only as a patently homemade device by which pupils may (1) arrange their ideas before they write, (2) revise their own themes before making the final copy, and (3) judge their₂neighbors' themes or talks given in class.²

¹

Cathleen Burns, "Make An Outline First," Scholastic, LV (November 2, 1949), 18.

²

Lucia B. Mirrielees, Teaching Composition and Literature (New York, 1947), p. 189.

and ends LaBrant suggests that there should be an atmosphere of friendliness. Personal experiences, creative writing and papers on science or other studies should be written. Outlines should be stressed, but if students can keep in mind Introduction - Body - Conclusion, or a beginning, middle and close, let them do so, because some papers need not be outlined on a separate sheet.¹

Frederick Sorensen suggests using students' themes as one of the basic textbook and the published textbooks as sources of material which the students need in solving the problems they actually face in their writing. During the first two weeks stress is placed on DETAILS plus organization and whatever language the students are accustomed to. Theme subjects during this time are about home, hometowns and characters. Personal letters are useful if they actually go to someone. The next two or three weeks the formula is: details plus ORGANIZATION plus the type of language appropriate. Stress is shifted from the What to the How. During the remainder of the quarter the formula is details plus organization plus STANDARD LANGUAGE. Writing in the class begins with the personal letter, which goes through various types of exposition,

¹Lou LaBrant, We Teach English (New York, 1951), pp. 143-70.

and ends with a business letter of application which the student thinks he would like to make at the end of four years. All this leads up to a series of panels on vocations of "The Best" in various fields.¹

Since Georgia E. Clifton suggests that students report their findings on their vocations. From Music one group may write about "What responsibilities do booking agents have?" "What three things does the reorganization of a band call for?" From a group interested in cabinet-making one may develop the subject "Why is drafting necessary?" "What is the nutritional value of food?" may be reported on by a group interested in commercial cooking. Students become enthusiastic writing about their interests. Visits can be made to various business houses, such as, beauty shops, radio stations, garages, cafeterias and newspaper offices. The students can interview owners and directors. Here, two types of composition, the interview and letter writing, can be used. After the unit is completed, students may be led to make displays for the room which may reveal the progress of industry.²

¹ Frederick Sorensen, "New Methods in Freshman English," College English, XIV (December, 1952), 162-63.

² Georgia E. Clifton, "Living English," English Journal, XLI (April, 1952), 194-96.

Surveys and trips to business houses will call for letters asking permission for the visit. Here is a purpose in teaching and learning the conventions of a business letter, and a purpose in communication. Since the letters must be mailed, the class will have to consider the forms of letters and the best letter corrected and mailed. If replies are late, the group should send a follow-up letter, and after the visit, the "thank-you" letter is written.

Neumayer lists several activities for letter writing growing out of a survey trip in his class of thirty-six pupils. The teacher selected four community centers: City Hall, Board of Education Building, Federal Building, and Essex County Court House. The class was divided by the teacher into four groups, and a drawing of places for each group to visit was made. The next step was writing letters to the executive official of each building, asking permission for the visits. Each group wrote letters addressed to the official of its building. After the letters were written, the class sat in groups for the reading of each letter and selected the best letter. The group members helped in the revision and the writer mailed the letter. His reply was brought to class and read. Conventional letter forms were noted. The students saw in actual use, variations

in letter formalities. After the visit the "thank you" letter was written to the official giving permission for the trip and to the guide. Students who wrote the first letters were not considered in the choice of the best in this reading. The class considered each letter on the basis of what was said and how it was said. Each visiting group reported to the class what they had seen and learned on the tour.¹

Fred G. Walcott states that the old standard method of teaching composition required reading of the finished product by the teacher. Penciled errors and the drill workbooks on mechanics have become unbearable. The function of proofreading or revision, of the careful checking of sentences for clarity, belongs to the writer. He says:

The remedy must lie in the development of a laboratory technique involving the original effort of the pupils with the teacher giving consultative help at the moment of the pupil's perplexity. Better still the pupils themselves should be drawn into cooperative critical and consultative work, with the teacher acting as a final authority.²

Ken Macroirie advocates that the student read another's paper in front of the class to improve both

¹Engelbert J. Neumayer, "Communication with a Purpose," English Journal, XL (October, 1951), 448-50.

²Fred G. Walcott, "Experiments in Composition," Educational Digest, XV (November, 1949), 40.

writing and speaking. After such an exercise one student wrote:

To have someone read my theme to me gave me even a better chance than when I read it aloud, because if there was some passage that wasn't clear, I inclined to use the sound of my voice either as an apology or an explanation. If someone else read it, he wouldn't know what I had in mind, and would either stop or stumble. By that I would know that I had not made myself clear.¹

Often the teacher finds it necessary to conduct a good review of grammar and mechanics. David C. Leek, after correcting a set of compositions, chooses several sentences for revision. He provides each student in a group with a duplicate copy of the sentences to be corrected. He uses this technique:

On the following day each secretary writes his committee's corrected version of the first example on the blackboard. The versions are compared and graded during a discussion led by the instructor. Following the same procedure, each succeeding example is studied carefully and rated. Finally, the secretary averages the scores received and hands in the final results. Each committee member has been following the procedure and scoring his own duplicate copy so that he knows what degree of success he and his fellow committee members have achieved. The grade earned by the committee is recorded for each member of that committee.

¹Ken Macroirie, "Words in the Way," English Journal, XL (September, 1951), 383.

Thus the students have had a hand in finding and correcting the errors. As they work in committees where relatively important decisions are made, they are learning more about group responsibility and the contribution of each individual to his group. Above all, they assimilate more; further composition has proved that there has been a greater improvement in sentence structure and word usage after study and discussion than had been customary under more standard procedures.¹

Ethel B. Davison of the South Shore High School, Chicago, Illinois, advocates the teaching of grammar through three basic sentence patterns: the subject, the transitive verb, and the object; the subject, the copulative verb, and the predicate. The simple sentence is used as a beginning. She illustrates with the following sentences:

1. Tom plays football.
2. Tom is a quarterback.
3. Tom plays well.
4. Tom is strong.
5. Tom ran a hundred yards Saturday.
6. He is a valuable player.²

¹David C. Leek, "Committee Study Improves Writing," English Journal, XXXIX (October, 1950), 455.

²Ethel B. Davison, "Power from Sentence Patterns," English Journal, XXXIX (September, 1950), 381.

The first reading of the sentences is a picture of the structure. It is pointed out sentences two, four, and six describe Tom, and one three and five show Tom in action. These are classified as describing or action sentences. The action sentences are broken down into those that express what Tom does, and those that express how and when. To enlarge the student's experience in distinguishing between action and describing sentences use the basic pattern with other types of sentences. After an understanding of subject-verb relationship, classification can be made of the subject, the verb, and the complement. The relation of parts of the sentence to one another and their order of arrangement can be pointed out. In the beginning the subject is limited to nouns and pronouns, but later the clause, the infinitive and gerund are introduced.

Helen Rand Miller of Evanston, Illinois, suggests the use of the unfamiliar in improving verb usage. To eliminate the student depending on sound, she made up the word "Smo" to mean "to consent" and gave the principal parts as smo, smid and smone. Sentences were devised and students required to fill in the correct verb form. Some of the examples listed were:

1. Write the principal parts of smo in the blanks:
 - a. When the boy offered to pay for the food, the girls _____.

- b. If you make the plans, we will _____.
- c. After the plans had been made, we _____¹ considered it necessary to _____.

Madeleine Sparks uses a practical approach to stress the importance of punctuation. A wide variety of letters was brought in by the students. The class, divided into committees of five, found out reasons for all punctuation marks in the letters. English in Action, Book III by Tressler, the textbook, became the reference book to check rules. After mastering the reasons for the punctuation appearing in the letters, each group presented its findings to the class. Here, student originality and ingenuity found expression. One group presented a radio skit, "What Am I?" with each member giving identifying hints on a mark of punctuation. For testing learning each group was responsible for making and administering some simple test on punctuation.²

James C. Britain, Franklin High School, Seattle, Washington uses the "Magic Word" as a technique in reading, speaking or writing. Once a week a word is written on the blackboard and left there all week under the heading "Magic Word." The word is never pronounced until papers have been

¹ Helen Rand Miller, "What If They Don't Know Grammar?" English Journal, XL (November, 1951), 525-26.

² Madeleine Starks, "A Practical Approach to Punctuation," English Journal, XLII (March, 1953), 158-59.

turned in the following week. To help the students understand the function of the assignment, the class is carried through the experience with one sample word. During the discussion students give their interpretation of the meaning of the word. Short themes are written on one of the more obscure meanings. Certain holidays or events may be used. The example cited by Britain:

When Constitution Day came, the Magic Word was constitution. Again the students enjoyed the word because it was pertinent to the holiday and to the Constitution Day assembly. They wrote stories about our government, about documents, about rules for parliamentary procedure, and about the physical condition of the human body.¹

This technique was modified for the students' needs of Price School. The Magic Word became the holiday activities that the students engaged in. For variation, a word was listed from class readings. Groups were responsible for an explanation of the word and additional information they could find out about the word. This provided weekly theme material and offered opportunity for the use of the library. The writer will point out in Chapter III how the

¹James C. Britain, "Magic Words," English Journal, XLI (November, 1952), 492.

general subject chosen by the group was narrowed to an individual theme subject that would tie in with a particular need.

Pearl S. Lupin offers the following suggestions for group organization. After dividing into groups of six or seven:

1. Elect a chairman and secretary, the chairman to conduct the group meetings and the secretary to keep track of assignments but not necessarily write formal minutes.
2. Discuss the group's topic and then break it down into subtopics.
3. Divide the subtopics among the individuals in the group.
4. Do research on the subtopics, each individual responsible for getting his own material as a "homework" assignment.
5. Bring completed individual assignments back to the group within a specified time limit set by the class.
6. Discuss all the research material with all members of the group.
7. Go back on further research assignments where necessary.
8. Correlate research material.
9. Plan the method of presentation to the class.
10. Prepare and practice the presentation.¹

¹Pearl S. Lupin, "Laying the Groundwork for Group Work," English Journal, XL (November, 1951), 524.

The precis gives training in short, concise written summaries which will develop valuable skills in the student's own writings. The pupil should be taught to state the main idea in the main clauses of the sentence and to put subordinate ideas in subordinate clauses and phrases. Students are surprised that the main idea of a paragraph can be stated in a sentence. It becomes fascinating, and with the literature classes records of poems, stories and plays can be kept this way.

Positive incentives for motivating composition are:

1. To gain marks.
2. To learn how to do something.
3. To gain approval of parent or teacher.
4. To gain approval of the group.
5. To experience personal satisfaction.
6. To do one's part in a common task.¹

A very high level of motivation involves the accomplishment of a worthy purpose by each student in and with a group. There are five stages in leading pupils to accomplish worthy purposes in composition.

They are:

1. A period of incubation and planning.
2. A period of preparation and discovery of new and related purposes.

¹

John P. Milligan, "Motivation of Composition," Teachers Service Bulletin in English, III (February, 1949).

- CHAPTER VIII
3. A period of improvement.
 4. A period of consummation.
 5. A period of appraisal and new direction.¹

EXPERIMENTAL PROCEDURE

Acquiring good work habits is one of the desirable outcomes in the language arts listed by the curriculum commission of the National Council of Teachers of English. It is the English teacher's duty to aid in establishing these habits through well-planned lessons. Group work offers an invaluable addition to teaching aids. This type of classroom experience provides lessons in skills in writing and serves as training in research, correlation of information, democratic group procedure, the art of listening, and critical discussion and evaluation before the actual writing of the composition.

The group method of teaching-learning, an adaptation of various techniques as advocated by Mirrieleas,¹ Sorensen,² Clifton,³ Neumayer,⁴ Walcott,⁵ and Leek,⁶ was employed. Thirty students in the ninth grade worked in groups of five, twenty-eight students in the tenth grade worked in groups of seven, and twenty-one students in the

¹Mirrieleas, *loc. cit.*

¹Ibid., *loc. cit.*

⁵Walcott, *loc. cit.*

²Sorensen, *loc. cit.*

⁴Neumayer, *loc. cit.*

⁶Leek, *loc. cit.*

CHAPTER III

EXPERIMENTAL PROCEDURE

The writer secured from books and journals techniques that were recommended for teaching written composition. Essays on Fire Prevention were written by seventy-nine students in the ninth, tenth and eleventh grades during the first semester, and five additional essays on free-choice subjects were written during the balance of the school year, 1952-53. This made a total of 474 samples of writing composition. All topics were discussed orally before the actual writing of the composition.

The group method of teaching-learning, an adaptation of various techniques as advocated by Mirrielees,¹ Sorensen,² Clifton,³ Neumayer,⁴ Walcott,⁵ and Leek,⁶ was employed. Thirty students in the ninth grade worked in groups of five, twenty-eight students in the tenth grade worked in groups of seven, and twenty-one students in the

¹Mirrielees, loc. cit. ²Sorensen, loc. cit.
³Clifton, loc. cit. ⁴Neumayer, loc. cit.
⁵Walcott, loc. cit. ⁶Leek, loc. cit.

eleventh grade worked in groups of seven. Each group selected its own chairman and secretary. The students with the teacher set up goals. The students wanted to develop the ability to produce well-organized and well-expressed themes which would reveal mastery of six technical skills:

1. Writing complete sentences
2. Subject and verb agreement
3. Using the correct verb form
4. Spelling
5. Punctuation
6. Capitalization

It is a school requirement that all students write one essay on Fire Prevention. Since Fire Prevention Week is in October, the students and teacher used this theme as the term paper for the first six-weeks period, September 2 to October 10. Subjects were selected from the State Handbook and the pupil's own wording. The students studied outlines in the textbooks, English In Action, Books I, II and III by Tressler, Keys to English Mastery by Rogers and McNeese. In the teaching-learning period topics were written on the blackboard and the class contributed in developing the outline. Some of the subjects for themes were:

1. Prevention of fires in our town

- pointed out how
2. How to use gas safely
 3. Fire prevention in the home
 4. We have fire drills
 5. The fire fighter is a soldier
 6. Ways of reducing local fire waste
 7. Gas: A valuable friend or a deadly foe
 8. What I would do if my clothing caught on fire

During Fire Prevention Week and National Health Week, the Price School students' prize-winning essays are published in the local newspaper. In order that each pupil will be motivated, room and assembly programs are arranged to give all pupils in the groups an opportunity of gaining the approval of parent, teacher and group.

The students made plans that the other themes would be written on subjects that involved their school and community activities. A list of these activities was made, but students suggested that the list could be altered if the groups wanted a change.

From October 13 to November 24, the second six-weeks period, football, Armistice Day, Thanksgiving and National Education Week were the general subjects placed on the bulletin board. In class discussion the students

pointed out how the subjects could be narrowed. Examples from the textbook and workbooks were studied. The process was understood to be the same in telling a personal experience or relating some incident drawn out of the general subjects listed on the bulletin board. Each group chose a general subject and in the group meeting, which was set for each Wednesday, made their individual assignment. Some of the topics used for themes were:

Football

1. My brother and his crutches
2. The school is responsible for medical care of the team
3. Manners go to a football game
4. My first touchdown

Armistice Day

1. The veterans in our town
2. What boys and girls can do in time of war
3. Are we still at war?
5. Opportunities for boys and girls in the armed forces
6. Our first Armistice Day

Thanksgiving

1. Our first Thanksgiving Day
2. Thanksgiving Day - then and now

3. Our good fortune
4. It's Turkey Day at my house
5. Turkey dinner in the lunch room

National Education Week

1. Our parents should spend a week at school
2. Qualities I like in a parent
3. Helping in my neighborhood
4. Singing in the church choir
5. Qualities I admire in my pastor

For the third six-weeks, from November 25 to January 19, interest centered around Christmas, Santa Claus Day, and Honor Roll. Students wrote on subjects as:

1. Gifts boys and girls should give
2. Santa comes to town
3. I marched behind the Green Jackets
4. How to make the Honor Roll
5. A student with one "C" should go on the Honor Roll
6. What Emerson says about gifts

The letter writing unit was completed in this period. Students wrote thank-you letters for Christmas gifts and informal invitations to holiday parties. One group wrote informal invitations for a church club. All letters were mailed. The same procedure was used with the business letters.

Letters ordering Christmas gifts from mail order houses, for belts and glasses advertised in magazines, were written and mailed. The money order application was filled out in the classroom.

At the beginning of the unit students arranged the bulletin board and part of the blackboard with the right and wrong forms of both social and business letters. The teacher supplied some from personal letters received from graduates and former students. Good and bad features were pointed out which made it easy to teach sentence structure and punctuation. Every student had a letter that should have been written. Friendly letters to relatives, friends and former schoolmates in the armed forces were written. Students were eager to read their replies and to point out errors in technical skills.

Prior to the beginning of the fourth six-weeks period, January 19 to March 2, the principal had announced plans for the organization of a student council. This, being the leading subject of interest, was added to the list of Negro History Week, Valentine Day, Washington's Birthday and Texas Independence. The speech unit was taught in this six-weeks period, because the students had suggested that they write campaign speeches. There were three weekly assemblies for the delivery of these

speeches. The group gave the speech to a campaign manager to be used for the candidate the group supported.

Subjects for other themes were:

1. The origin of Valentine Day
2. Washington in literature
3. Carter G. Woodson and the Negro History Program
4. My favority Negro author
5. Selections in our textbooks by Negro writers
6. The Civic Clubs in Taylor
7. We go to the polls
8. I cast the first vote

For the fifth six-weeks, March 2 to April 10, Recreation, Health, Interscholastic League and Easter were listed on the bulletin board. Themes were written on:

1. I'm glad I am an American
2. The practice teacher and baseball
3. Taylor High and Price High: Co-workers
4. They took my blood
5. The responsibility of a citizen

During this period the Price students along with students from the white high school worked with the Chest X-ray Program and the Blood Bank Drive. There was no

racial segregation. They registered both white and Negro citizens. Those students who worked in this project enjoyed writing about it.

The last six-weeks period, April 13 to May 27, included novels, biographies, vocation, hobbies, and surveys as general topics of interest. Discussions were made on selections from literature, novels, screen and radio versions of novels; choice of vocations and hobbies. Students at Price School used the library to gain information about their vocations and hobbies. They were interested in training required for the vocation, opportunities for advancement, salary and possible locations for pursuing the vocation. The principal arranged to have a representative from the recruiting office to lecture to the boys and girls on opportunities in the Armed Forces. Since emphasis was placed on a high school education, the students' themes revealed the necessity of completing high school work, and that the Armed Forces offered opportunity for advance education. Taylor, which is a small town with inadequate payroll for the Negro, offers few opportunities for the Negro youth.

The trips to the Taylor Bedding, Chamber of Commerce, Telephone Building and the City Hall gave an opportunity for the review on letter writing. Letters asking permission

for the visit and the "thank you" letters were written. The best letter chosen by the group was revised and mailed. After the tour written reports were made on the operation of the Chamber of Commerce, the Police Department, use of cotton, and the process of putting through long distance calls. Cotton became more than something that they had to pick in the fall when the students saw the comforts, the quilts and mattresses. They were proud that their town was the home of the famous advertised Morning Glory Mattress. Dickey had received. This was

Brief expository assignments in history, home-making and other subjects were worked out as English compositions. This was voluntary on the part of the student. One group wrote a letter assignment from the history class, asking the Representative permission to visit the legislature in session. After the visit a "thank you" letter was written. Students enjoyed relating the experience of observing their government at work, and were proud of the fact that they were recognized as visitors. It was an experience that the writer had never witnessed. The students have two to three themes free each

The Chamber of Commerce, the Rotary and Kiwanis Clubs each year name the outstanding citizen of Taylor. This year that honor went to a Negro doctor, Dr. J. L. Dickey.

Newspapers and radios all over the country flashed the news. TV was made of it. Since his son was in the eleventh grade and Dr. Dickey was the family doctor for many of the students, the event was something that they wanted to talk and write about. They made scrapbooks of other newspaper clippings and pictures of the family. Letters were written in the groups to relatives in other cities requesting clippings from their newspapers that carried an account of it. The son brought letters of congratulation that Dr. Dickey had received. One was a letter from Mrs. Bethune. The form, content, and punctuation were noted by the class. Some of the subjects for themes in this period were:

1. My father, the reporters and TV
2. My family doctor
3. Taylor's leading citizen
4. It is service that counts
5. Hobbies will pay
6. I want to play professional baseball
7. My kid brother and groceries

The students chose two to three themes from each six-weeks period for presentation in the assembly. Other departments were responsible for the program, but the same students were in the English classes and used their themes.

The writer guided them in arranging some in round table and panel discussions. For National Education Week, the eleventh grade developed:

- We grow through our service
1. In the home
 2. In the school
 3. In the church
 4. In the community

The tenth grade presented a discussion on manners which was developed by combining themes written on football. This discussion included manners at home, at church, at a social, and the correct way to treat a visiting team. Individual themes selected by the groups were read on the Thanksgiving, Christmas, Valentine Day and Negro History Week programs.

On Wednesday of each week students worked in groups reading, writing and revising themes. In the ninth grade the groups sat in the same row with the teacher moving and giving individual help during the revision period. The ninth grade students needed more guidance from the teacher. Group responsibility must have a good orientation period. However, these students exchanged themes for reading and worked in groups of two for revision. In the second semester the ninth grade worked in groups of five.

On Friday a theme was read from each group. Stress was placed on favorable comment first and ways of improving. If a suggestion for improving a sentence was made, the secretary of the group wrote the sentence on the blackboard, and underneath it she wrote the class members' revised forms. This process was repeated for all themes. Sometimes more than one period was necessary. Each student kept his individual misspelled words, but the group compiled the group list and submitted it to the teacher. The writer used these words in dictation exercises on Tuesday of each week. For variation the group submitted a pupil-made dictation exercise which was given by the teacher. The dictation exercises also served as a review in punctuation. An example is given:

Dr. J. L. Dickey, who was named Taylor's outstanding citizen, received many letters and telegrams. On Saturday the school secretary typed replies for him. He is planning to answer all letters and telegrams. His success was announced on the radio in foreign countries. I believe this is an honor that he deserved.

This is a pupil-made dictation exercise and the words underlined are the misspelled words from the themes.

The individual term paper due by the end of the fifth week in each six-weeks period was graded by the teacher. The following tables show the frequency of errors made in the themes by classes and that the total number decreased:

TABLE I

FREQUENCY OF ERRORS FOR
NINTH GRADE THEMES

(Number of Students 30)

Skills	Theme Number					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Sentence Fragments	80	65	45	38	27	25
Subject-verb Agreement	62	51	36	38	36	24
Tense	40	36	22	23	20	14
Spelling	50	28	20	20	18	12
Punctuation	68	69	64	52	40	30
Capitalization	27	22	27	26	16	14

TABLE II

FREQUENCY OF ERRORS FOR
TENTH GRADE THEMES

(Number of students 28)

Skills	Theme Number					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Sentence Fragments	54	48	38	36	29	19
Subject-verb Agreement	50	45	35	29	22	19
Tense	31	29	28	20	19	12
Spelling	26	26	20	19	17	10
Punctuation	36	22	20	14	9	4
Capitalization	26	16	10	7	3	0

TABLE III
 FREQUENCY OF ERRORS FOR
 ELEVENTH GRADE THEMES

(Number of Students 21)

Skills	Theme Number					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Sentence Fragments	45	36	24	23	22	18
Subject-verb Agreement	40	28	22	12	10	6
Tense	11	10	6	0	0	0
Spelling	17	15	10	10	0	0
Punctuation	10	6	5	3	2	0
Capitalization	6	4	0	0	0	0

Skills in the six areas listed were taught as the needs arose for them. In proofreading or in listening to a classmate read his theme, the textbook and workbook became reference books for the student for the correction of errors.

The total number of errors made in the first semester were compared with the total number of errors made in the second semester to see if the errors were increased or decreased. The following table reveals this result.

TABLE IV
FREQUENCY OF ERRORS
BY SEMESTERS

Skills	Ninth		Tenth		Eleventh		Total	
	1st	2nd	1st	2nd	1st	2nd	1st	2nd
Sentence Fragments	150	90	140	84	105	63	395	237
Subject-verb Agreement	149	98	130	70	90	28	369	196
Tense	98	57	88	51	27	0	213	108
Spelling	98	50	72	46	42	10	212	106
Punctuation	201	122	78	27	21	5	300	154
Capitalization	76	56	52	10	10	0	138	66

Table IV shows that sentence fragments, punctuation and verb usage were the leading errors. The errors occurring most frequently in subject-verb agreement was the use of the singular subject with a plural form of the verb, and the pronoun "I" with the singular verb form. Samples of these errors are shown in Appendices A, B, and C. The following words were misspelled in themes from all grade levels:

receive
success
foreign

planning
truly
false

Saturday
February
leisure

TABLE V

FREQUENCY OF ERRORS
BY GRADES

Number Pupils in Class	Ninth 30	Tenth 28	Eleventh 21	Total 79
<u>Skills</u>				
Sentence Fragments	280	224	168	672
Subject-verb Agreement	247	200	118	565
Tense	155	139	27	321
Spelling	148	118	52	318
Punctuation	323	105	26	454
Capitalization	132	62	10	204
Total for All Areas	1285	848	401	2534

Table V shows that from 454 errors in punctuation, 323 were found in the themes of the ninth grade, 105 in the tenth grade, and 26 in the themes of the eleventh grade.

From an analysis of 1285 errors in the themes of 30 ninth grade students, the following results were obtained:

	Per Cent
Punctuation	25.2
Sentence Fragments	21.7
Subject and verb agreement. . .	19.3
Tense	12.1
Spelling	11.5
Capitalization.	10.2

The breakdown of 848 errors in the tenth grade themes for 28 pupils revealed:

	Per Cent
Sentence fragments	26.4
Subject-verb agreement	23.6
Tense	16.4
Spelling	13.9
Punctuation.	12.4
Capitalization	7.3

For 401 errors in the eleventh grade themes for 21 pupils the percentage in each area is:

	Per Cent
Sentence fragments	41.89
Subject-verb agreement	29.42
Tense	6.73
Spelling	12.96
Punctuation.	6.5
Capitalization	2.5

A further breakdown was made from the personal record sheets of errors for the thirty pupils in the ninth grade. This revealed that in the areas of the highest percentage of errors, ten pupils made 64.3 per cent of the 323 errors in punctuation, 62.1 per cent of the 247 errors in sentence fragments and 69.7 per cent of the 230 errors in subject-verb agreement. The total errors are given in Table V.

In the areas of the highest percentage of errors for twenty-eight pupils in the tenth grade, eight pupils made 63.8 per cent of the errors in sentence fragments, 69.5 per cent of the errors in subject-verb agreement, and 65.4 per cent of the errors in tense.

In the areas of the highest percentage of errors for twenty-one pupils in the eleventh grades, six pupils made 83.3 per cent of the errors in sentence fragment, 67.2 per cent of the errors in subject-verb agreement, and 52.3 per cent of the errors in spelling.

Distribution of errors will vary in schools, but this study represents the findings from the 474 samples of writing for seventy-nine pupils in the ninth, tenth, and eleventh grades at Price School. The numbers of errors appeared large for seventy-nine students. By breaking them down to each grade level and rechecking individual record

CHAPTER IV
EVALUATION AND CONCLUSIONS

sheets of errors, the largest percentage of errors was made by ten, eight and six pupils in the ninth, tenth, and eleventh grades respectively. The percentage of students not making the errors could have more freedom to write with attention centered on subject matter and clear organization. The students making the errors could be given drills for mastery of their particular weaknesses. Such a procedure saves the teacher's time and eliminates, for the student, that boredom which seemingly existed in drill work, but never in the time devoted to actual writing.

Appraisal based on observation of the writer showed that the classes settled down to the task of writing to meet approval of groups, and that almost every member could produce a well-organized and well-expressed theme of three paragraphs during the class period. Students took pains to proofread and correct careless errors, and they were eager to display written work on the bulletin board.

CHAPTER IV

EVALUATION AND CONCLUSIONS

Students became aware of progress made as they checked their own personal error sheet of weekly themes. From one week to another the student was able to see his weakness and improvement in the technical skills. The students and teacher had set up goals at the beginning of the study. In writing the short weekly themes, criticism by the group made the student conscious of his work, and the necessity of proofreading. By the time he wrote his theme to be checked by the teacher he was disciplined to proofreading and was able to write a final draft that demonstrated his ability to organize and compose an interesting paper on some familiar subject.

Appraisal based on observation of the writer showed that the classes settled down to the task of writing to meet approval of groups, and that almost every member could produce a well-organized and well-expressed theme of three paragraphs during the class period. Students took pains to proofread and correct careless errors, and they were eager to display written work on the bulletin board.

Without suggestions from the teacher, appropriate scenes for the general subjects of themes were drawn on poster paper by students who were interested in art, and the group themes were arranged on it for display in the classroom.

Since the key to better writing is constant writing, the writer with the students planned a year's program in writing centered around the interests of the students. Students showed interest throughout the program and were eager to add to the planned procedure as their new writing needs arose. All writing activities arose from subjects the students were hearing and reading about, and from activities. At all times material was available for any assembly program.

In the letter writing unit students did not improve overnight, but the writing had a meaning. It was something that the student had to do, and he learned the necessity for writing in correct form. The technical skills became means by which he could make himself understood.

As a result of this study the writer believes the following conclusions can be made:

1. Every theme a student writes should have a purpose.
2. Written compositions should be used in assembly and community programs.

3. A school paper or any other means of publicizing student work provides an incentive for good writing.
4. Reading themes aloud provides a way for recognizing where to punctuate and what punctuation mark to use.
5. Literature offers a variety of subject matter for writing. The student visualizes himself in situations from selections in literature and realizes that personal problems can be solved through literature.
6. Students associate people in their community with characters in fiction.
7. Students are aware of real-life situation for correct form and punctuation in studying actual letters from firms.
8. Group work in composition develops both cooperation and initiative.
9. Writing compositions in groups demonstrated the use of the textbook as a reference book.
10. Students add to their vocabularies in finding the right word to convey exactly what they mean.

11. Students receive valuable training in conducting research and applying their findings.
12. The writing program for the entire year correlates composition and literature.
13. Writing composition through group work leads to social adjustment.
14. Students are given an opportunity to assume responsibility by writing in groups.
15. Writing about common interests and sharing in revision is a step toward better democratic living.
16. Group work with the ninth grade is not advisable. Pupils in this grade are not matured enough to accept the responsibility of group work. They need the personal direction of the teacher in the revision of their themes.
17. Ninth grade pupils may be introduced to the group work plan in the sixth six-weeks period of the year's program.
18. Class reading of the ninth grade themes should be made by the teacher.

Since changes in society in general change the function of element in the culture, there are needs for reconsideration of the role of writing in education of our young people. The writings of young people reveal reaction to what is seen, felt, feared and touched. Narratives of the home, accounts of increasing understanding about life, common concern about the future of the world and their personal futures are some of the things young people like to write about. Free expression of opinion in social and physical sciences, in literature and other subjects should be a habit of each student. Students learn to write by constantly writing and revising, and the English teacher must provide a program for his expressions. The successful accomplishment of improving written composition in the high schools will depend upon a well-planned curriculum, the cooperative service of every teacher in the system, and the English teacher making use of every available technique that can be made to fit her students' needs. Grammar is a tool to be used when it is needed and should be taught to meet the individual difference in all forms of students' writings.

APPENDIX A

SAMPLES OF ERRORS FOUND IN THE
THEMES FOR NINTH GRADE

Sentence fragments:

1. As Jane went on the porch
2. He staying at home on the night the "enthusia"
face the lions
3. The band marching down the street in new suits
4. The right amount and kind of bleaching to use
5. To learn to keep my house safe from fires

Subject-verb agreement

1. He run to the fires.
2. I mean the enjoyment of poetry and prose.
3. They wasn't gentlemen.
4. There is twenty-five boys and girls to go.
5. Mother tell us to keep matches in a fruit jar.

APPENDIX X

tense and wrong verb

1. We sees the bus.
2. I've chose this project....
3. We laid on the grass and ate our lunch.
4. The fire bell has rang.
5. The visiting team come into the room to meet us.

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Tense and wrong verb

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2. I've chose this project....
3. We laid on the grass and ate our lunch.
4. The fire bell has rang.
5. The visiting team come into the room to meet us.

APPENDIX B

SAMPLES OF ERRORS FOUND IN THE
THEMES FOR THE TENTH GRADE

Sentence fragments

1. Some who are trying to get a free ticket, and some for candy
2. By planning and preparing pleasing meals
3. After trying so hard and soon finished my theme on the date
4. I would select my gifts with the spirit to get
5. A father leading an important role in the family
6. Pinkey being a trained nurse
7. Emotions that were aroused during the show

Subject-verb agreement

1. She should prepare a meal anytime her mother tell her.
2. For the bright sun which shine on high....
3. Caring for pets give children one of their first lesson in self-control.
4. When life begin to seem a little dull around school, the Thanksgiving recess come.
5. The references that I used was:

Errors in tense and verb

1. After he was adopt he enjoyed Christmas.
2. He had began to advance on me.
3. I sewed some of my shirt which had been tore.
4. Oscar drunk three cokes at the Taylor Bedding.

APPENDIX C

SAMPLES OF ERRORS FOUND IN THE THEMES
FOR THE ELEVENTH GRADE

Sentence fragments

1. Trying to get a job for the worthless father
2. If every person would consider it his duty to prevent fires
3. Before a boy buys a girl flowers, candy, a book
4. To undertake this great task
5. Failure in learning to live together at home and school
6. To be a good citizen and always an American
7. Just as a football game cannot be played effectively unless the players abide by the rules

Subject and verb agreement

1. The United States stretch from Canada to Mexico.
2. She have a smaller brother and sister.
3. Woman, who were the first nurses, were probably also the first physicians.
4. The year before the child starts to school are important.
5. The cause of the fires in Taylor have not been learned

Errors in tense and verb

1. My parents were opposed to my foolish ideas, but I go on my trip.
2. When Roland had finish writing, he became interest in Ruby.
3. I was so afraid until I dropped my gun and run away.

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