

THE WRITING PORTION OF THE TASP TEST:
DOES INSTRUCTION MAKE
A DIFFERENCE?

Presented to the Director of the Honors Program
University of North Texas
In Fulfillment of the Requirements

For Graduation with University Honors

By

Susanne G. Vrba, B.A.

Denton, Texas

March, 1992

Vrba, Susanne, G., The Writing Portion of the TASP Test: Does Instruction Make a Difference?. Senior Honors Colloquium, March, 1992, 179pp., 11 tables, 26 figures, reference list, 69 titles.

This investigation sought to determine the effects of composition instruction on student performance. Informants consisted of students and teachers. Students completed two surveys and participated in interviews. Teachers completed one survey. The findings suggest that student performances are influenced by confidence in writing ability and previous writing instruction. Further, teachers either teach composition actively or inactively, and these teacher stances influence both student confidence and ability to compose. Implications from these findings can be extended to teacher training, student instruction, and further research.

Copyright by
Susanne G. Vrba
1992

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
LIST OF TABLES.....	vi
Chapter	
I. INTRODUCTION.....	1
Background	
Purpose	
Research Questions	
Significance of the Study	
Definition of Terms	
II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE.....	15
III. DESIGN OF STUDY.....	35
Research Methods	
Data Collection and Data Analysis	
Summary	
IV. NARRATIVE OF FINDINGS.....	50
Phase I	
Phase II	
Phase III	
Summary	
V. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS.....	139
Overview of the Study	
Discussion of Findings	
Educational Implications	
Recommendations for Future Research	
Conclusions	
Appendices	
APPENDIX A.....	158
APPENDIX B.....	164

APPENDIX C.....170
REFERENCE LIST.....173

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1.....7
Figure 1.....51
Figure 2.....52
Figure 3.....53
Figure 4.....54
Figure 5.....56
Figure 6.....57
Figure 7.....58
Figure 8.....60
Figure 9.....61
Figure 10.....62
Figure 11.....64
Figure 12.....65
Figure 13.....66
Figure 14.....67
Table 2.....69
Table 3.....70
Table 4.....71
Table 5.....72
Table 6.....73
Table 7.....74
Table 8.....75

Table 9.....76
Table 10.....98
Figure 15.....99
Figure 16.....114
Figure 17.....115
Figure 18.....115
Figure 19.....116
Figure 20.....116
Figure 21.....117
Figure 22.....117
Figure 23.....118
Figure 24.....119
Figure 25.....119
Figure 26.....120
Table 11.....171

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Background

In 1986 after a ten month study, the Committee on Testing of the Coordinating Board, Texas College and University System, reported that "every year more than 110,000 freshmen enter Texas public colleges and universities. Of these, at least 30,000 cannot read, communicate, or compute at levels needed to perform effectively in higher education" (p. 1). As a result of these alarming figures, the Coordinating Board devised a plan to identify and remediate students who exhibited deficiencies in the areas of math, reading and writing. The Texas Academic Skills Proficiency (TASP) Test was thus designed to measure basic skills which were critical for effective student performance in college.

The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) identified six main areas in which a student should be competent in order to succeed in college. The areas selected were reading, writing, speaking and listening, mathematics, reasoning and studying (1986). The basic skills identified as necessary for reading included the

ability to recognize different purposes and methods of writing, point of view, tone, and literal as well as inferential interpretation of an author's meaning (THECB, 1986). The basic skills needed for college level math included the ability to use integers, fractions, ratios, decimals, percentages, proportions, algebra and geometry (THECB, 1986). The basic skills of writing incorporated the writer's ability to address different audiences and purposes by varying writing style, vocabulary and sentence structure (THECB, 1986).

Because a large percentage of students had not mastered basic skills, the TASP Test was developed to identify those students who had not reached a competency level. The skills measured on the TASP Test were identified by thousands of Texas educators as important for success in undergraduate programs.

Although the TASP Test was designed to measure the basic skills of math, reading and writing, this study focused on the writing portion of the TASP Test. Writing is an activity which serves as both a foundation and a springboard in most academic fields. It is the major method of disseminating ideas, news, and discoveries in fields as varied as physics, sociology, political science, history, economics and literature. Because of the importance of being able to communicate thoughts and ideas to others, "college faculties regard writing not only as a powerful

tool but also as an essential one for all educated adults" (THECB, 1989, p. 19). When a student begins college, it is assumed that this student has mastered the basic skills of composition. The writing portion of the TASP Test was designed to identify students who have not mastered these skills.

The writing portion of the TASP Test is divided into two parts: an essay which requires the students to demonstrate the ability to communicate effectively in writing on a given topic, and a set of multiple choice questions which assess the student's ability to recognize various elements of effective writing (THECB, 1991). Although the multiple choice questions are included, they are only referred to if a student receives a borderline score on the test. That is, a student who receives a six, seven, or eight on the holistically scored essay portion is passed without regard to the multiple choice section. A student who receives a four or below is failed without regard to the multiple choice section. If the score on the writing sample is a five, then the student must have answered at least 70% of the multiple choice questions correctly to pass the test (THECB, 1991).

According to the rubric of the "Description of Score Points Used in Evaluating the TASP Test Writing Sample" (THECB, 1991, p. 5), the writing portion of the TASP Test is specifically concerned with the student's ability to

communicate a message to a specified audience. The writing portion of the test measures the degree to which a student masters purpose, unity, focus, development, sentence structure, diction, and use of mechanics such as spelling and punctuation in composition. According to the degree the skills are demonstrated, the student receives a score of zero to four holistically. A four is the highest score, while a zero is the lowest score. Two graders score each test and the scores are combined to give the student a final score. An elaboration and explanation of the skills which the rubric measures can be found in the TASP Writing Competencies (THECB, 1989). The competencies are the TASP guidelines and recommendations that college students must meet to be considered effective and confident writers.

The first competency includes "collecting, examining, and evaluating information pertinent to a given audience, occasion and purpose" (THECB, 1989, p. 19). These pre-writing activities encourage a student to examine the topic, determine what he/she already knows about the topic and what additional information needs to be included, how much detail to include, and analyze the information according to purpose, audience and occasion. The competencies recommend that the student use pre-writing strategies such as looping, listing, brainstorming, clustering, pentad or cubing to come up with ideas and explore the topic.

The second writing competency includes "formulating a

controlling idea and developing a framework within which this information can be organized so that it is appropriate to the writing task" (THECB, 1989, p. 19). This competency stresses the need for arrangement with focus and unity in a draft, or multiple drafts of the document. The language and style would be directed to the specified audience, occasion and purpose, and transitions would be included.

The third writing competency includes "processing the information that has been organized around a controlling idea so that it becomes a finished, effective written text applicable to a given audience, purpose and occasion" (THECB, 1989, p. 19). This competency includes the revision and editing portion of the complete writing process. As part of the revision process the student would re-evaluate the data, arguments and style to determine if the document communicates to the audience with a purpose and occasion.

Although the above competencies are divided into three groups, they are interrelated. Writing is the product of a process that is intertwined. The student may invent, arrange, and edit at the same time or invent throughout the entire process. The competencies cannot be separated from each other; they act together.

In addition, the TASP Competencies and the Texas State Essential Elements are related. One cannot miss the

correlation between the TASP's writing objectives and the Texas Essential Elements for English IV. The TASP Competencies appear to be patterned after the Essential Elements while bridging the gap between the high school curriculum and the expectations of college professors (Chadwick-Joshua, 1988, p. 25). The two sets of objectives are very similar when compared. As shown in Appendix A, there are vast similarities between the Texas Essential Elements for English IV and the TASP Writing Competencies. Thus, one can conclude that according to the Texas state Essential Elements, teachers should be teaching the skills which are being measured on the writing portion of the TASP Test. However, about twenty percent of the students who take the test fail each time.

Since the TASP Test was first administered in March, 1988, the results show that student performance on the writing portion has fluctuated (see Figure 1). The results vary from eighty-two percent passage for 1989 to eighty-five percent passage for 1990. These percentages, provided by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, reflect individual student performance. Thus, students may have taken the test more than one time in a year, yet for all attempts only one score is recorded. Therefore, a student who attempted the writing section three times and passed with the final attempt would be recorded as passing for the year (THECB, February 14, 1991). At present, insufficient

information allows no substantive conclusion to be drawn regarding the trends of student performance on the writing portion of the TASP Test.

Passing Rates of TASP Writing Section For
High School Students

1989

	Number Tested	Percent Passing
Black	2,128	63.4%
Hispanic	5,387	73.2
Anglo	18,516	88.2
TOTAL	27,119	82.8

1990

Black	4,496	69.7%
Hispanic	10,214	77.3
Anglo	37,938	90.3
TOTAL	55,794	85.7

(THECB, February 14, 1991)

Table 1

As well as requiring college students to pass all sections of the TASP test, the state of Texas mandates that all students pass a high school level basic skills test based on the core curriculum as part of graduation requirements. This test is the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS) Exit Level Test and measures competency in the basic skills of math reading and writing. The TAAS test is

very similar to the TASP test, thus, all students who graduate from a Texas public school must have demonstrated the mastery of basic skills. Because students must pass the TAAS to graduate, students should enter college with the basic composition skills. However, since many first year college students in Texas do not write at the level they should be writing, the TASP Test was developed. Even with the development of this test as a prerequisite for graduation one fifth of the students who take the TASP Test consistently do not pass. However, because students must pass the TAAS to graduate from high school, the twenty percent of students who do not pass the TASP are not carrying the skills they learned in high school to the TASP test. Thus, students are not demonstrating a mastery of basic composition skills. The question arises as to whether the students do not possess the skills or are not using them. In either case, something needs to be done because this rate of failure is unacceptable to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. The unacceptability of this failure rate is demonstrated by the Coordinating Board's commitment to remediate the students who do not pass before they can continue their educations.

Purpose

Since all teachers in the state of Texas are mandated to follow the Essential Elements, some of which address basic composition skills, the failure of students to

demonstrate their mastery of composition skills on the writing portion of the TASP Test may indicate a lack of transfer from learning situations to application situations. It would seem that the methods by which students are taught to write could affect their performance on the writing portion of the TASP Test. As a result, this study examined whether the teaching of composition affects student performance on the writing portion of the TASP Test. The study also explored the nature of writing instruction and attempted to identify if a relationship exists between instruction and student performance and how this relationship is impacted.

Research Questions

The following questions provided a focus for gathering and collecting data related to this investigation:

1. What factors impact student performance on the writing portion of the TASP test?
2. How do methods of teaching writing affect student performance on the writing portion of the TASP test?
3. Which methods of teaching writing produce the best results on the writing portion of the TASP test?

Significance of the Study

If instructors are to succeed in bringing students to a competency level of basic writing skills, they need to know the instruction strategies which are most successful. This study will be valuable to the field of education because it

will provide information useful for guiding instructional strategies in composition. If some teachers are teaching students to write more effectively and successfully than others, the possibility of a difference in pedagogy exists. This study will identify the relationship between teaching styles of composition and student performances. It will provide information useful to develop more efficient strategies for instruction of composition. Therefore, an improvement in teaching composition can be identified, and students will benefit. In addition, this study will ultimately impact the teaching of composition and help facilitate student transfer to practical situations while increasing the learning potential of students.

Definition of Terms

The following list defines terms which are specific to this study. Throughout this study, the following definitions apply to these terms.

Appropriateness is one of the seven characteristics used to measure the success of a student's writing sample. Appropriateness measures the extent to which the student addresses the topic and uses language appropriate to the given audience, purpose and occasion (THECB, 1991, p. 11).

The audience is to whom the paper is addressed. Audience will determine the word choice, length of sentences, and topics used to develop a paper (Chadwick-Joshua, & Jones-Johnson, 1991, p. 14).

Brainstorming is a pre-writing strategy in which free association is used to think of words or ideas that are related in some way to a given topic (Chadwick-Joshua, & Jones-Johnson, 1991, p. 20).

Clustering is a pre-writing strategy which enables the student to draw connections to the topic through general grouping (Chadwick-Joshua, & Jones-Johnson, 1991, p. 23).

College-level Writing is academic writing where the author is considered the expert and the audience is the public. College-level writing includes the "narrow academic focus on exposition of topics that require abstract thought and often demand a synthesis of more than one source" (THECB, 1989, p. 63).

A competency is defined by the Texas Higher Education Board as "a statement of the entry-level prerequisite skill, knowledge, understanding, attitude and experience in reading, writing and mathematics" which are believed to be necessary for "adequate mastery of foundation level program content and skills" by college instructional program designers and faculty (THECB, 1989, p. 63).

Cubing is a pre-writing strategy, developed by Elizabeth Cowan, students use to look at a topic from six points of view: describe it, compare it, associate it, analyze it, apply it, argue for or against it (THECB, 1989, p. 63).

Development is one of the seven characteristics used to

measure the success of a student's writing sample.

Development measures the student's amount, depth and specificity of supporting details (THECB, 1991, p. 11).

Edited American English is the written, native language of United States citizens which is distinguishable from British English yet not so different to be a separate language (THECB, 1989, p. 64).

Holistic is defined by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board as "a method which is relates to, or is concerned with wholes, or complete systems, rather than treatment of individual parts" (THECB, 1989, p. 64).

Listing is a pre-writing strategy that begins with a word or idea and is used to develop topics of interest or to narrow broad topics.

Looping is a pre-writing strategy developed by Peter Elbow in which a sentence or thought is pulled from a free writing exercise as a "center of gravity" for continued writing. This process is repeated until a desired topic is reached (THECB, 1989, p. 64).

The use of mechanical conventions is one of the seven characteristics used to measure the success of a student's writing sample. Mechanical conventions address the spelling of common words and the use of conventions such as punctuation and capitalization (THECB, 1991, p. 11).

Occasion includes the events or situations that determine the setting and environment in which the audience

will read the paper (Chadwick-Joshua, & Jones-Johnson, 1991, p.13).

Organization is one of the seven characteristics used to measure the success of a student's writing sample. Organization addresses the clarity of the student's writing and the logical sequencing of ideas (THECB, 1991, p. 11).

The pentad was developed by Kenneth Burke and is a five question writing strategy that allows students to generate text in the invention stage of writing (Chadwick-Joshua, & Jones-Johnson, 1991, p. 35).

The purpose is reason for writing. Purpose gives an essay its direction and meaning. Two purposes addressed by the TASP are expository, a type of writing that explains or describes, and persuasive, a type of writing that convinces, argues or persuades (Chadwick-Joshua, & Jones-Johnson, 1991, p. 16).

A rubric is a scoring guide used in holistic scoring. The rubric lists characteristics of writing and attempts to categorize the characteristics and assign scores.

Sentence structure is one of the seven characteristics used to measure the success of a student's writing sample. Sentence structure addresses the extent to which a student's writing is free from errors in structure (THECB, 1991, p. 11).

The unity and focus of a writing sample is one of the seven characteristics used to measure the success of a

student's writing sample. Unity and focus address the clarity with which a student states and maintains a main idea and point of view (THECB, 1991, p. 11).

Usage is one of the seven characteristics used to measure the success of a student's writing sample. Usage addresses the extent to which a student's writing sample is free from errors in word usage and shows precision in word choice.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

My writing skills have always been behind by a year or two. I read slow and don't understand what I'm reading. When writing I'm slow, I have to stop and think a lot. Teachers have told me that I can't write, but now I don't care. (Paul, 1200 student)

During the past fifty years, research on student achievement and literacy has come to the forefront of educational research. This move, in part, was brought to the attention of the public through different national programs. These programs, however, seemed to flow in and out of the government's attention. The Right to Read program established by Commissioner of Education James E. Allen Jr. in 1969 brought optimism and promises of improved schooling. This program, however, was lost during the tumultuous 70's and never moved past the initial planning stages (Carroll & Chall, 1975). The Right to Read program was completely discontinued during the early Reagan years and the National Reading Council, established in 1970 was closed in 1973.

Allen commissioned a report in 1971 on the status of

reading and writing in the United States. This report, completed in 1975 by John Carroll and Jeanne Chall for the National Academy of Education, described the national situation of turmoil with hope and urgency

Our national policy is that every child is expected to complete at least the twelfth grade; we ought then to expect every child to attain twelfth grade literacy. . . . An individual cannot participate in modern society unless he can read, and by this we mean a high rate of literacy. (pp. 9-10)

In the late 70's and early 80's the mood shifted from that of equity to an emphasis on standards when the Right to Read was replaced with the Demand for Excellence. Minimum competency tests for high school graduation were put into place in many states and remedial programs were established. This emphasis on minimum standards of basic skills, especially reading, changed to a concern about excellence in education. Graduation requirements increased, the school day was lengthened and testing became more structured (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983; U. S. Office of Education, 1984).

Although these attempts were made to improve the education of the country, the National Commission on Excellence in Education stated its concern about the faltering educational system. "The educational foundations of our society are presently being eroded by a rising tide

of mediocrity that threatens our very future as a nation and a people." (1983, p. 5). This statement reaffirmed Copperman's study (1978) which showed that after a brief improvement and period of hope during the post-Sputnik period (1957-1965) the quality of public education declined. The primary cause of the decline, according to Copperman, was the inadequacy of literacy instruction:

Since the mid 1960's, academic performance and standards have shown a sharp and widespread decline. . . . Even in the more traditional classes, work demands and imposed standards have dropped considerably . . . high school textbooks in most subject areas have been rewritten with a sharply reduced reading level, usually one or more years lower than the grade for which they are intended. (pp. 15, 16)

Although efforts have been made to remedy these problems and reading in the primary grades has shown slight improvement, the achievement in the upper grades has continued to drop, especially in the more demanding literacy tasks and in writing (NAEP, 1981).

With decline in literacy, an awareness of the lack of adequate writing skills also became apparent. This issue was brought to the attention of the public by the Newsweek article "Why Johnny Can't Write" (December 8, 1975). This article set the tone for much of the discussion that

followed in the media. A wide range of people agreed that many people needed writing improvement. Shaughnessy (1977) asserted that there were writing difficulties with speakers of nonstandard dialects. Lyons (1976) concluded that university students in general were lacking in writing skills. Bureaucrats (Redish, 1986) and business writers (Odell, 1980) also displayed a lack of adequate writing ability. These studies indicated that the "writing problem" is not a problem for the minority, rather it is a problem for the majority.

When the media discusses an instructional concern, they focus on the question of whether things have gotten worse. This question is difficult to measure. However, data from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) (1975, 1980a, 198b, 1980c) have shown that there was a slight decline during the 70's but not of an amplitude to cause an educational crisis. The sudden dissatisfaction was not from a decrease in performance, but rather from a rise in expectations. More and more people began entering the schools from diverse backgrounds, and with the technology of the past decades, more and more people had a need to communicate through written language (Sawyer, 1977).

One response to the public interest in literacy was increased research activity, especially the research on student achievement in reading and writing. One theory which evolved through this research is the theory of the

reading-writing connection. This theory evolved after many other studies of student performance and instructional practices.

Although many researchers have investigated student performance and instructional methodology, Goodlad conducted the most extensive survey. Goodlad's examination of 38 schools gathered data from 8,624 parents, 1350 teachers and 17,163 students. Goodlad's conclusions were revealing. In the classes, students rarely made decisions about their own learning. Over 75% of the class time was spent on instruction and nearly 70% of this was teacher centered. Only 5% of the time was used to elicit student response. When questioning did occur, it did not include any type of open response involving reasoning or an opinion from any student (1984). This pattern was also discussed in Boyer's study of high schools. "Most discussion in classrooms when it occurs, calls for simple recall . . . or the application of an idea. . . . But serious intellectual discussion is rare" (1983, p. 146). Both of these researchers also found that the written work resembles this oral recitation pattern. Goodlad found that the English language-arts classes emphasized a

kind of repetitive reinforcement of basic skills of language usage throughout the twelve grades--a heavy emphasis on mechanics in the topics covered by teachers, textbooks stressing these topics, and

workbooks, worksheets, and quizzes emphasizing short answers and the recall of specific information. (1984, p. 207)

Goodlad's conclusions were supported by smaller surveys conducted by Fillion (1986) and Applebee (1981). Fillion examined three schools and found that the most common form of student writing was copying. Applebee's research for the National Study of Writing in the Secondary Schools explored writing in secondary classrooms. He studied the writing that took place in various classrooms throughout the academic year. Applebee found that during 44 percent of the class time observed writing activities took place. Most of this writing, however, was brief: short answer, fill in the blank, note taking. Applebee also found that writing a paragraph or longer occurred only about three percent of the time. Applebee concluded that students found assignments as "reasonable tasks only when they are interpreted by students as requests to summarize material previously presented in lessons or texts" (1981, p. 74). This type of writing seldom required students to demonstrate comprehension or compose new text; it merely directed them to reproduce information.

Surveys conducted by the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) indicated that 82 percent of student writing, when writing at length, was formal academic writing. This writing consisted of essays or reports in

which students repeated ideas given to them in the classroom, very little time was spent with the students generating their own text with their own ideas (Applebee, Langer, & Mullis, 1987a). These results were also supported by British researchers in the 1970's (Britton et al., 1975).

The various NAEP studies indicated that students have learned what they have been taught. Generally students could recall factual information and the mechanics of writing, but they lacked the ability to critically explore their own ideas (Applebee, Langer, & Mullis, 1987b). These results suggested that the focus on minimal competence has been misdirected. Most of the students attained this minimal competency; the problems were with the more complex tasks.

One major result of this NAEP study was the redefinition of reading competence. Traditionally reading comprehension was tested through a series of multiple choice questions. This new definition of reading competency connected reading with writing and revealed a new emphasis on what should be measured when evaluating students.

In school and society, we expect a reader to be able to analyze, evaluate, and extend the ideas that are being presented, just as we expect a writer to elaborate upon and defend judgments that are expressed. (Applebee, Langer, & Mullis, 1987b, p. 9)

This definition stressed the connection between reading and

writing. Correlational studies have also shown that writing ability is strongly related to reading ability; students draw on the knowledge of the language conventions and discourse that they attain from reading (Applebee, Langer, & Mullis, 1987a). Langer and Applebee also examined the effect of writing on learning. They concluded that "activities involving writing . . . lead to better learning than activities involving reading and studying only" (Langer & Applebee, 1987, p. 135).

The 1979-1980 assessment of 39,000 students was the first to link reading and writing. The test results indicated that the students could handle multiple choice inferential questions but had far more difficulty on the open-ended questions. The students could do little more than summarize. The authors concluded that students lacked experience with reading/writing tasks that involve critical thinking or problem solving (Reading, Writing, and Thinking, 1981).

The results of the 1979-1980 assessment were supported by two NAEP publications, The Writing Report Card, (Applebee, Langer, & Mullis, 1986b) and The Reading Report Card (Applebee, Langer, & Mullis, 1986a) which reported on the 1984 reading and writing assessment. The results of this assessment showed some improvement, writing scores improved and students were writing 5 percent more than they were five years earlier. However, the number of students

who went beyond minimally adequate response was very low. Only 23 percent of the eleventh graders wrote better than a minimal response. The authors concluded that:

. . . by and large 17-year-olds do not have consistent control of the reading skills or strategies needed to comprehend material such as primary source historical documents, scientific documents, or financial and technical documents--those often needed to achieve excellence in academic, business, or government environments. (1986b, p. 28)

As disturbing as these results may appear, there is a consistent and repetitive attention to basic facts and skills and a lack of attention to intellectual development in instruction. These studies of instruction and student achievement have shown that the need to "cover" material overwhelms the need to develop critical thinking, in-depth learning, and writing (Goodlad, 1984; Applebee, Langer, & Mullis, 1987a, 1987b; Applebee, 1981; Boyer, 1983).

The idea that something was wrong with writing instruction was not a surprise to most language-arts educators. Evidence strongly suggested that most teachers from the elementary to the university level were not prepared to teach composition (Morrison & Austin, 1977), that not much writing was being done in the schools (R. Applebee, 1966), and that the required writing gave little motivation or hope for the exercise of higher level thinking

skills (Muller, 1967).

The shift from an emphasis on assessment of writing skills to an emphasis on the pedagogy of writing skills was a result of this new awareness of the lack of literacy in the country. With the emphasis on instruction, the researchers turned their attention from assessing what students knew to ways instructors could increase student literacy.

One of the most researched topics of composition is the effect of formal grammar instruction on writing. In their research, Braddock, Lloyd, Jones, and Schoer (1963) concluded that formal grammar instruction was an ineffective way to teach writing. Further, they asserted that because such instruction took away from actual writing practice, it had a negative effect on writing development. This assertion was also supported by Ingrid Strom (1960) and George Hillocks (1986).

In addition, James Britton and his colleagues in The Development of Writing Abilities, (1975) concluded that the demands placed on students in schools stifled their writing. Almost all the writing students did in school was informative or persuasive. Rarely did students write expressive discourse or put their own thoughts into text. The only exception to this was English; however, after the students began to prepare for exams (around fifth grade), that writing also became almost exclusively informative.

Writing became simply a way of testing the students' knowledge.

To Britton, this left the students in a rhetorical dilemma. The students were writing to an audience about a topic that the audience knew more about, and for no purpose of communication. The student was simply demonstrating if material had been mastered. Even more limiting, the student was restricted to write in a formal setting which did not allow the personal expression of speech (Britton et al., 1975).

As publications on writing began to attract attention (Applebee, 1974; Moffett, 1968; Britton, 1975), how students learn to write rather than what they write was brought to the forefront of the research (Emig, 1971). Applebee, Moffett, and Britton continued to stress the importance of writing in learning. Donald Murray (1986) and Mina Shaughnessy (1977) helped teachers clarify their thinking about the process of composing.

This shift to a concern for the writing process brought both a scholarly and political redirection. The scholarly investigations studied the nature of the composing process, while the traditional instruction was attacked. The starting point of this movement was Janet Emig's monograph, The Composing Process of Twelfth Graders (1971). She found, through her research of writing behavior and interviews with the students about their writing processes, that school

writing instruction inhibited student development:

This inquiry strongly suggests that, for a number of reasons, school sponsored writing experienced by older secondary students is a limited, and limiting experience. The teaching of composition at this level is essentially unimodal, with only extensive writing given sanction in many schools. Almost by definition, this mode is other-directed--in fact it is other centered. The concern is with sending a message, a communication out into the world for the edification, the enlightenment, and ultimately the evaluation of another. Too often the other is a teacher, interested chiefly in a product he can criticize rather than in a process he can help initiate through empathy and support. (p. 97)

Emig's declaration set the tone for a movement toward a writing process which would allow students more control over their own writing with the support, not criticism, of the teacher.

At the time of Emig's research, composition was almost subsumed under literature. Squire and Applebee (1968) found that two thirds of composition topics were tied to literature. In addition, the students were asked to write about literature in a distant, structured way. The papers were structured with typical thesis-support and the tone was impersonal.

Different methods of approaching a less structured writing setting for students were developed. Elbow (1973) and Macrorie (1968) discussed ways to use free-writing to help writers discover ideas. Murray (1968) claimed that if students were to be treated as writers, they should have the freedom to choose their own topics. This way, the student would be the authority rather than writing to the authority.

Other ways of responding to student writing were also proposed. Elbow (1973), Moffett (1968) and Macrorie (1968) proposed student writing groups where the response would come from peers rather than the evaluator. In addition, Garrison (1974), Carnicelli (1980) and Murray (1968), suggested the use of one-on-one writing conferences between the teacher and the student could remove the teacher from the role as evaluator and help provide the support that Emig claimed was lacking in traditional instruction.

These propositions led to a redirection of teaching writing. No longer would students be "expected" to write (Christensen, 1967, p.3); but rather an attention to teaching writing and the processes students use to write was emphasized. One result of the move to teaching writing and instructional improvement was the Bay Area Writing Project which evolved into the National Writing Project (Gray & Myers, 1978). Other writing projects also developed across the country and soon these projects found their way into many different schools and classrooms.

With the entrance of the new attention to writing instruction, traditional approaches were found lacking. The traditional approaches to teaching writing treated the final product as a body of knowledge that must adhere to the characteristics of effective text. With the traditional approach, students were required to learn the rules that govern sentences, paragraphs and larger units. The resulting curriculum usually resulted in a specific set of rules and exercises in which the rules could be applied and practiced. The time spent teaching and practicing these rules varied. Most of the instruction centered on the sentence level rules, the next largest amount of instruction was on paragraph level rules, and the least amount of time was spent on how to put these components into larger texts (Braddock et al, 1963).

During the 1970's and 1980's the traditional approach to the writing curriculum was challenged. A general shift to the process-oriented approach of writing instruction emerged; however, the idealized process-oriented writing class with student centered activities and the teacher acting as facilitator was in direct opposition to the traditional literature lesson. The literature lesson utilized the lecture and discussion method to lead students toward a canonical interpretation of standard texts (Applebee, Langer, & Mullis, 1987a; Ravitch and Finn, 1987). English teachers continued to view themselves as teachers of

literature. Over seventy percent of students surveyed in the 1986 literature assessment asserted that over half of their class time was spent on literature (Applebee, Langer, & Mullis, 1987b). A process pedagogy which stressed free choice of topics was viewed by literature teachers as taking time and effort away from their main goals. Applebee concluded that "put simple, process-oriented approaches may be, by definition, impossible to implement successfully, given traditional notions of instruction" (1986, p. 108).

It is important to understand how the teaching of writing functions in the classroom. Applebee (1981) at the secondary school level, and Florio and Clark (1982) at the elementary level have documented that many school writing activities restrict and limit students from engaging in the writing process. For example, students were given writing assignments from worksheets on which the majority of the text was provided by the publisher or the teacher. These assignments did not allow students to formulate their own writing. Rather than the teacher provided text, collaborative relationships between teacher and student which allow students to make their own decisions in their writing activities help students develop their ideas (Britton, 1989; Wells, 1986).

With the move to process-oriented writing instruction, and its conflict with traditional literature instruction, a move to a process-oriented approach of teaching literature

has begun to develop (Langer, 1989). The process approach to teaching writing, however, has also created other issues to be contended with. Perhaps the most crucial issue that has arisen is the assessment of student learning.

As the process approach to writing developed a shift in writing assessment also occurred. The traditional multiple choice tests which focused on testing grammar and usage was abandoned for the direct assessment of writing skills. Writing abilities were tested by asking students to write (Applebee, Langer, & Mullis, 1986c).

The shift in assessment of written language also changed in the classroom. Traditional grading--comments written on students' papers which addressed mechanics or simply justified the grade did not help students learn (Searle & Dillon, 1980; Petty & Finn, 1981; Sperling & Freedman, 1987). The shift in professional literature has called for opportunities for students to make communication, not grades, as their end goal (Applebee, 1984; Britton et al., 1975; Freedman, 1987a).

Evaluation of writing on state, district, and national levels also changed. The most popular large scale assessments of writing have been modeled after the evaluations developed and used by the Educational Testing Service (Davis, Scriven, & Thomas, 1987; Diederich, 1974; Myers, 1980; White, 1985). In these evaluational tests, students write on an assigned topic in a testing situation.

Teachers undergo calibration training, then rate the papers holistically, with more than one calibrated teacher evaluating each paper. Although problems such as rater judgments, test length and item topics were major concerns, many of these problems have been overcome. Applebee, Langer, and Mullis reported that reliabilities above 0.9 are regularly reported by National Assessment (1986c).

By the mid 1980's, process-oriented writing instruction replaced the product-oriented writing instruction, at least in the professional literature. Studies still showed, however, that the majority of teachers continued to use the traditional textbook approach in the classroom (Langer, 1984; Langer & Applebee, 1986). Although efforts have been made to improve the instruction of composition to students, there is still a lack of competency in literacy skills.

In 1986, after a ten month study, the Committee on Testing of the Coordinating Board, Texas College and University System, reported that "every year more than 110,000 freshmen enter Texas public colleges and universities. Of these, at least 30,000 cannot read, communicate, or compute at levels needed to perform effectively in higher education" (p. 1). As a result of these alarming figures, the Coordinating Board devised a plan to identify and remediate students who exhibited deficiencies in the areas of math, reading and writing. The Texas Academic Skills Proficiency (TASP) Test was thus

designed to measure basic skills which were critical for effective student performance in college.

The writing section of the test measures the basic competencies required to communicate a message to a specified audience (THECB, 1991), and follows the holistic grading procedure. Although the test was first administered in March of 1988, the results show that one fifth of the students taking the writing portion of the test fail each time (THECB, February 14, 1991).

Although there is a strong correlation between how students are taught to write and how they write (Applebee, Langer, Mullis, 1987a, 1987b; Emig, 1971; Braddock et al., 1975), additional research suggests that other factors appear to influence student performance and instruction. Teacher expectations, teacher value on instruction and student efficacy have been identified as having critical impact on student performance.

The best known study of teacher expectations is Rosenthal and Jacobson's *Pygmalion in the Classroom* (1968). This study demonstrated that when some teachers expect high levels of achievement from students, those students achieve at higher levels. Brophy and Evertson (1981) continued this line of research and concluded that teachers treated students differently according to the expectations they had for those students. In addition, Brattesani, Marshall and Weinstein found that student perceptions of differential

teacher expectations and treatment contributed to levels of student achievement (1984).

Teachers' beliefs about the value of what they are teaching also influence how they teach. As Applebee, Langer and Mullis asserted, teachers continue to think of themselves as teachers of literature rather than teachers of writing. Therefore, over seventy percent of the class time was spent on literature (1987b). Thus, with teachers believing that their main objective was to teach literature rather than composition, a shift to a process approach of teaching writing was not valued by teachers and difficult to implement successfully (Applebee, 1986).

Another factor that impacts student performance is presented in Bandura's study of self-efficacy (1982). Bandura asserted that there is a strong positive relationship between student perceptions of self-efficacy (one's estimate of probability of success) on tasks and performance on those tasks. In addition, Weiner (1979; Weiner et al., 1983) found that the manner in which students approach academic tasks is influenced by the students' motivation toward that task.

Although extensive research has been done to study the nature of composition instruction and factors which influence student achievement, the studies generally examined these areas separately. This study explored student and teacher perceptions of the nature of composition

instruction in today's English high school classroom, as well as the factors that influenced student performance on the writing portion of the TASP test. Because a large percentage of students are not performing at a competency level, it is necessary that instructors understand the factors that influence student performance, whether affective or cognitive, in a writing situation that requires students to provide their own ideas and their own text.

CHAPTER 3

DESIGN OF STUDY

Research Methods

In this study, the researcher wanted to examine whether there was a relationship between high school composition instruction strategies and student performance on the writing portion of the TASP test. To determine this, a description of student perceptions of composition instruction and performance on the TASP, as well as, a description of the nature of writing instruction used by teachers was needed for this study. Specifically, the researcher wanted to explore the nature of writing instruction, to determine if a relationship exists between instruction and student performance and further, how this relationship is impacted. In order to determine possible relationships between instruction and performance and to provide accurate description of a relationship, the researcher employed both quantitative and qualitative analysis. The quantitative analysis was necessary to determine and to provide statistical evidence for emerging relationships between the factors, while the qualitative analysis was necessary to provide in-depth description of emerging patterns and relationships.

Quantitative

In order to determine relationships and provide numerical support for relationships between factors, quantitative analysis was used. Quantitative analysis allowed the researcher to use statistical packages to determine if relationships between variables existed. The statistical packages also allowed the researcher to transform large groups of numbers into manageable data, to reduce the possibility of error and to reduce the amount of time needed to analyze the data. Frequency distribution counts were used to identify patterns of informant responses to the questionnaires. The data was also subjected to a statistical procedure for a determination of the means of the GPA and SAT. In addition, a correlational analysis was used to determine if variables were related to each other. Finally, a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used in conjunction with the Tukey HSD test. The ANOVA compares variables among two or more groups in order to determine "whether the differences between group means are large enough to assume that the corresponding population means are different" (Huck et al., 1974, p. 49). The Tukey test was applied to the ANOVA to strengthen the findings and determine which groups of variables have the significant difference. This comparison of means helped to substantiate the emerging relationships.

Qualitative

The researcher also wanted to examine to the nature of composition instruction and student and teacher perceptions of that instruction. In order to describe relationships between variables and the nature of instruction with accurate detail, qualitative analysis was employed in this study. R. C. Bogdan and S. K. Biklen define qualitative research as being driven by five features: research occurs in the natural setting, research is descriptive, researchers are concerned with studying the process rather than the product, data is analyzed inductively, and participant perspectives are important (1982, pp. 27-29). The questions which guided this investigation were used to determine if relationships between instruction and performance exist. The questions were focused on describing how student performance is affected by different factors, specifically the ways in which students are taught to write. The perspectives of both teachers and students on composition instruction were important to this study. Therefore, students and teachers answered open-ended questions on surveys, and students participated in interviews. The use of qualitative analysis allowed the collection of this data.

Data Collection and Data Analysis

Data collection and data analysis were divided into phases based on the focus of the period of research and the techniques involved in the procedures. Data collection was

divided into a three phase pattern and data analysis was divided into a three phase pattern.

Data Collection--Phase I

To begin the study, a sample of student perceptions of writing instruction and the writing portion of the TASP test was necessary. Therefore, the first phase of data collection involved student informants and occurred during the second and third weeks of September. Students, who were enrolled in freshman English courses at the University of North Texas, were selected to participate in phase one of this study. This selection was based upon the fact that these students were the most recent to graduate from high school and to take the TASP test. It was believed that these students would have the most vivid perceptions of the test and high school instruction.

Design of the Instrument

This study was concerned with composition instruction, student performance on the writing portion of the TASP test and the relationships between these two variables. High school graduates, entering a college or university are required to take the TASP test; therefore, the opinions of recent high school graduates, enrolled in a college or university, of their high school composition instruction and the TASP test were needed for this study. This information would assist in beginning to determine a relationship between instruction and performance.

An instrument in the form of a questionnaire (see Appendix B) was designed to collect the students' opinions on a variety of issues: composition instruction, the TASP test, and past teachers. Background information of students' high school performance was also included. The surveys were color coded to reflect the specific English courses in which students were enrolled. The color coding identified students from developmental courses, academic core courses, and first and second semester freshman courses. The color coding was a timesaving device designed to facilitate later comparisons between students.

The optional background questions provided demographic information such as high school, former teachers, high school grade average, SAT scores, TASP scores on the math, reading and writing sections, gender and ethnicity. In addition, blanks for signatures and phone numbers were included to allow students to indicate a willingness to participate in further surveys and interviews. The high schools and teachers were included to allow the collection of information from future informants.

Six questions were designed in a Likert-scale format, to ascertain student perceptions on a scale of one through five (one reflecting total agreement and five reflecting total disagreement) of their high school writing experiences and the TASP test. The questionnaire also included two open-ended questions with space for comments. These

questions were designed to measure student insight into how their writing skills compared to other college students' skills and what influenced their performance on the TASP test.

Administration of Instruments

After obtaining permission from the Institutional Review Board to use human subjects and from the Department of English to administer the surveys to the freshman English classes, the surveys, and a cover letter (Appendix B) explaining the nature of the study, were given to the teaching fellows for distribution to all students who had taken the TASP test. The surveys were then returned to the researcher through the departmental mail box system.

Data Analysis--Phase I

Phase one of data analysis consisted of sorting the surveys and employed both qualitative and quantitative analysis. This phase of analysis took approximately five weeks and occurred during the last week of September and the month of October.

Quantitative Analysis

Over five hundred surveys were collected, and analysis of these surveys involved tabulating information in a series of ways. Because of the large number of surveys, statistical packages were used to compile the information, determine relationships, identify means, and compute frequency counts.

The information on the questionnaires was coded and compiled using SPSSX. This statistical package is used the most in the field of education and other social sciences. SPSS performs statistical analysis and data management tasks.

Variables were coded and included English course, high school, high school grade point average (GPA), SAT score, passing and failing scores on the math, reading and writing sections of the TASP, favorite subject, least favorite subject, gender and ethnicity. These variables were used in the analysis of demographic information and provided frequency counts. The frequency counts were used to determine the percentage of students who passed the writing sections of the TASP test, number of students in each course, ethnicity and gender.

A frequency count of Q1 through Q6 (Likert-scale questions one through six) was also performed to determine the frequencies of responses to the questions. Furthermore, the questions were split by course to determine the frequency of responses in each course. In addition, the means of the GPA, and SAT were tabulated to provide further possibilities of comparison among variables. The tabulation of the means for GPA and SAT were also split by pass/fail of the writing section and by course.

An ANOVA of Q1 through Q6 by course 1 through 4 (English 1200, 1310, 1311, 1320) was also run to determine

if the respondents' attitudes were significantly different by course ($P < 0.05$). Then, a Tukey test was run to determine which groups had a significant difference.

Finally, a correlational analysis between GPA, SAT, course and writing was executed. This analysis was run to determine if a correlation between the variables existed.

Qualitative Analysis

In an effort to provide a more accurate description of student perceptions of writing ability and performance on the writing portion of the TASP test, the responses to the open ended questions were coded and analyzed. The responses were coded into categories of like responses such as teacher influence, testing conditions, and personal conditions. These categories of like responses were then employed in the development of the student follow up survey, labeled Survey II.

Data Collection--Phase II

The second phase of data collection occurred during second, third and fourth weeks of November and involved interviewing and surveying students who indicated a willingness to participate in further research. These students were contacted through the demographic information provided on the initial surveys. Students who were willing to continue the research established a meeting time with the researcher to complete Survey II and participate in a ten minute interview.

Design of the Instrument

Further information regarding student perceptions of classroom instruction and the TASP test were needed from these students to provide a more in-depth description of their perceptions, and to strengthen and provide more statistical support for the emerging patterns of relationships. A follow up questionnaire, Survey II (see Appendix B), based upon the responses to Survey I, was designed to measure student perceptions of instruction.

Survey II consisted of eight questions which were designed for students to respond using a scale of one through four (one reflecting strong agreement and four reflecting strong disagreement). The Likert-scale questions were designed to survey student perceptions of high school instruction and testing conditions. The survey also included a section where students were instructed to rank six factors in order of their influence on their performance on the writing portion of the TASP test. The listed factors were derived from student responses to the open ended questions on the initial survey. In addition, the survey included a section where students were forced to select items from a predetermined list. These items were also derived from responses to the open-ended questions on the first survey. Finally, the questionnaire asked students to describe the specific writing strategies of former high school teachers.

To obtain more detailed descriptions of classroom learning experiences, an interview was conducted during this phase of data collection. The interview followed a guided interview format where a series of predetermined questions were used to elicit information from the informants. These questions were:

1. Describe your former high school English class.
2. Was the atmosphere comfortable or threatening?
3. What types of writing activities did you do in class?
4. How often did you engage in writing activities?
5. Did you write in other classes?
6. Did you feel prepared for the TASP?

Administration of Instruments

Students met with the researcher during the prearranged time. The students completed Survey II at this time. After the students finished the survey, a ten minute interview was conducted with the researcher. The previously indicated questions were used to focus the interview. Students were asked to begin the interview by describing their high school English classes. The students were then allowed to continue talking to cover all guiding questions. The interviews were tape recorded to allow for more interaction between the researcher and the informant. These interviews were later transcribed and subsequently analyzed to determine patterns of response.

Data Analysis--Phase II

The second phase of data analysis consisted of compiling the results of Survey II and transcribing and analyzing the interviews. This phase of analysis covered a two month period. The analysis began in the third week of November and continued through the month of December and the first two weeks of January.

Quantitative Analysis

To provide a statistical analysis of Survey II, the surveys were tabulated using the statistical package, SPSS. The variables entered into the program included pass or fail on the writing section, and high school attended. A frequency distribution count was run on the eight Likert-scale questions to determine the percentages of responses to the questions, the influencing factors to determine the student rankings, and on the forced selection items to determine the areas of instruction that the students perceived as adequately taught. In addition, the questions, influencing factors, and instructional items were split by pass/fail to examine the attitudes of the two groups. Finally, a correlational analysis between pass or fail on the writing section and the influencing factors was also run to substantiate emerging patterns or relationships.

Qualitative Analysis

In order to compile a list of writing strategies the students were exposed to in high school, the responses to

the open-ended question on Survey II were coded into categories of like responses. These categories, in conjunction with responses from Survey I, then contributed to the development of a survey for teacher informants. The tape recorded interviews were transcribed and analyzed to substantiate or refute the emerging patterns of classroom experiences.

Data Collection--Phase III

The third phase of data collection began in the second week of December. After the interruption of Christmas break, data collection was completed in the second week of January. Phase three of data collection consisted of surveying teachers about the role and nature of composition instruction in the high school classroom. Teacher informants were chosen on the basis of the demographic information provided by the initial student surveys. To narrow the group of teachers contacted, the selection was limited to teachers in school districts across the North Texas area.

Design of the Instrument

After collecting and analyzing data received from student informants, the Composition Instruction Survey was developed (see Appendix B). This survey, mailed to teacher informants, was employed to gain the instructor's perspective of the nature of composition in the classroom. The survey contained a section for demographic information

designed to provide information about teaching experience, education, and classroom perspectives. The demographic information included the classes currently being taught, years of teaching experience, and highest degree of education obtained. The researcher requested this information to evaluate possible correlations between education, experience and the opinions expressed on the rest of the survey. In addition to the demographic information, ten questions in a Likert-scale format were also included. The teachers were asked to respond on a scale of one to four (four reflecting strong agreement and one reflecting strong disagreement) to statements about teaching and grading practices. A section where teachers were forced to select items from a predetermined list was also a part of the Composition Instruction Survey. The items on this list were derived from the responses to the open-ended question on the second survey and student interviews. Teachers were asked to select items which were a regular part of their curriculum, frequency of writing in their classroom, and types of discourse written in the classroom. Finally, with an open ended question, the teachers were asked to describe their perception of the role that composition should play in the classroom.

Administration of the Instrument

The Composition Instruction Surveys were distributed to teachers through the mail. A cover letter (see Appendix B)

explaining the nature of the study and requesting their cooperation with the research was included with the survey. In addition, a business reply envelope was included to facilitate the teachers' return of the surveys (see Appendix B).

Data Analysis--Phase III

The third phase of data analysis occurred during the last two weeks of January. This period of analysis consisted of tabulating and coding the responses on the Composition Instruction Surveys.

Quantitative Analysis

To provide a statistical analysis of the Composition Instruction Survey, the surveys were coded and compiled using the statistical package, SPSS. The variables were entered into the program and included high school, years of teaching experience, highest degree of education attained, and frequency of writing assignments. A frequency count of years of experience, education, number of writing assignments, the responses to the Likert scale questions, and of the forced selection items to determine the percentage of teachers who teach different composition strategies was also run.

Qualitative Analysis

In order to obtain a comprehensive and clear picture of the teacher's perspective of the role of composition instruction in the classroom, the responses to the open-

ended question were analyzed and coded into categories of like responses. The responses were then cross referenced with the demographic information provided on the surveys.

Summary

During a five month period, three stages of data collection and data analysis were completed. The data collection included three surveys and one set of interviews. The data analysis included the use of SPSS, a statistical analysis package used to ease in data analysis and manipulation. Data analysis also incorporated quantitative analysis to provide accurate description of emerging relationships.

CHAPTER FOUR

NARRATIVE OF FINDINGS

Introduction

To ease the organization of the discussion of findings this chapter was divided into sections according to the different phases of data collection and data analysis. As in chapter three, the discussion of data analysis was further divided by the discussion of quantitative and qualitative analysis.

Phase I

Data Collection--Phase I

A total of 530 surveys were collected from freshman English students at the University of North Texas. The qualitative analysis of these surveys resulted in eleven pages of written notes which were used to identify students for later surveys and to facilitate a search for emerging patterns and relationships.

Data Analysis--Phase I

The discussion of data analysis was divided into two sections. One section, quantitative analysis, includes a discussion of the statistical analysis performed on the data supplied by Survey 1. The other section, qualitative

analysis, describes the responses to the two opened questions on Survey 1.

Quantitative Analysis

Five hundred and thirty cases were recorded into the statistical package SPSS. The first analytical procedures run on the data were frequency counts. Frequency counts were completed for course (which English course the students were enrolled in when completing the survey), passage of the writing section of the TASP test, gender, ethnicity, and questions one through six.

The frequency count by course indicated that 41 students (7.7% of the sample), were enrolled in English 1200, a developmental writing course designed to assist students who had not passed the writing section of the TASP.

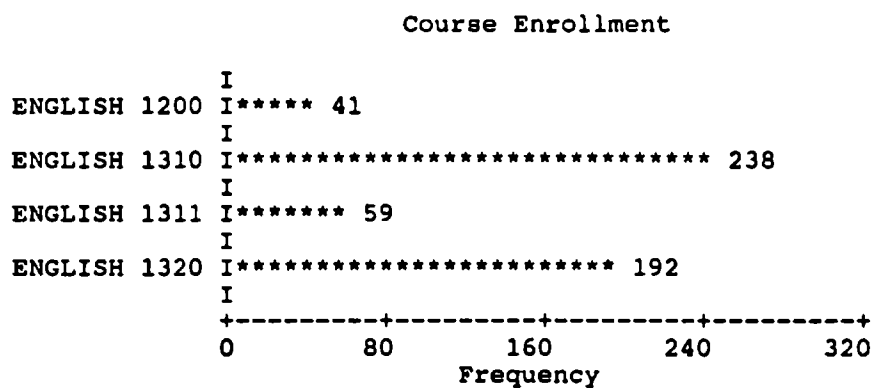


Figure 1

In English 1310, the first semester freshman composition course, 238 students (44.9% of the sample), were enrolled. In the academic core course, English 1311, 59 students (11.1% of the sample), were enrolled. In English 1320, the

second semester freshman composition course, 192 students (36.2% of the sample), were enrolled (see Figure 1).

The frequency count by writing revealed that 42 students (7.9% of the sample), failed the writing portion of the TASP. 189 students (35.7% of the sample), passed the writing portion, and 299 students (56.4% of the sample) did not record a score on the survey.

The majority of the students who responded to the ethnicity question were Euro-American. The Euro-American grouping consisted of 348 students (80.2% of the sample). The remainder of the sample consisted of 27 Hispanic students (6.2% of the sample), 23 Asian-American students (5.3% of the sample), 31 African-American students (7.1% of the sample), and 5 students who labeled themselves as "other" (1.2% of the sample) (see Figure 2).

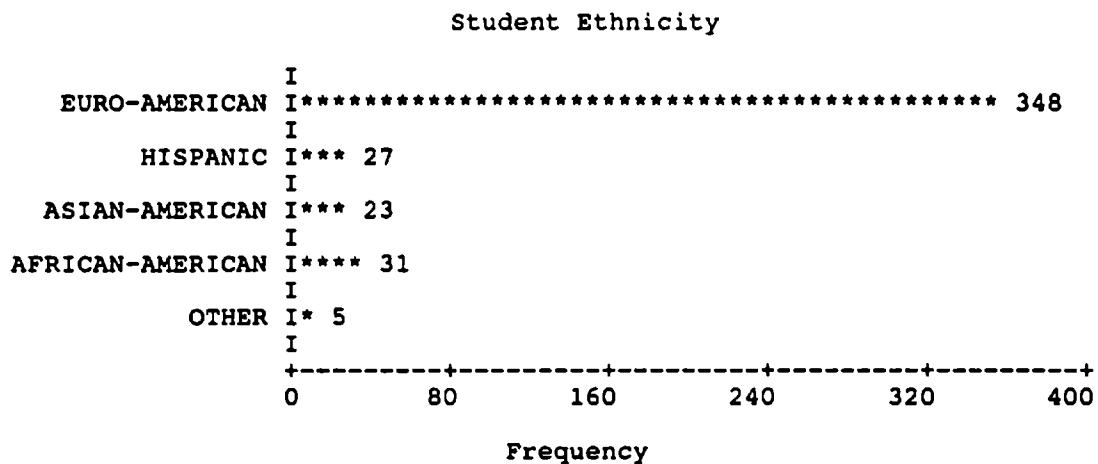


Figure 2

Of the students responding to the gender question, the sample included slightly more females than males. The

sample consisted of 278 female students (55.4% of the sample) and 224 male students (44.6% of the sample).

To determine the range and frequencies of responses to six Likert-scale questions, a frequency count was run on each question. The frequency counts were run by total response and by course. The first question, "To prepare for my TASP Test, I had an opportunity to practice writing a variety of papers," was designed to measure student perceptions of their preparation for the test. The students were required to respond on a Likert scale (one reflecting total agreement and five reflecting total disagreement).

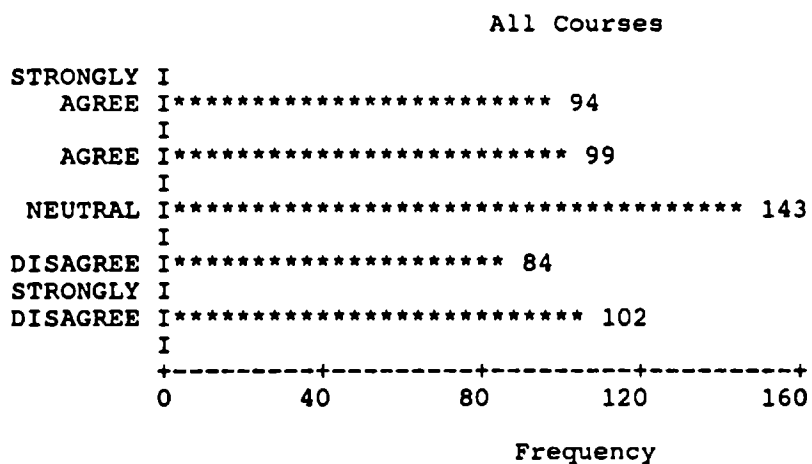
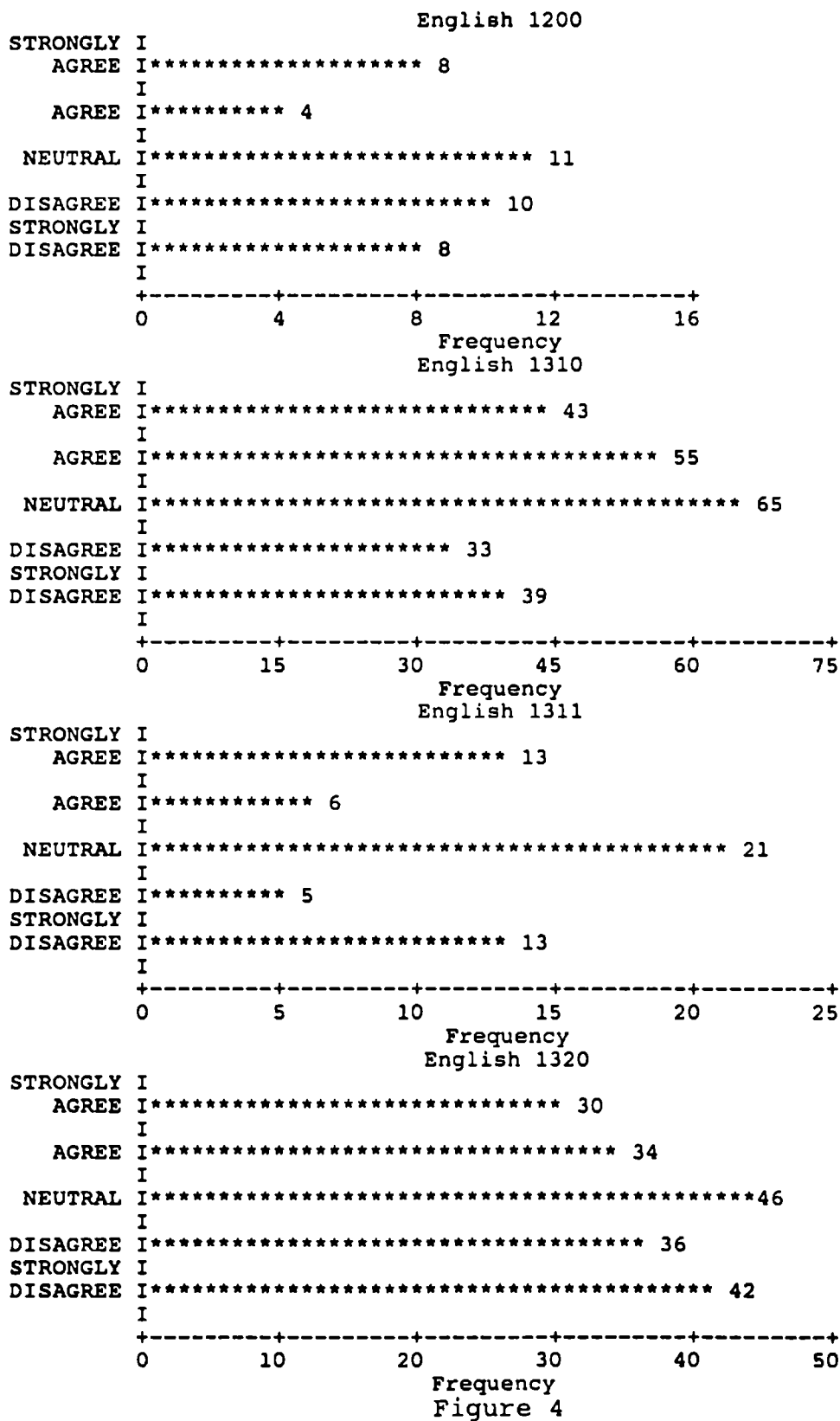


Figure 3

Of the students responding to question one, 94 (18%) indicated strong agreement, 99 (19%) indicated agreement, 143 (27.4%) indicated a neutral position, 84 (16.1%) indicated disagreement, and 102 (19.5%) indicated strong disagreement (see Figure 3). By discounting the neutral responses, the researcher determined that slightly more .



students indicated agreement (193 students or 51%) than disagreement (186 or 49%).

The responses to question one were also examined by course. By examining Figure 4, it is clear that student responses varied by course. When discounting the neutral responses, the researcher determined that in English 1200 60% of the students (18) indicated disagreement while only 40% of the students (12) indicated agreement. For English 1310, only 35% of the students (72) indicated disagreement with question one, while 65% of the students (98) indicated agreement. In English 1311, only slightly less students indicated disagreement (18 students or 49%) than agreement (19 students or 51%). Finally, in English 1320, 55% of the students (78) indicated disagreement, while 45% of the students (64) indicated agreement.

Overall, only slightly more students indicated agreement than disagreement to question one ("To prepare for my TASP Test, I had an opportunity to practice writing a variety of types of papers."). However, more students in 1310 and 1311 indicated agreement than disagreement, while in 1200 and 1320 more students indicated disagreement than agreement. A frequency count of the responses to question two, "In high school, the teachers prepared the students for the TAAS and the TASP," was also run. The results of this count indicated that students tended to disagree with this statement. Of the students responding to this question, 81

(15.4%) indicated strong agreement, 93 (17.7%) indicated agreement, 139 (26.5%) indicated a neutral position, 80 (15.2%) indicated disagreement, and 132 (25.1%) indicated strong disagreement (see Figure 5). By discounting the neutral responses, the researcher determined that only 45% of the students (174) indicated agreement with question two, while 55% of the students (212) indicated disagreement.

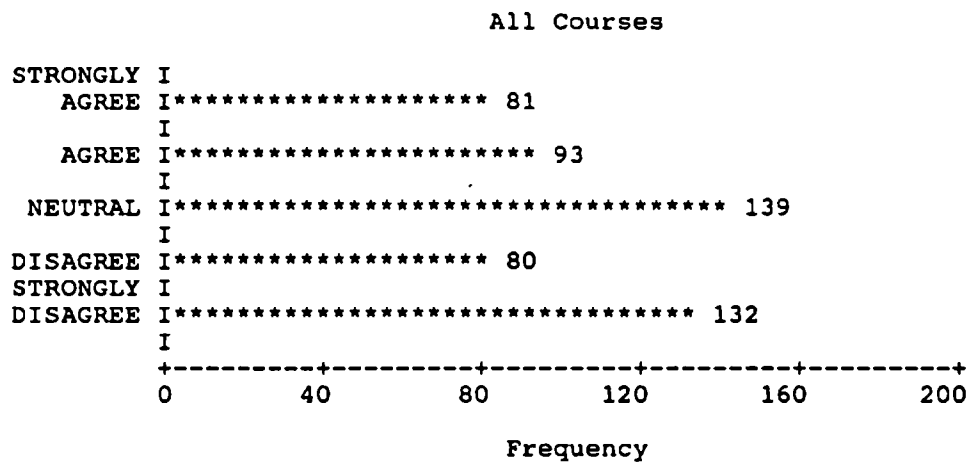


Figure 5

The responses to question two were also examined by course. By examining Figure 6, it is clear that student responses varied by course. By discounting the neutral responses, the researcher determined that in English 1200 only 40% of the students (13) indicated agreement with question two, while 60% of the students (19) indicated disagreement. In English 1310, however, more students indicated agreement than disagreement; 52% of the students (92) indicated agreement to question two, while 48% of the students (84) indicated disagreement. In English 1311, only

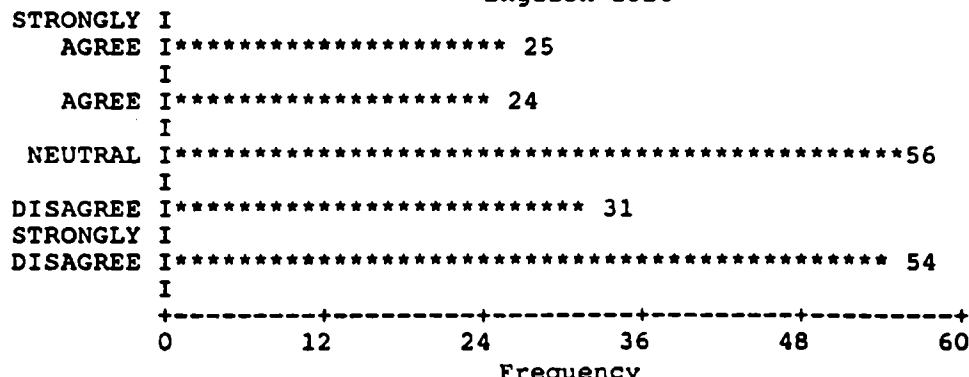
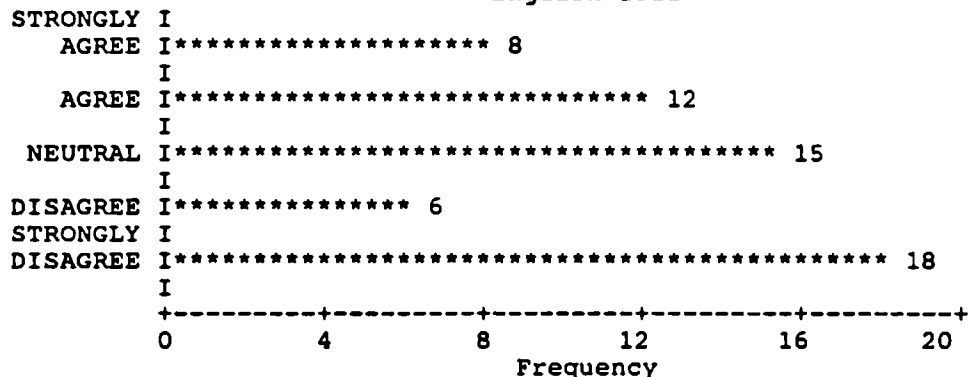
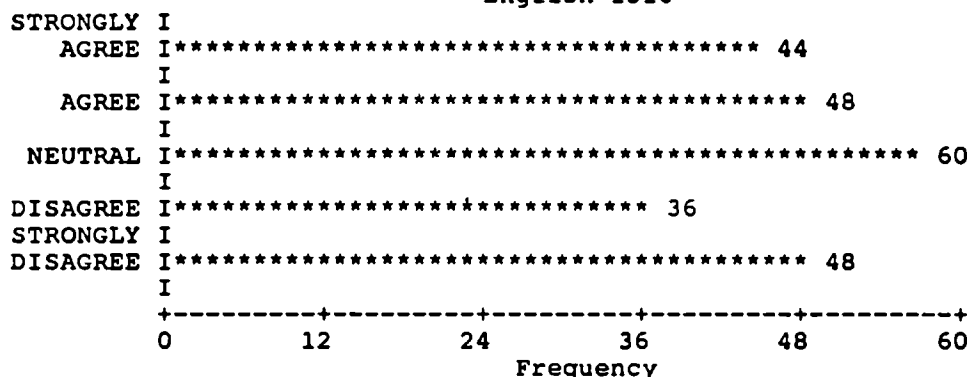
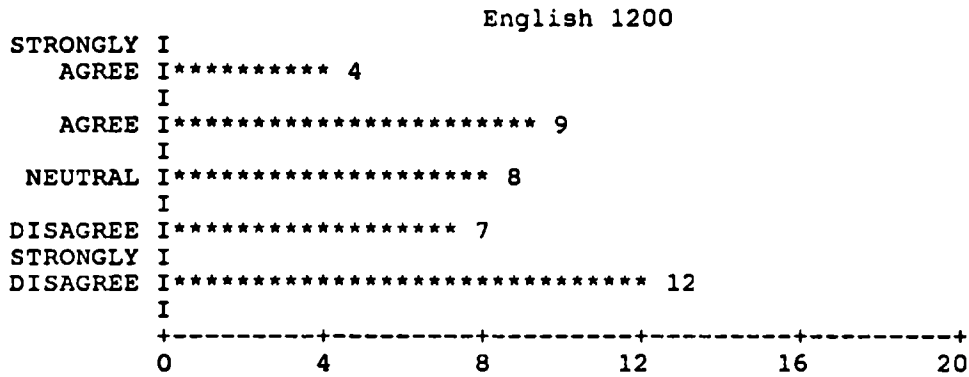


Figure 6

45% of the students indicated agreement, while 55% of the students indicated disagreement, and in English 1320 only 37% of the students (49) indicated agreement, while 63% of the students (85) indicated disagreement.

Overall, the majority of students who responded to question two indicated disagreement. More students from English 1200, 1311 and 1320 indicated disagreement than agreement; however, more students in English 1310 indicated agreement than disagreement.

A frequency count of the responses to question three, "I think my writing skills are similar to most college students," was also run. The results of this count indicated that students overwhelmingly agreed with this statement. Of the students responding to question three, 78 (14.7%) indicated strong agreement, 194 (36.6%) indicated agreement, 166 (31.3%) indicated a neutral position, 69

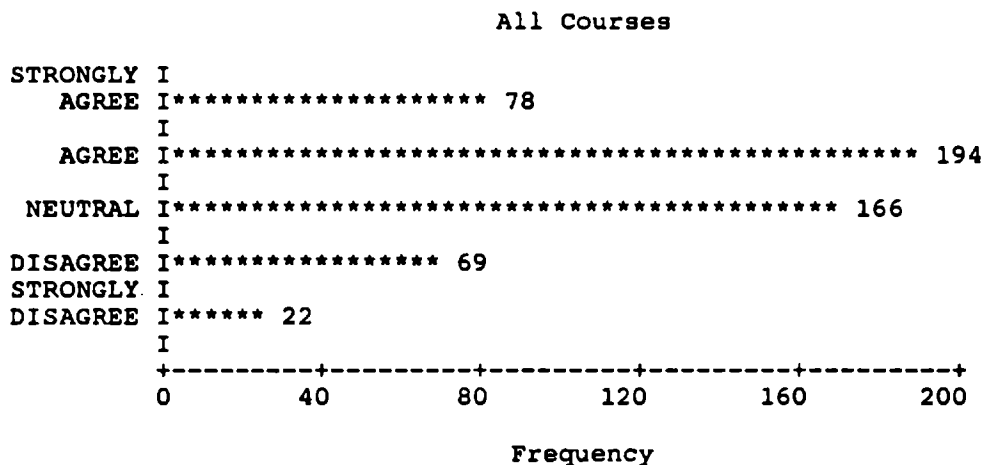
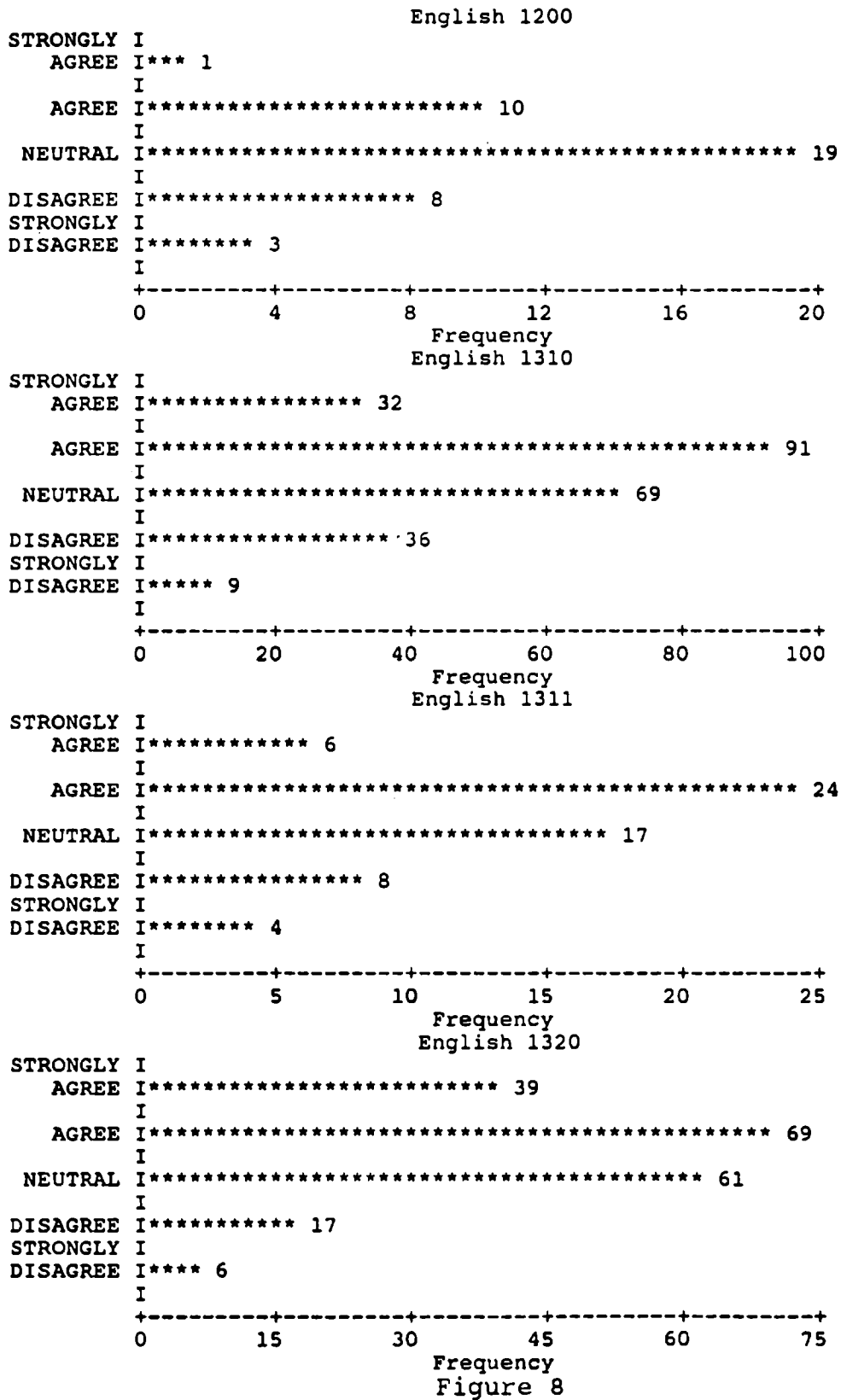


Figure 7

(13.0%) indicated disagreement, and only 22 (4.2%) indicated strong disagreement (see Figure 7). By discounting the neutral responses, the researcher determined that an overwhelming 75% of the students (272) indicated agreement with question three, while only 25% of the students (91) indicated disagreement.

The responses to question three were also examined by course. By examining Figure 8, it is clear that the students almost overwhelmingly agreed by course. By discounting the neutral responses, the researcher determined that students in English 1200 split agreement and disagreement evenly, 11 students indicated agreement and 11 indicated disagreement with question three. In English 1310, 73% of the students (123) indicated agreement, while 27% of the students (45) indicated disagreement. In English 1311 the results were similar, 71% of the students (30) indicated agreement, while 29% of the students (12) indicated disagreement. Finally in English 1320, 82% of the students (108) indicated agreement, while 18% of the students (23) indicated disagreement with the statement.

Overall, the majority of students who responded to question three indicated agreement with the statement, "I think my writing skills are similar to most college students." Students in English 1310, 1311, and 1320 indicated 70% or more agreement. However, the students in English 1200 indicated that their opinions, about the



comparability of their writing skills to other college students, were split.

A frequency count of the responses to question four, "I think my high school English teachers taught me to write very well," was also run. The results of this count indicated that students tended to agree with this statement. Of the students responding to this statement, 144 (27.3%) indicated strong agreement, 163 (30.9%) indicated agreement, 120 (22.7%) indicated a neutral position, 58 (11.0%) indicated disagreement, and 42 (8.0%) indicated strong disagreement (see Figure 9). By discounting the neutral

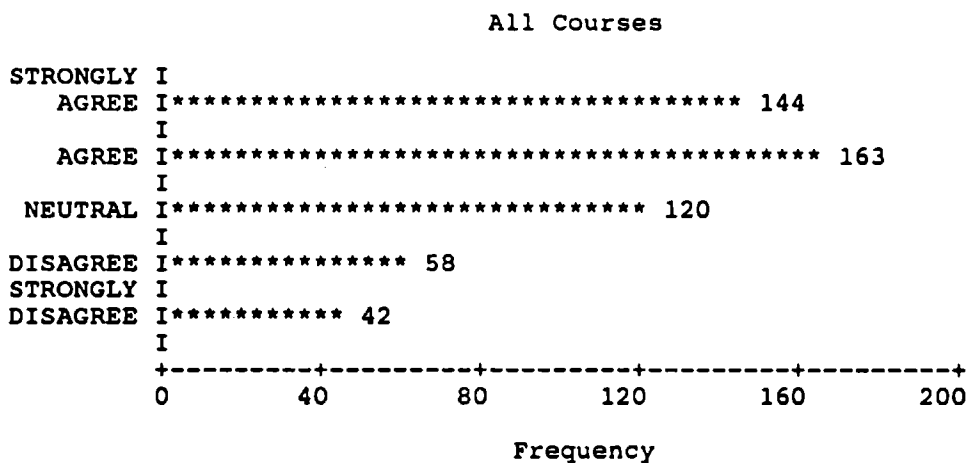
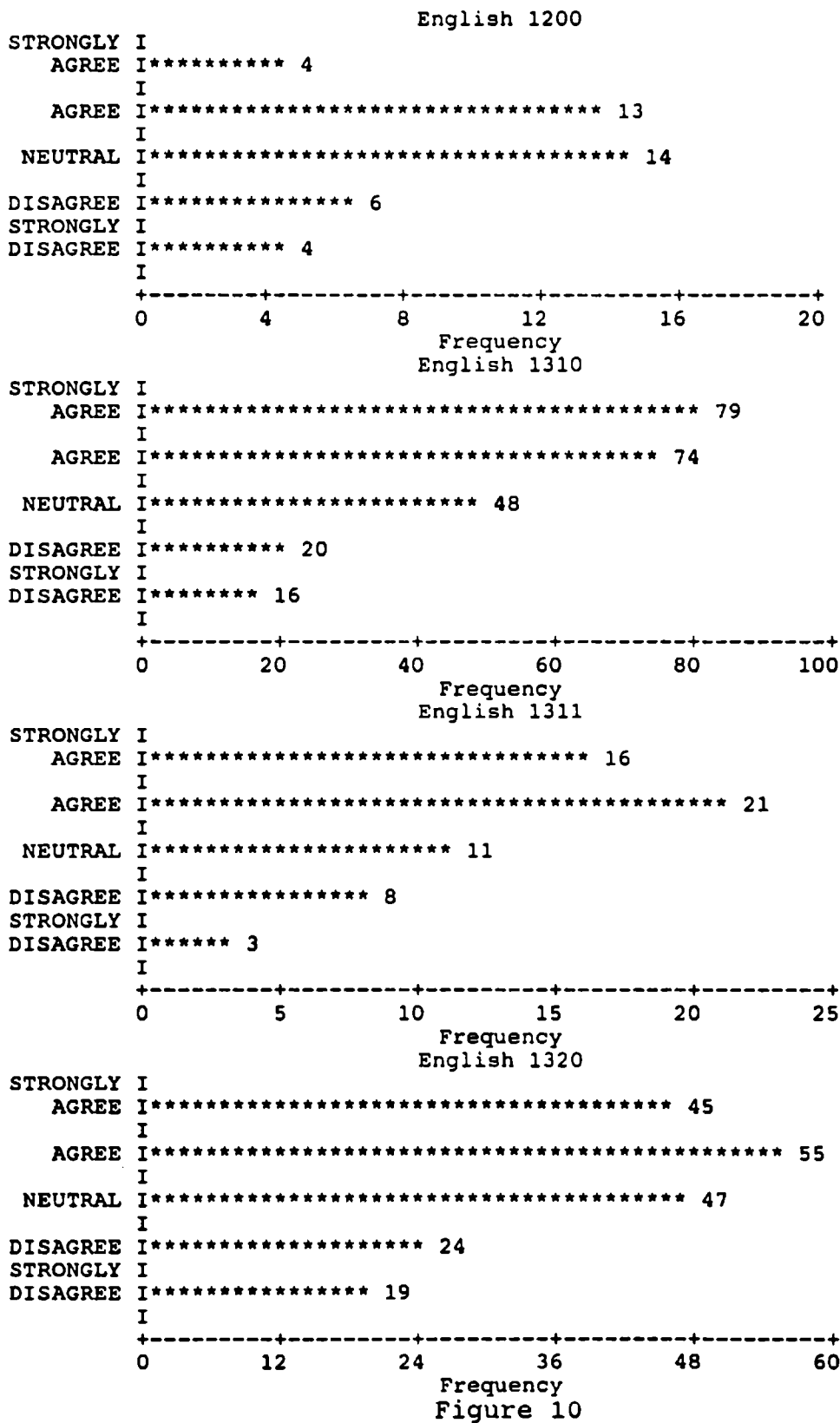


Figure 9

responses, the researcher determined that 78% of the students (307) indicated that they felt their teachers taught them to write well, while only 22% of the students (90) disagreed with this statement.

The responses to question four were also examined by course. By examining Figure 10, it is clear that the



majority of students in all courses agreed with the statement. By discounting the neutral responses, the researcher determined that 63% of the students (17) in English 1200 agreed with the statement, while 37% of the students (10) disagreed. In English 1310, 81% of the students (153) agreed with question four, and 19% of the students (36) disagreed. In English 1311, 77% of the students (37) indicated agreement, while 23% of the students (11) indicated disagreement. Finally, in English 1320, 70% of the students (100) indicated agreement, and 30% of the students (43) indicated disagreement.

Overall, the majority of students in all four courses indicated agreement. The students agreed with the statement, "I think my high school English teachers taught me to write very well."

A frequency count of the responses to question five, "When I took the TASP Test, I was prepared to take the writing section," was also run. The results of this count indicated that the majority of students indicated agreement with this statement. Of the students responding to question five, 163 (31.2%) indicated strong agreement, 144 (27.5%) indicated agreement, 113 (21.6%) indicated a neutral position, 54 (10.3%) indicated disagreement, and 49 (9.4%) indicated strong disagreement (see Figure 11). By discounting the neutral responses, the researcher determined that 75% of the students (307) indicated agreement with

question five, while only 25% of the students (103) indicated disagreement.

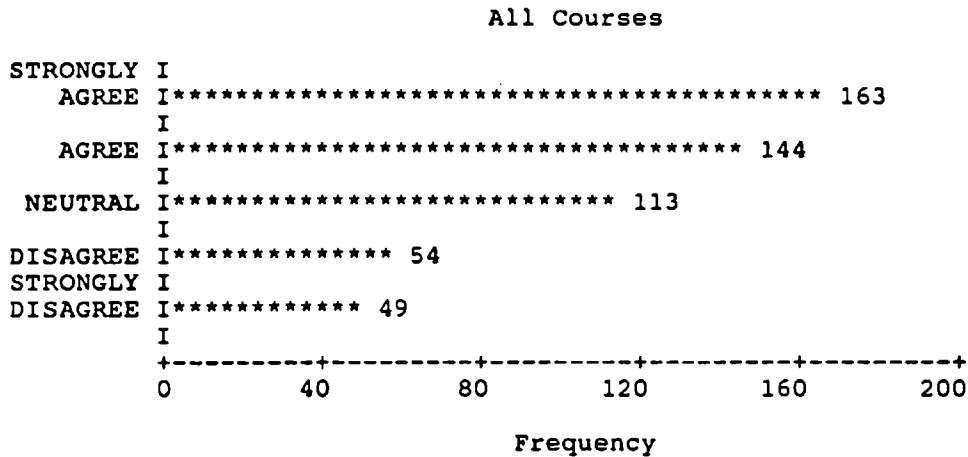


Figure 11

The responses to question five were also examined by course. By examining Figure 12, it is clear that the students' perceptions of preparedness differed by course. By discounting the neutral responses, the researcher determined that more of the students in English 1200 disagreed (22 or 63%) with question five than agreed (13 or 37%). In English 1310, 82% of the students (151) agreed with the statement while only 18% of the students (33) disagreed with the statement. In English 1311, 76% of the students (35) agreed with question five, and 24% of the students (11) disagreed. Finally in English 1320, 74% of the students (108) indicated agreement with the statement, and 26% of the students (37) indicated disagreement.

Overall, the majority of students who responded to question five indicated agreement with the statement, "When I took the TASP Test, I was prepared to take the writing

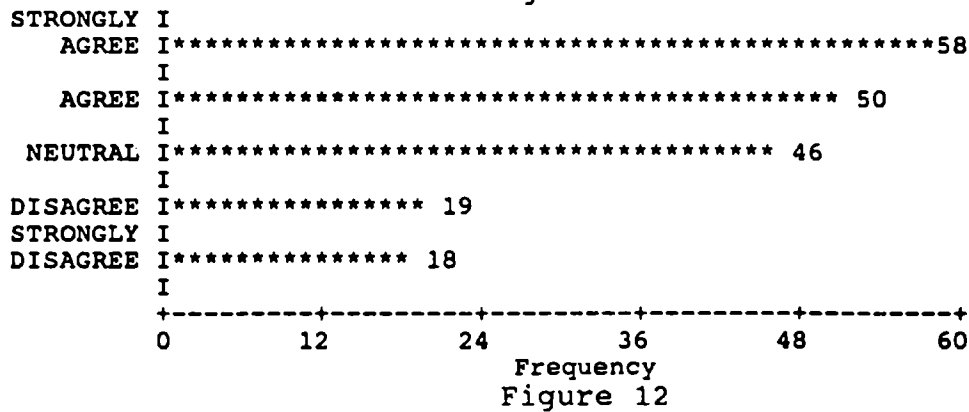
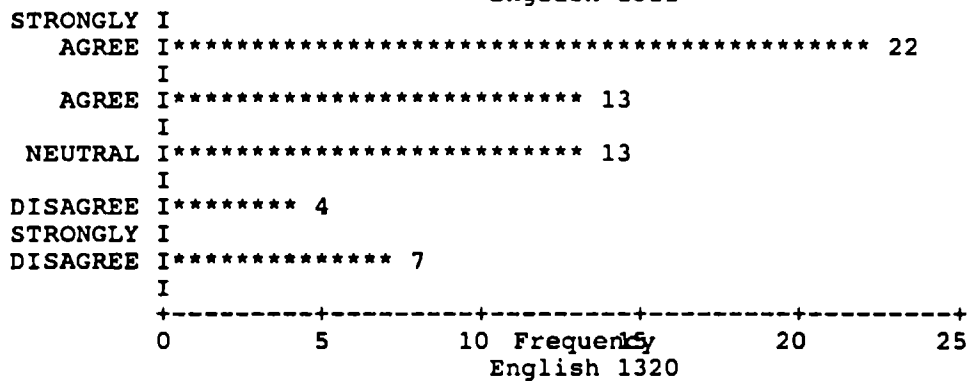
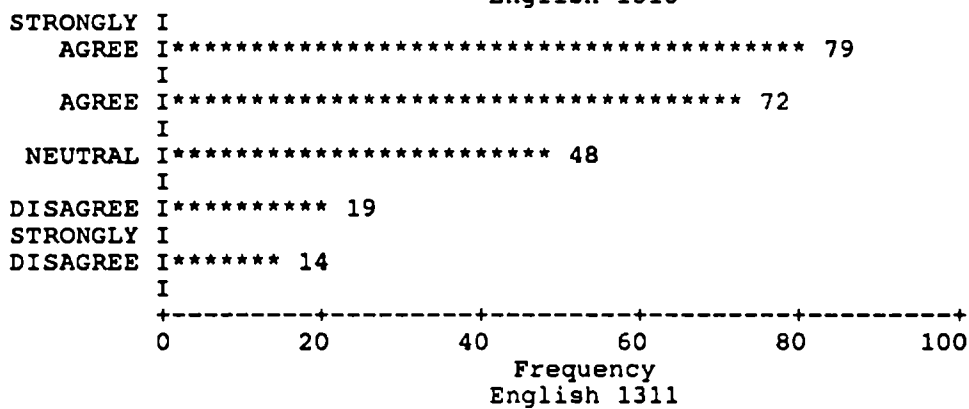
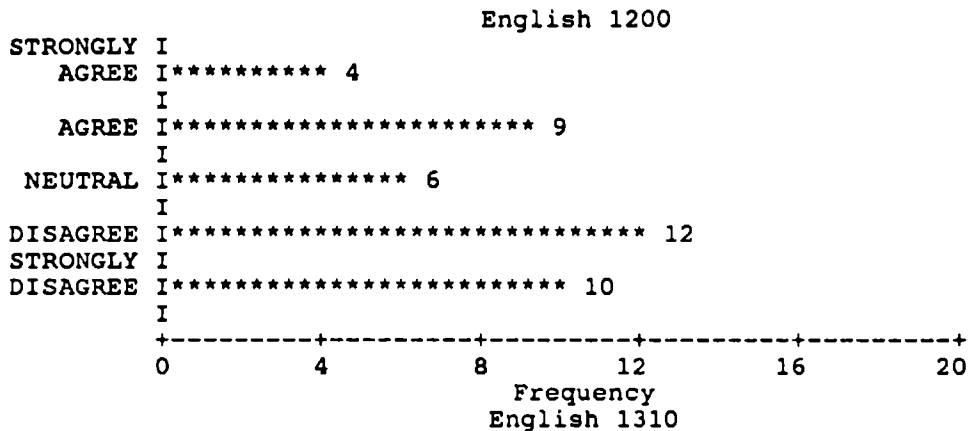


Figure 12

section." Students in every course except English 1200 agreed that they were prepared to take the writing section of the TASP.

A frequency count of the responses to question six, "When I left the TASP testing center, I felt I did well on the writing section," was also run. The results of this count indicated that the majority of students agreed with this statement. Of the students responding to question six, 188 (36.0%) indicated strong agreement, 143 (27.4%) indicated agreement, 90 (17.2%) indicated a neutral position, 53 (10.2%) indicated disagreement, and 48 (9.2%) indicated strong disagreement (see Figure 13). By discounting the neutral responses, the researcher determined that 67% of the students (331) indicated agreement with question six, while 33% of the students (151) indicated disagreement.

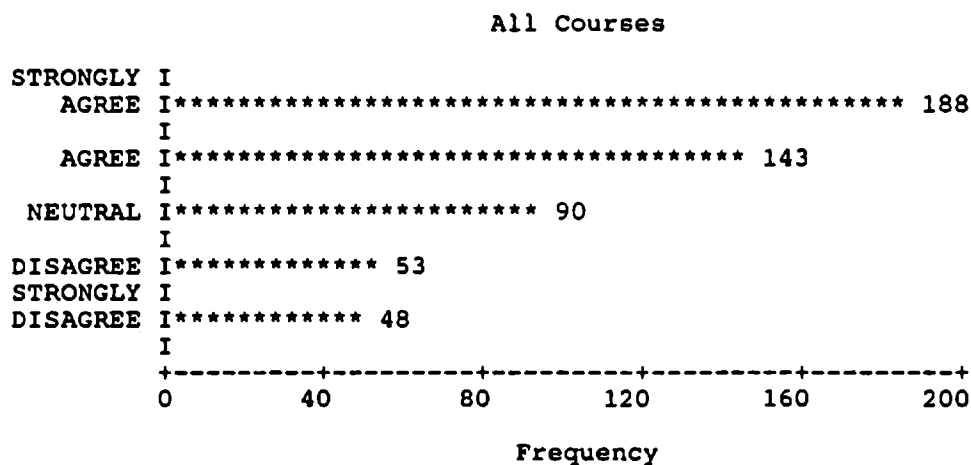


Figure 13

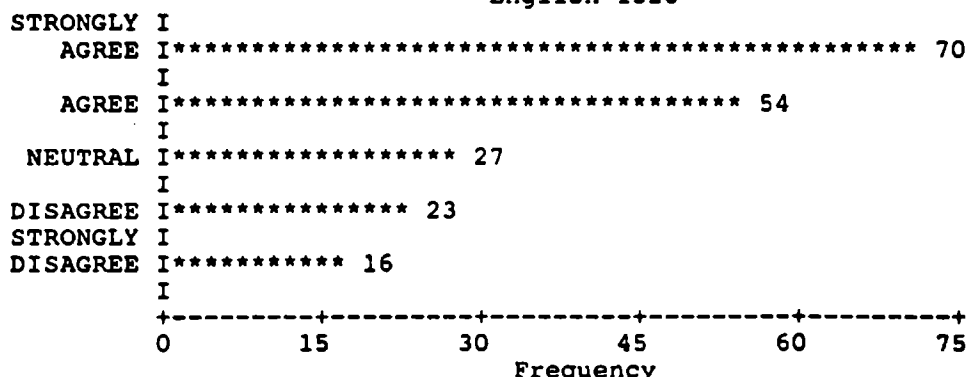
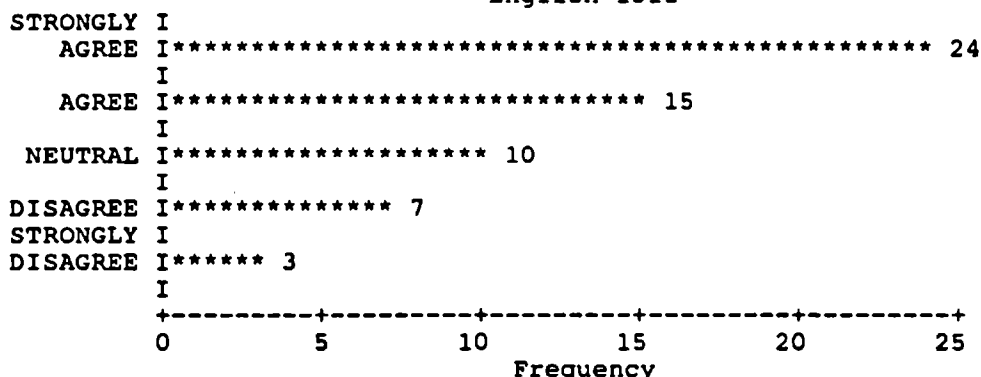
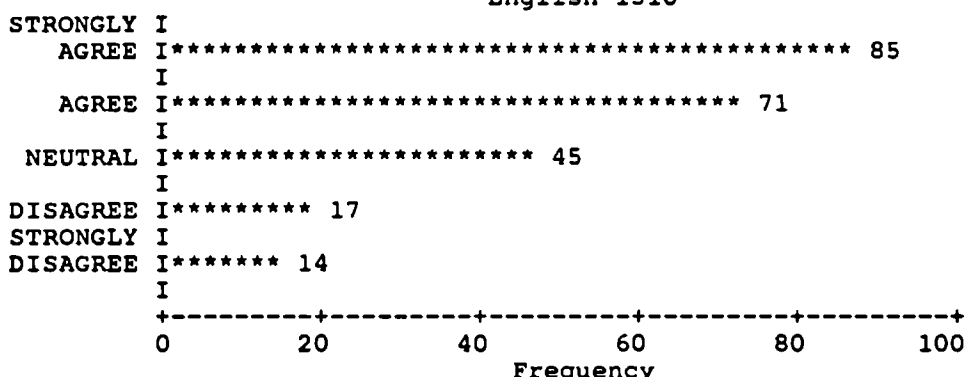
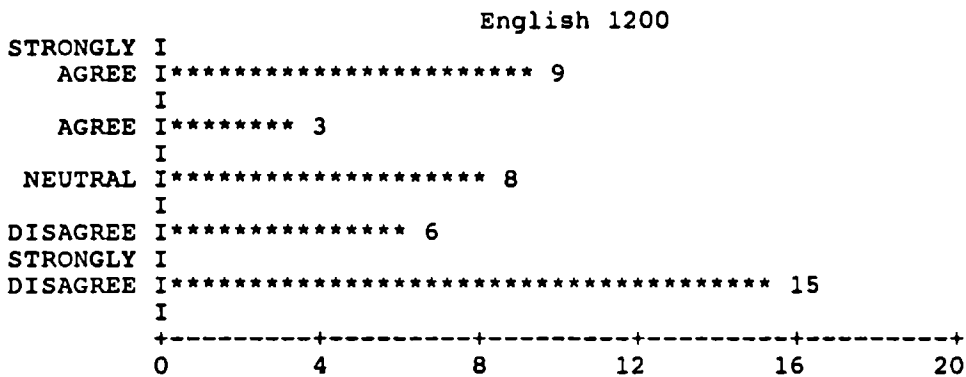


Figure 14

The responses to question six were also examined by course. By examining Figure 14, it is clear that the students varied their responses by course. By discounting the neutral responses, the researcher determined that the majority of students in English 1200 disagreed with the statement, only 36% (12) agreed with the statement while 64% (21) disagreed. In English 1310, 83% of the students (156) indicated agreement with question six, while only 17% of the students (31) indicated disagreement. In English 1311, 80% of the students (39) indicated agreement with the statement, and 20% of the students (10) indicated disagreement. Finally, of the students in English 1320, 76% (124) indicated agreement and 24% (39) indicated disagreement.

Overall the majority of students who responded to question six indicated agreement with the statement, " When I left the TASP testing center, I felt I did well on the writing section. Although the overall majority of students agreed with this statement, the majority of English 1200 students disagreed.

Following the frequency counts, the data was subjected to a statistical procedure for a determination of the means of GPA and SAT score. The means were determined in order to help provide an overview of the students in relation to the SAT scores and GPAs. The means were also analyzed in reference to pass/fail on the writing section and course enrollment.

The overall mean of the GPA, with 479 responses to that question, was 3.27 on a 4.0 scale. For students who indicated that they passed the writing section, the mean was 3.34. For students who indicated that they failed the writing section, the mean was 2.95. The mean for students enrolled in 1200 was 2.92, in 1310 was 3.37, in 1311 was 3.80, and in 1320 was 3.10 (see Table 2).

The overall mean of the SAT score, with 335 responses recorded, was 980.88. Students who passed the writing section recorded a mean score of 992.01, while students who failed the writing section recorded a mean score of 895.94. The mean score for students enrolled in 1200 was 877.00, in 1310 was 959.82, in 1311 was 1082.37, and in 1320 was 991.75 (see Table 2).

<u>VARIABLE</u>	<u>GPA</u>	<u>SAT</u>
Overall	3.27	980.88
Pass	3.34	992.01
Fail	2.95	895.94
English 1200	2.92	877.00
English 1310	3.37	959.82
English 1311	3.80	1082.37
English 1320	3.10	991.75

Table 2

A third statistical procedure performed on the data was a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA). The ANOVA was run on the dependent variables, Likert-scale questions one

through six, by the independent variables, course one through four (English 1200, 1310, 1311, and 1320) to determine if the respondents' attitudes to the questions were significantly different by course ($P < .05$). Then, a Tukey test was run to determine which group had a significant difference.

The dependent variable, question one ("To prepare for my TASP Test, I had an opportunity to practice writing a variety of papers.") was analyzed for variance by the independent variable course. The ANOVA indicated that the F probability was .2141. Since the level of significance was set at .05 ($P < .05$), there was no significant difference between the responses of the four courses (see Table 3). By referring to Figure 4 (Frequency Responses to Question One), the researcher confirmed the similarity of responses to question one by course.

Variable Q1
By Variable COURSE

ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE					
SOURCE	D.F.	SUM OF SQUARES	MEAN SQUARES	F RATIO	F PROB.
BETWEEN GROUPS	3	8.3189	2.7730	1.4983	.2141
WITHIN GROUPS	518	958.6792	1.8507		
TOTAL	521	966.9981			

Table 3

The dependant variable question two ("In high school, the teachers prepared students for the TAAS and the TASP."), was analyzed for variance by the independent variable

course. The ANOVA indicated that the F probability was 0.0453. Since the level of significance was set at 0.050 ($P < 0.050$), a significant difference existed between the responses to question two by course. The Tukey test indicated that the groups significantly different at the 0.050 were group 2 (English 1310) and group 4 (English 1320) (see Table 4). An examination of the frequency of responses to question two (see Figure 6), indicated that students in English 1310 generally agreed with the statement while students in English 1320 generally disagreed with the statement.

Variable Q2
By Variable COURSE

ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE					
SOURCE	D.F.	SUM OF SQUARES	MEAN SQUARES	F RATIO	F PROB.
BETWEEN GROUPS	3	15.4391	5.1464	2.6961	.0453
WITHIN GROUPS	521	994.4733	1.9088		
TOTAL	524	1009.9124			

(*) DENOTES PAIRS OF GROUPS SIGNIFICANTLY DIFFERENT AT THE 0.050 LEVEL

Mean	Group	G G G G
2.9831	Grp 2	r r r r
3.2373	Grp 3	p p p p
3.3421	Grp 4	2 3 4 1
3.3500	Grp 1	*

Table 4

The dependent variable question three ("I think that my writing skills are similar to most college students."), was analyzed for variance by the dependent variable course. The

ANOVA indicated that the F probability was 0.0014. Since the level of significance was set at 0.050 ($P < 0.050$), significant difference existed between the responses to question three by course. The Tukey test indicated that there was a significant difference between group one (English 1200) and group two (English 1310) and between group one and group four (English 1320) at the 0.050 level (see Table 5). An examination of the frequency of responses to question three (see Figure 8) indicated that students in English 1200 generally disagreed with the statement while students in 1310 and 1320 tended to agree.

Variable Q3
By Variable COURSE

ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE					
SOURCE	D.F.	SUM OF SQUARES	MEAN SQUARES	F RATIO	F PROB.
BETWEEN GROUPS	3	16.2607	5.4202	5.2642	.0014
WITHIN GROUPS	525	540.5598	1.0296		
TOTAL	528	556.8204			

(*) DENOTES PAIRS OF GROUPS SIGNIFICANTLY DIFFERENT AT THE 0.050 LEVEL

Mean	Group	G G G G
2.3854	Grp 4	r r r r
2.5738	Grp 2	P P P P
2.6610	Grp 3	4 2 3 1
3.0488	Grp 1	* *

Table 5

The dependant variable question four ("I think my high school English teachers taught me to write very well.), was analyzed for variance by the dependant variable course. The

ANOVA indicated that the F probability was 0.0070. Since the level of significance was set at 0.050 ($P < 0.050$), a significant difference existed between the responses to question four by course. The Tukey test indicated that the significant difference was between group two (English 1310) and group four (English 1320) and between group two and group one (English 1200). An examination of the frequency of responses by course to question four (see Figure 10) indicated that students in 1310 (group two) had a higher percentage of agreement than students in 1200 (group one) and 1320 (group four).

Variable Q4
By Variable COURSE

ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE					
SOURCE	D.F.	SUM OF SQUARES	MEAN SQUARES	F RATIO	F PROB.
BETWEEN GROUPS	3	18.0425	6.0142	4.0843	.0070
WITHIN GROUPS	524	771.5938	1.4725		
TOTAL	527	789.6364			

(*) DENOTES PAIRS OF GROUPS SIGNIFICANTLY DIFFERENT AT THE 0.050 LEVEL

Mean	Group	G G G G
2.2405	Grp 2	r r r r
2.3390	Grp 3	P P P P
2.5497	Grp 4	2 3 4 1
2.8293	Grp 1	* *

Table 6

The dependent variable question five ("When I took the TASP test, I was prepared to take the writing section."), was analyzed for variance by the dependent variable course.

The ANOVA indicated that the F probability was 0.000. Since the level of significance was set at 0.050 ($P < 0.050$), a significant difference existed between the responses to question five by course. The Tukey test indicated that the significant difference was between group one (English 1200) and the three other courses (see Table 7). An examination of the frequency responses to question five by course (see Figure 12) indicated that students in English 1200 tended to disagree with the statement while students in the other courses tended to agree.

Variable Q5
By Variable COURSE

ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE					
SOURCE	D.F.	SUM OF SQUARES	MEAN SQUARES	F RATIO	F PROB.
BETWEEN GROUPS	3	46.7707	15.5902	10.0404	.0000
WITHIN GROUPS	519	805.8755	1.5527		
TOTAL	522	852.6463			

(*) DENOTES PAIRS OF GROUPS SIGNIFICANTLY DIFFERENT AT THE 0.050 LEVEL

Mean	Group	G G G G
2.2112	Grp 2	r r r r
2.3390	Grp 3	p p p p
2.4188	Grp 4	2 3 4 1
3.3659	Grp 1	* * *

Table 7

The dependent variable question six ("When I left the TASP testing center, I felt I did well on the writing section."), was analyzed for variance by the dependent variable course. The ANOVA indicated that the F probability

was 0.000. Since the level of significance was set at 0.050 ($P < 0.050$), a significant difference existed between the responses to question five by course. The Tukey test indicated that the significant difference was between group one (English 1200) and the three other courses (see Table 8). An examination the frequency responses to question six by course (see Figure 14) indicated that students in English 1200 tended to disagree with the statement while students in the other courses tended to agree.

Variable Q6
By Variable COURSE

ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE					
SOURCE	D.F.	SUM OF SQUARES	MEAN SQUARES	F RATIO	F PROB.
BETWEEN GROUPS	3	52.8758	17.6253	11.0684	.0000
WITHIN GROUPS	518	824.8636	1.5924		
TOTAL	521	877.7395			

(*) DENOTES PAIRS OF GROUPS SIGNIFICANTLY DIFFERENT AT THE 0.050 LEVEL

Mean	Group	G	G	G	G
2.1525	Grp 3	r	r	r	r
2.1552	Grp 2	p	p	p	p
2.2684	Grp 4	3	2	4	1
3.3659	Grp 1	*	*	*	

Table 8

The final statistical procedure performed on the data was a correlational analysis of GPA, SAT, pass/fail of the writing section, and course. An examination of Table 9 would indicate that there is a correlation between GPA and SAT, GPA and writing, SAT and writing, SAT and course, and

writing and course. However, due the number of missing cases, these results cannot be substantiated.

Variable	Cases	Mean	Std Dev
GPA	479	3.2714	.5762
SAT	335	980.8806	152.4478
WRITING	231	.8182	.3865
COURSE	530	2.7585	1.0317

- - Correlation Coefficients - -

	GPA	SAT	WRITING	COURSE
GPA	1.0000	.2723**	.2428**	-.0852
SAT	.2723**	1.0000	.1682*	.1582**
WRITING	.2428**	.1682*	1.0000	.6312**
COURSE	-.0852	.1582**	.6312**	1.0000
0* - Signif. LE .05		** - Signif. LE .01		(2-tailed)

Table 9

Qualitative Analysis

Qualitative analysis in phase one involved the examination of the two open ended questions on Survey I. The first open ended question was designed to determine student perceptions of how their writing skills are similar or different to other college students. This question was analyzed by course. That is, the responses to this question were analyzed in reference to each separate English course.

Of the 42 students who completed the survey in English 1200, 22 responses to the first open ended question were recorded. 41% of the responses indicated that the students believed that their writing skills were average or above average when compared with other students. These responses typically suggested that the students felt they wrote well,

had average skills or were confident in their writing ability due to past Advanced Placement or Honors English courses in high school. The following remarks exemplify these responses:

I enjoy writing and feel I write relatively well.

(male, 1200)

I feel I can comprehend the subject matter and write a good essay. (Carrie, 1200)

I think I can delever my idea. (male, 1200)

I think my writing skills are average compared with other college freshman. I was enrolled in honors English for three years and my senior year I was enrolled in Honors/AP English. (Tiffany, 1200)

Although a large percentage of the 1200 students stated that they had average or above average writing skills, the majority, 59%, of the responses indicated that the students felt that their writing skills were weaker or below those of most college students. In these responses students stated that they had weaker writing skills, poor spelling, poor grammar, the need to use development, poor word usage, and that the students were not taught to write well in high school. Student remarks included the following examples:

I don't think my writing skills are as developed as

most college students. (female, 1200)

I think my writing skills are worse than most college students. (Lee, 1200)

I wasn't taught enough methods in high school. (Greg, 1200)

My writing is very unfocused, and unflowing, and word use is not very good. (female, 1200)

I don't feel that I have as good of a background in writing. My senior year was the only year I had a good English teacher, so I feel I'm pretty far behind. (female, 1200).

Of the 238 students who completed Survey 1 and were enrolled in English 1310, the first semester freshman English course, 85 responses to the first open-ended question were given. From the students in 1310, a large percentage of the responses indicated that the students felt that they had average or above average skills. 79% of the responses given by the students suggested that the students felt confident about their writing skills. These responses included that the students believed they had stronger vocabulary than most students, good organizational skills, that their skills were stronger due to an honor or advanced

placement high school English class, or that their skills were strong as a result of a journalism or creative writing class. Some remarks which typify this category include:

I took an honors, AP English course for three years. The teachers I had for these classes were exceptional, and they easily prepared me for writing in college.

(Chris, 1310)

My writing skills are probably better than most college students. I worked on the newspaper for three years and enjoyed writing papers for English. (Elisa, 1310)

I feel I am very focused in my writing, and tend to prove my thesis. Others seem they do not even have a thesis. (Traci, 1310)

I feel that my writing skills may be a bit higher than those of the average college freshman, I had an excellent senior English teacher and was enrolled in honor level courses. I'm confident in my writing ability and I feel that most students are not. (Laura, 1310)

The other 21% of the 1310 students responding to the first open ended question described a different picture of their writing abilities. Their responses suggested that they felt they had below average writing skills. Some of

the weaknesses these students mentioned were weak vocabulary, poor spelling, limited writing experience, limited knowledge of writing, weak grammar, and poor instruction in high school. Some responses typical of this description were:

I feel as though there were not any of my teachers in high school that really taught us how to write. (male, 1310)

My grammar and mechanics isn't that great. (female, 1310)

I don't know exactly how to organize thoughts. (female, 1310)

I feel my writing skills are much lower than other students. After reading friend's papers and peer editing classmates' papers, I was astounded by the way others are able to express every thought and feeling. I have great trouble expressing myself and proving a point. (Wendy, 1310)

For the course English 1311, the academic core course, 48 responses were recorded from the 59 students who completed the questionnaire. Of these responses 71% revealed that the students felt they had average or above average composition skills. Some characteristics of these

responses were: the use of a strong form, good teachers, and enrollment in honors or advanced placement high school English classes. Typical responses from these students included:

I was in an honors English class my junior year with an excellent teacher who spent a lot of time teaching us to form a thesis statement and offer support. I was in AP English my senior year with a teacher who also helped my writing skills. I think that once I know what I'm doing, in terms of writing, I can do it pretty well. Maybe a little above average. (Mary, 1311)

I have been writing for years and know a lot about correct form. (female, 1311)

I use extensive vocabulary words and my grammar is correct. (Jennie, 1311)

The other 29% of the responses from the students enrolled in 1311 indicated that the students felt their skills were below average. These students typically remarked that they had poor organization, low vocabulary, poor grammar, and little writing experience. The following remarks exemplify these student opinions:

I have poor grammar mistakes and bad sentence structure. (unknown, 1311)

I feel my writing skills are different from that of other college students because I am much less experienced. I am slightly lower than the average student when it comes to writing. (Will, 1311)

I don't feel as though my writing skills are very well. I have a hard time organizing my thought and ideas into a paper. (Naomi, 1311)

The last course group to be examined was the students enrolled in English 1320, the second semester freshman composition course. Of the 192 students who completed the survey 154 responses to the first open-ended question were recorded. Of these responses 82% of the students indicated that they thought their skills were average or above average. The students felt their skills were average or above average due to their good organization, vocabulary, grammar, and high school English experiences. These responses included comments such as:

I feel that I might be better at grammar than most college students. (male, 1320)

I feel that I write as well or better than most other college students. I have always liked to write and read and I can express myself adequately. (male, 1320)

I did high school and college grammar in middle school

and I learned most mechanics of writing in high school.
(unknown, 1320)

I feel like my writing skills are equivalent to other students. My senior English teacher was the best I ever had. She made everything so interesting it made me want to learn. (Lauren, 1320)

I find that in peer groups not everyone puts as much effort into their writing as I, while some are decent writers, others seriously lack writing ability. I enjoy writing, it exercises my creativity. I take very much pride in my writing, which is something probably only half of college students do. (James, 1320)

I have a lot of journalism background, which has exercised my writing skills more. (female, 1320)

The remaining 18% of the responses given by the 1320 students, indicated that the remainder of students in this sample felt that their writing skills were below average. The students attributed their weaker writing skills to weak vocabulary, poor spelling, weak grammar, difficulty in focusing, limited writing experiences, and high school composition instruction. Some of the typical comments from these students included:

In high school I did not learn how to write well. My teachers did not care and did not seem to want to help you understand what you are doing. (Kristi, 1320)

My grammar, usage, and content is usually lacking.
(male, 1320)

Grammar is no longer taught in high school and most college students do poorly with grammar. (Janet, 1320)

Overall, from the 530 surveys completed, 309 responses to the first open-ended question were recorded. This question asked students to compare their writing skills to other college students and describe how their skills are similar or different. The researcher wanted to investigate student perceptions of their own writing skills. Of the 309 responses recorded 76% suggested that the students felt their skills were average or above average. The other 24% of the responses indicated that students felt their skills were below average. Interestingly, the idea that the students felt their skills were strong or weak due to past high school instruction was recurrent though all four English courses.

The second open ended question was designed to evaluate student perceptions of their performance on the TASP Test and why the students felt they did good or bad. This question was a response to Likert question six ("When I left

the TASP testing center, I felt I did well on the writing section."). This question was analyzed by course. That is, the responses to this question were analyzed in reference to each separate English course.

Of the 42 students who completed the survey in English 1200, the developmental writing class designed for students who did not pass the TASP, 28 responses to the second open ended questions were recorded. Only 25% of the responses given were from students who agreed with question six. Typically, these students stated that thought that they performed adequately on the test. The following remarks exemplify these responses:

I thought my paper was good. I got confidence in writing. (male, 1200)

I thought I did well on the TASP writing section because I answered the prompt to its fullest and I thought I did everything correct. (male, 1200)

It was a good prompt that I could relate to and write about. Similar to my English class. (Carrie, 1200)

I thought that I have written the three main things for an essay. (male, 1200)

Although these students indicated that they believed they performed well on the writing section, they did not

pass the test.

The other 75% of responses recorded for the second open-ended question in English 1200 were from students who disagreed with question six. Typical responses from these students included: unprepared, length of the test, lack of confidence, and attitude. The following remarks exemplify these student responses:

I was unprepared. (Tyra, 1200)

I was not very confident with the question I was asked so I wasn't sure I did well on the writing part. (Greg, 1200)

I just do my best on TASP, but I do not feel I did well. (Lee, 1200)

I felt I didn't do so well, because the TASP Test itself was toooooo . . . lengthy. If they gave of part by part and give us time to regain some strength I know we could have done better. By the time for writing I just wanted to get it done and get out. (male, 1200)

By the time I got to the writing part I was tired and just wanted to get out of there the test was too long. (female, 1200).

Of the 238 students who completed Survey I and were

enrolled in English 1310, the first semester freshman English course, 142 responses to the second open-ended question were recorded. From the students in 1310, a large percentage of students stated that they believed they performed well. 70% of the responses given by the students indicated that the students thought did well on the test. The responses indicated that the students thought the test was easy, were prepared well by former teachers, had strong writing backgrounds, had taken English 1200 or a TASP related class, and were confident with their writing ability. Some statements which typify this category include:

The TASP test, in my opinion, was extremely easy in all sections. I was well prepared because of the calibre of my teachers in the past, and I was prepared because of my own efforts. (Chris, 1310)

My senior English class was a composition class so I had been over everything needed to write a paper. (Michelle, 1310).

I took 1200 last year so I was ready to take the test. I passed the test the second time I took it. (Cathy, 1310).

Ms. Nicholson has taught me how to write a good paper,

and I feel confident in all of my writings. (Traci, 1310)

The test was orientated for someone with skills much less than a high school graduate. If you didn't fall asleep in high school English, you cannot fail the test. (Carl, 1310)

The other 30% of the 1310 students responding to the second open-ended question thought that they did not do well on the writing section. Their responses indicated that they were unprepared, had weak skills, had difficulty answering the prompt, and thought that the test was too long. Some responses typical of this description were:

I thought I just barely passed. I don't feel I have confidence in my own work--maybe I just haven't had enough practice accompanied by feedback. (Wendy, 1310).

I was surprised to see that I did good on the writing section. Often when I thought I did good on a piece of writing, I ended up doing poorly. As a result of this, I felt uncomfortable writing and I didn't feel I write good at all. I took Academic English in High School. This class was supposed to help me with writing and prepare me for college. This class obviously didn't help me at all. Because when I took a placement test

during the summer to take college English in summer school, I got put in remedial English because of my writing. (Mary, 1310)

I thought I did horrible on the writing section because I was so unprepared for it. I tried to organize my thoughts, but I was tired and kept getting off focus. (Rachel, 1310)

For the academic core course English 1311, 40 responses were recorded from the 59 students who completed the questionnaire. Of these responses, 75% revealed that the students felt that they performed well on the test. Some characteristics of these responses were: easiness of the test, confidence, and preparation by former teachers. Typical responses from these students included:

I think I did good because I have been writing for years and have been prepared for it in high school. I was in honors English for seven years. (female, 1311)

The test question was very easy, I had plenty of "relaxed" time to write, and I was well prepared by my teachers in high school. (Wendy, 1311)

I think I did well because I took my time and developed every aspect of my answer. (Rebecca, 1311)

The other 25% of the responses from the students in

1311 indicated that the students thought they did not perform well on the test. These students typically stated that they had difficulty with the prompt, were tired by the end of the test, and were unprepared. The following remarks exemplify these student opinions:

After 3 1/2 hours of testing, I could not develop an essay that I was satisfied with. (female, 1311)

Although I did pass all the sections after I took the test. I was shakey about the writing portion of the test because I wasn't prepared to take it. (Naomi, 1311)

I didn't read the directions very clearly and wrote on three subjects instead of just one. I had only 30 minutes left to rewrite the whole essay over. (Jennie, 1311)

The last course group to be examined was English 1320, the second semester freshman English course. Of the 192 students who completed the survey, 177 responses to the first open-ended question were recorded. Of these responses, 62% of the students expressed that they thought they performed well on the test. The students stated different reasons for their strong performance on the test: they believed the test was easy, they were prepared well by former teachers, they were confident about their writing

skills, they had strong writing backgrounds, they had taken English 1200 or a TASP related course. These responses included statements such as:

I have a lot of journalism background which has exercised my writing skills more. I was confident with my writing and thought I did well. (female, 1320)

I felt I did good on the test because it was so easy even after being out of high school for a year. (male, 1320)

I was confident because of my previous writing experience. (male, 1311)

I had really good teachers in high school so I knew how to write a good essay. I wrote like I was taught and knew I did well. (1320, Sandra)

The remaining 38% of the responses given by the 1320 students, indicated that the students thought they did not perform well on the writing section. The students attributed their performance to the length of the test, weak writing skills, difficulty with the prompt, lack of preparation, and lack of confidence. Some of the typical responses from these students included:

The reason being, is that, so far I have been a poor writer and I felt that my paper was inadequate. (male,

1320)

I did horrible, the question they asked was stupid and I was tired . I basically counted the words until I hit 200. (female, 1320)

I never had to do any writing in high school so I wasn't prepared enough to write the essay. (female, 1320)

I need time to think about what I want to write about. They just threw a topic at us and expected us to write. We didn't have enough time to organize our thoughts. (female, 1320)

Overall, from the 530 surveys completed, 392 responses to the second open-ended question were recorded. This question asked students to explain why they felt they performed good or bad on the test. The researcher wanted to investigate student perceptions of their performance on the test and their explanations of that performance. Of the 392 responses recorded, 63% indicated that the students felt that they performed well on the test. The other 37% of the responses indicated that the students felt that they did not perform well on the test. Interestingly, the idea that the students felt they did well or poor due to past preparation,

or lack thereof, was recurrent through all four English courses.

Phase II

Data Collection--Phase II

During phase two of data collection, sixteen students agreed to meet with the researcher. These students completed Survey II and participated in a short interview. These interviews resulted in two hours and thirty minutes of tape recorded discussion, sixteen pages of notes taken during the interviews and recorded after the interviews, and two five by seven inch note cards for each student (32 note cards). The open-ended question on the survey produced two pages of notes on which the responses to this question were recorded.

Data Analysis--Phase II

Phase two of data analysis was divided into two sections, quantitative analysis and qualitative analysis. The quantitative analysis section discusses all of the statistical procedures which were run on the data from Survey II. The qualitative analysis section discusses the results from the open-ended question on Survey II and the interviews with the students.

Quantitative Analysis

Sixteen cases from Survey II were recorded into the statistical package SPSS. The first of the analytical procedures run on the data were frequency counts. Frequency

counts were completed for pass and fail of the writing section, questions one through eight, the influencing factors, and the instructional areas.

Of the sixteen students who completed the survey, ten had passed the test and six had failed it. This factor split the students into two groups, those who passed and those who did not pass. Throughout the rest of this discussion, the items were divided by students who passed and students who did not pass.

To the first question, "I don't think my high school teachers taught me to write very well," three students indicated strongly disagree, five indicated disagree, six indicated agree, and two indicated strongly agree. Of the students who passed the TASP, two indicated strongly disagree, four indicated disagree, and four indicated agree. Of the students who failed the TASP, one indicated strongly disagree, one indicated disagree, two indicated agree, and two indicated strongly agree. Overall, the students who passed the TASP tended to disagree with the statement, and students who failed the TASP tended to agree with the statement.

The second statement, "My high school teachers influenced the way I write," was agreed upon by 75% of the students. Only four students indicated that they disagreed, nine indicated agree, and three indicated strongly agree. Two students who passed indicated disagree, five indicated

agree, and three indicated strongly agree. Of the students who did not pass, one indicated disagree while the other five indicated agree. Overall the majority of the students agreed with the statement.

The third statement, "My high school teachers spent a lot of time stressing grammar and mechanics," was agreed upon by 62.5% of the students. Six students indicated disagree; seven indicated agree; three indicated strongly agree. All six responses of disagree were given by students who passed the test, while only three indicated agree and only one indicated strongly agree. Of the students who failed the test, four indicated agree and two indicated strongly agree. From this sample, the students who did pass the test indicated that they agreed that their teachers spent much time stressing grammar. The majority of the students who did not pass the test, however, disagreed with this statement.

Statement four, "I do not have any confidence in my writing ability," was disagreed with by 81.3% of the students. Six students indicated strongly disagree, seven indicated disagree, two indicated agree, and only one indicated strongly agree. Of the students who passed the test, four indicated strongly disagree, seven indicated disagree, and only one indicated agree. Of the students who did not pass the test, two indicated strongly disagree, two indicated disagree, one indicated agree, and one indicated

strongly agree. Overall, the majority of students who passed and students who failed indicated that they disagreed with the statement.

Statement five, "I get nervous when I have to write in a timed situation," received a completely divided answer, 50% agreed and 50% disagreed. Three students indicated strongly disagree, five indicated disagree, five indicated agree, and three indicated strongly agree. Of the students who passed, two indicated strongly disagree, two indicated disagree, three indicated agree, and three indicated strongly agree. Of the students who failed, one indicated strongly disagree, three indicated disagree, and two indicated agree. Overall, the students divided their opinions equally.

The responses to statement six, "I think I should have had more writing instruction in high school," were also split evenly. Three students indicated strongly disagree, five indicated disagree, five indicated agree, and three indicated strongly agree. Of the students who passed, one indicated strongly disagree, four indicated disagree, four indicated agree, and one indicated strongly agree. Of the students who failed, two indicated strongly disagree, one indicated disagree, one indicated agree, and two indicated strongly agree. Over all the students divided their responses to the statement equally.

82.2% of the students agreed with statement seven, "My

teachers stressed the importance of development and organization when writing." Only one student indicated strongly disagree, two indicated disagree, eight indicated agree, and five indicated strongly agree. Of the students who passed the test, one indicated disagree, five indicated agree and four indicated strongly agree. Of the students who failed the test one indicated strongly disagree, one indicated disagree, three indicated agree, and one indicated strongly agree. Overall, the majority of the students agreed with statement seven.

Of the responses to statement eight, "I think that how I was taught to write influenced my performance on the writing portion of the TASP," 68.7% were in agreement. One of the students indicated strongly disagree, four indicated disagree, five indicated agree, and six indicated strongly agree. Of the students who passed the test, two indicated disagree, three indicated agree, and five indicated strongly agree. Of the students who failed the test, one indicated strongly disagree, two indicated disagree, two indicated agree and one indicated strongly agree. Overall, the majority of the students agreed that their teachers influenced their performance on the TASP test.

The next frequency count was run on the six influencing factors. To put the factors in a ranked order, the frequency of responses for each value was multiplied by the value and added. The lower values were ranked as more

influential on their performance on the TASP test. The six variables were: confidence, attitude, health, test taking skills, instruction in composition, and length of the test. As a group, the students ranked confidence as the most influential, then composition instruction, attitude, test taking skills, length of the test, and health as the least influential on their performance on the TASP test. The students who passed the test ranked the factors differently than the entire group. From most influential to least influential, their responses were: confidence, instruction in composition, test taking skills, attitude, length of the test and health. The students who failed the test also had a different ranking order. From most influential to least influential, their responses were: health, confidence, length of the test, instruction in composition, attitude and test taking skills (see Table 10).

<u>All Students</u>	<u>Passing Students</u>	<u>Failing Students</u>
1. Confidence	1. Confidence	1. Health
2. Instruction	2. Instruction	2. Confidence
3. Attitude	3. Testing skills	3. Length
4. Testing skills	4. Attitude	4. Instruction
5. Length	5. Length	5. Attitude
6. Health	6. Health	6. Testing skills

Table 10

Overall, confidence and instruction were the two factors that the students ranked as most influential.

A frequency distribution count was also run on the instructional items. The students were asked, through a forced selection list, to mark the items on which they thought they received adequate instruction while in high school. By referring to Figure 15, the items which received the most markings were using examples, grammar, vocabulary, pre-writing and development.

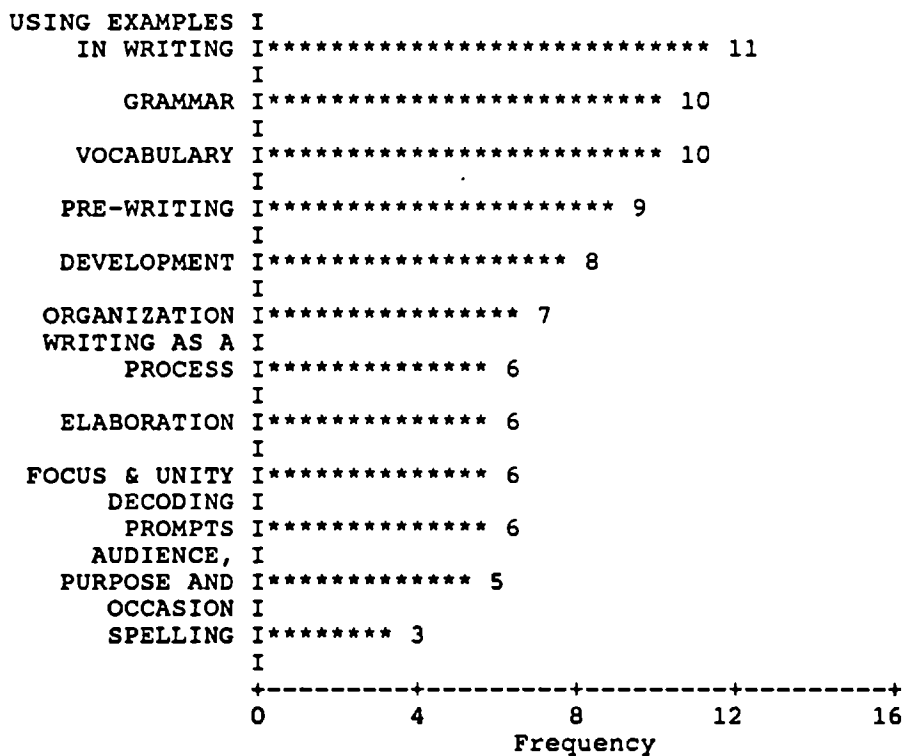


Figure 15

The majority of the students did not mark organization, writing as a process, elaboration, focus and unity, decoding writing prompts, audience, purpose and occasion, and spelling as areas in which they received adequate instruction.

Qualitative Analysis

Phase two of qualitative analysis included analyzing the responses to the open-ended question on Survey II and analyzing the student interviews. The open-ended question, "Please list or describe any specific writing strategies your teachers taught you in high school," was designed to allow students to comment on areas instructors taught.

Although only two of the sixteen students did not mark any areas in the forced selection section of the survey, 50% of the students left the open ended question blank or indicated that the teachers did not teach writing. One statement which typifies these remarks was given by Amy, a 1311, academic core student who failed the writing portion of the TASP.

My former high school teachers did not spend much time teaching the students how to write well-developed essays. We mostly did grammar worksheets and when we did write it didn't count on our grades.

The other 50% of the students did comment on the open ended question. Their answers included using examples in writing, free writing, the five paragraph essay, and instruction from other courses such as journalism and creative writing. Some comments which typify these student responses are as follows:

My high school teachers taught us to have a introduction, three body paragraphs and a conclusion.

(Nick, 1200, developmental writing student, who failed TASP)

Basic five paragraph research paper, with bibliography and footnoting, but the most influence on writing in journalism--how to write a news story, in-depth feature writing, editorials. (Elisa, 1310, first semester freshman English, student who passed TASP)

They basically taught us to support everything we said with specific examples. We always seemed to use the five paragraph essay every time we wrote. (Meg, 1310 student who passed TASP)

One student however, commented extensively on the manner his former teachers taught the writing process.

All three of the teachers I had through high school used the same basic pattern. First, they stressed the importance of pre-writing and they gave us concrete details and examples to use to understand the pre-writing process. They also stressed the importance of writing several drafts of a work after the pre-writing process is completed. They used what was called a "zero draft" as the first draft of a composition, and then it was left up to the student to further develop the piece through at least two more drafts. From this, the student received advice from

the instructor on the last rough draft in order to make the final draft as complete and well-written as possible. The final draft would be graded and returned, and if the student scored low, he would have the opportunity to revise the draft under the supervision of the teacher and resubmit it for a higher grade. (Chris, 1310 student who passed TASP)

Chris articulated how his teachers, throughout all of his high school years, taught him to use the writing process (pre-writing, arrangement, revision and delivery), to produce the best papers he could. Overall, the student responses to the open ended question varied greatly. From students who commented that their teachers did not teach composition, to the five paragraph essay, to a complete writing process, the amount of instruction these students received was very disparate.

In the student interviews, 41 teachers were discussed by the sixteen students. Most of the students described more than one teacher, and most of the students described different types of teachers. The responses in the student interviews revealed three different teacher types: the Structurist, the Literaturist, and the Processist. Each student described more than one teacher so the responses from the students overlapped into more than one category.

The students described eighteen teachers who could be described as Structurists. This group of teachers taught

some literature and some composition; however, when teaching composition, they focused mainly on a strict format and the students mainly wrote literary papers. The Structurists stressed the five paragraph essay with a beginning, middle and end. These teachers also taught the students that the introduction and conclusion paragraphs should have three to four sentences, while the body should have seven to nine sentences. In addition, the Structurists focused on grammar, form and structure. When teaching the research paper, these teachers usually stressed the correct formats for note cards and bibliography rather than the content of the paper. When grading, the structurists marked grammar or simply returned marked papers without any comments for improvement or revision. Essays, if written, were turned in only one time to the teacher. Some of the remarks made by students of these teachers were as follows:

It seemed like I always wrote the basic five paragraph paper. We didn't vary that at all, I can only write a formal five paragraph essay now. (Meg, 1310 student who passed TASP)

When I was in high school we didn't write much in my English classes, and when we did we had a lot of rules. We had to use that pyramid structure where you begin and end with the same thing. When I was a sophomore we did a research paper but mainly we did note cards and

stuff like that. (Elisa, 1310 student who passed TASP)

When I was in school it [composition] was real strict with grammar and structure, they stressed the five paragraph paper which I didn't like. . . A strict structure in 9th, 10th, and 11th grade, it was the five paragraph paper--end of story that's all there was. John, 1310 student who passed TASP)

My teachers didn't teach me to write well, I don't think my writing is any good. I don't remember learning anything about writing, only the five paragraph thing. . . I wasn't ready to write when I got here [the University] and I don't know how I managed to pass TASP. (Mike, 1310 student who passed TASP)

One teacher only gave us grammar worksheets, that's what we mostly did, and we didn't go over stuff, even if the whole class messed up, the teacher would say we should've learned it in junior high. . . With another teacher we only did one or two essays a year, but they weren't important to your grade and she only marked grammar. (Amy, 1311 student who failed TASP)

I was disgusted with three years of my classes, the teachers were always bleeding all over the paper--it was real discouraging--they should've shown us what we did right or how to correct something instead of just marking spelling and grammar. The classes were too structured and too strict and there was no consistency across the school, one teacher would do all grammar and the next would do all literature. (Jim, 1320 student who passed TASP)

I need to write more in high school, we wrote some but it was basically turn it in with no feed back, we weren't told what was wrong with it--that would have helped me a lot more than just saying you have a fragment here and a misspelling there. (Paul, 1320 student who failed TASP)

My junior year the teacher graded grammar and vocabulary only, we did a lot of writing but she only graded grammar (Talisa, 1310 student who failed TASP)

Overall the Structurists were described by students as teachers who did not make many writing assignments and graded only for structure or grammar. The students of these teachers did not feel very confident in their writing skills or found writing to be a chore which they learned to hate, and many expressed a need for opportunities to make

revisions with the teachers' guidance. The students articulated the following reflections on the Structurist teachers:

Now, I think pre-writing in my college class helps and the peer editing and revisions. My instructor takes up our papers and gives them back with comments. It would have helped if we did that in high school. (Meg, 1310 student who passed TASP)

I needed more practice writing in high school. Now my 1200 class tells us how to write differently. We practice a lot and they teach how to get ideas to write about, different writing strategies. (Justin, 1200 student who failed TASP)

I didn't have very good English teachers, I don't think. We didn't talk about how to write, we just did trivial things like note cards. I really do think I needed more writing in high school, more of the process. (Kim, 1310 student who passed TASP)

The next group of teachers were the Literaturists. These teachers were described by students as focusing mainly on literature, and that when writing assignments were given the assignments were mainly literary. The students did a lot of reading in their classes and wrote only literary essays or creative responses to literature.

I was in AP English and we did a lot of reading and we wrote a lot of our own stuff, like we wrote our own Canterbury Tale and stuff like that, but that's really the only kind of writing we did. (Kathy, 1310 student who failed TASP)

We mainly read literature, didn't do a lot of writing at all. My senior English teacher was really into reading deep into stuff so most of our papers were about analyzing literature. We didn't really write much of our own. (Kim, 1310 student who passed TASP)

My junior and senior years we studied a lot of literature. We didn't really write, like when I got to college and had this writing class, like where we write papers every week, long ones. We never really did that in high school . . . we stressed a lot more on the reading (Elisa, 1310 student who passed TASP)

My senior year we did all reading. We wrote one paper the whole year, at the end of the year. It was hard to write one paper without any practice all year. (Stephanie, 1310 student who passed TASP)

I was in honor's English all through high school and all we ever did was read literature. We never did any

writing, my writing would've been a lot better if we would of wrote more. (Suzzette, 1200 student who failed TASP)

Mostly we just discussed literature, and interpreted it, I still don't know how that would help you. We didn't do much writing, mostly reading. (Scott, 1320 student who passed TASP)

Overall, the students with Literaturists for teachers had very little confidence in their writing and thought that they lacked experience in writing. In addition, many of these students also had Structurists for teachers.

The last group of teachers described by the students were the Processists. These teachers were typically described as making writing less threatening to the students. The teachers had the students write at least three times a week (with some teachers writing every day). The teachers also instructed students in how to write an essay. The teachers approached writing as a process and took students through pre-writing, arrangement and revision. Many of the Processists allowed the students to resubmit papers after further revisions were made. Typical comments made by students describing these teachers were as follows:

My senior English teacher was a big influence, she made learning fun. She would break down assignments into smaller pieces and let the class push itself. We did a

lot of conferencing with her and other students. She really stressed using examples and addressing different audiences and we always had to do revisions on our papers. (Jim, 1320 student who passed)

I think our teachers really prepared us for the TASP test. They helped us on prompts and showed us how to go about understanding them and how to go about different ways of writing, then they would give the papers back and go over how to improve our papers. We did a lot of peer editing and revision and stressed giving ideas to support what you said. . . . We had folders which followed us through school every year and we could see where we improved and what areas the teachers would work on when teaching. (Scott, 1310 student who passed TASP)

My teachers developed a writing system for the school district. They stressed making the classroom situation more comfortable for students so we could sit back and write with out being nervous, without feeling too stuffy or formal. It was up to us to find the ideas in the books and pull them out and bring it into our writing. They were there to help us. They had a big emphasis on pre-writing--listing, clustering, cubing, brainstorming, weaving--they taught us how to use each

one and then left it up to us which one to use for each paper. Each year they would recap what we learned. My sophomore year we learned to write all over again, to be good writers. The other years we had about a five to six week recap. We'd begin with pre-writing and move through the writing process, developing at least two to three drafts. With each draft we'd improve it and make it more concise until the final draft. Then the teachers would tell us how to set it up, what format would look best. After about three papers they would go over the revising process, what to look for and what to do to make the paper better. We had a lot of teacher conferencing. The biggest thing was the atmosphere, it was informal with no pressure--you wrote what you thought--good bad or indifferent--and if you didn't do well the teacher would tell you how to improve and give you a chance to get on the right track. (Chris, 1310 student who passed TASP)

By my senior year we knew all the basics, grammar how to write, so we practiced writing constantly. We had about twenty papers, some in class and some out. We mixed literary papers with non-literary papers. We used a lot of writing strategies, free-writing, brainstorming, clustering. Free-writing always worked best for me, by the end of ten minutes I had my whole

paper figured out and the more time for revision the better my paper. My senior year, revision was a big thing, we were always told to go back and make corrections. If you had a paper and you didn't do well you could meet with her and rewrite it. (Annie, 1311 student who passed TASP)

To tell you the truth, I wouldn't be a good writer unless I had written on newspaper staff. Because that teaches you how to write so other people can read it and understand it. We always had to go back and revise our stories at least three times. (Elisa, 1310 student who passed TASP)

Overall, the students who had the Processists for teachers were much more confident in their writing ability. Many of the students stated that they enjoyed writing and thought they were very strong writers. Statements which exemplify the students' confidence because of this instruction were as follows:

I had more than enough teaching as far as structuring and just being prepared and being able to write quickly and massing all my ideas in pre-writing and just going with it. (Chris, 1310 student who passed TASP)

After my senior teacher the TASP was much easier than

the TAAS because I knew how to write and I was prepared for the writing section. My teacher taught us how to write and be confident in it (Jim, 1320 student who passed TASP)

That teacher [senior teacher] definitely helped with TASP. Because I was confident when I sat down and read the prompt I was like, o. k., no problem. I had no worries that I wouldn't finish it in time or not know how to say it or what to say or say it clearly. I knew that I could do it, I had utter confidence. (Annie, 1311 student who passed TASP)

Overall, there were three different types of teachers the students discussed, the Structurists, the Literaturists, and the Processists. The students who had Structurists or Literaturists as teachers did not write as often and were not as confident in their writing ability as students who had processists as teachers.

Phase III

Data Collection--Phase III

In order to collect data for phase three, 145 Composition Instruction Surveys were sent to teachers across the North Texas area. A total of 95 surveys were returned to the researcher. The surveys responses were recorded into the statistical package SPSS for quantitative analysis. The qualitative analysis resulted in 95 pages of responses from

the teacher and 95 note cards, one for each teacher.

Data Analysis--Phase III

The discussion of data analysis was divided into two sections. One section, quantitative analysis, includes a discussion of all the statistical analysis performed on the data supplied by the Composition Instruction Survey. The other section, qualitative analysis, discusses the responses to the open-ended question on the Composition Instruction Survey.

Quantitative Analysis

Ninety-five cases were recorded into the statistical package, SPSS. This data was subjected to many frequency counts. Frequency counts were run for the years of experience, highest degree attained, questions one through ten, the instructional areas, frequency of assignments, and types of discourse.

The first frequency count measured the frequency of the years of teaching experience. Of the ninety-five teachers responding to the Composition Instruction Survey only 16.3% had been teaching less than ten years. Four teachers (4.3%) had one to three years of experience. Six teachers (6.5%) had four to six years of experience, and five teachers (5.4%) had seven to nine years of experience. The remaining seventy-seven teachers (83.7%) had ten or more years of experience.

The teachers were also asked to indicate their highest

degree of education obtained. Thirty-five of the teachers (36.9%), indicated that they had received Bachelor's degrees. These degrees varied from Secondary Education, English, Journalism and History; however, the majority of the degrees were held in Secondary Education and English. Fifty-eight of the teachers (61.1%) indicated that they held a Master's degree. The Master's degrees ranged from Counseling, Administration, Education, Liberal Arts and English; however, the majority of the degrees were held in Education. Only two teachers (2.1%) held doctorates. One of the teachers had a PhD in Humanities, and the other had a PhD. D in English.

Frequency counts were also run on the ten Likert questions. An examination of Figure 16 illustrates that the majority of the respondents indicated that they agreed with statement one. 79.6% of the teachers indicated that they "spend most of the year discussing and writing about literature."

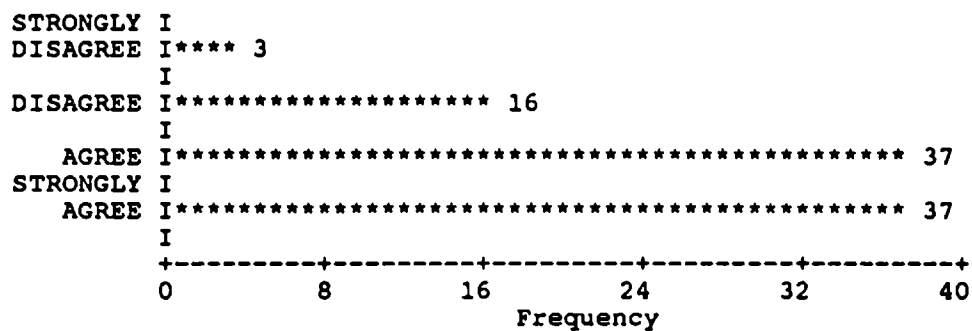


Figure 16

The majority of the teachers agreed with question two, "When teaching composition, I stress development and

organization more than grammar and mechanics." An examination of Figure 17 indicates that 45 of the respondents agreed with the statement and 31 of the respondents strongly agreed (a combined total of 82.6%). Only 17.4% of the respondents did not agree with the statement.

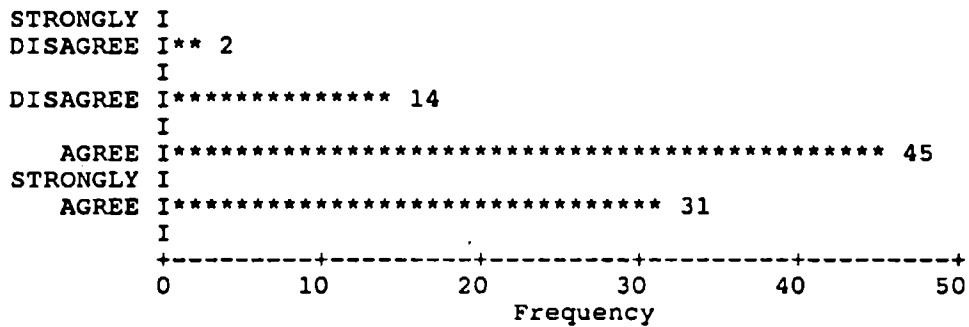


Figure 17

The majority of the teachers disagreed with question three, "I spend a lot of time teaching grammar and mechanics." An examination of Figure 18 indicates that only three teachers strongly agreed and twelve agreed with this statement (a combined total of 14%). The other 84% of the teachers disagreed with the statement.

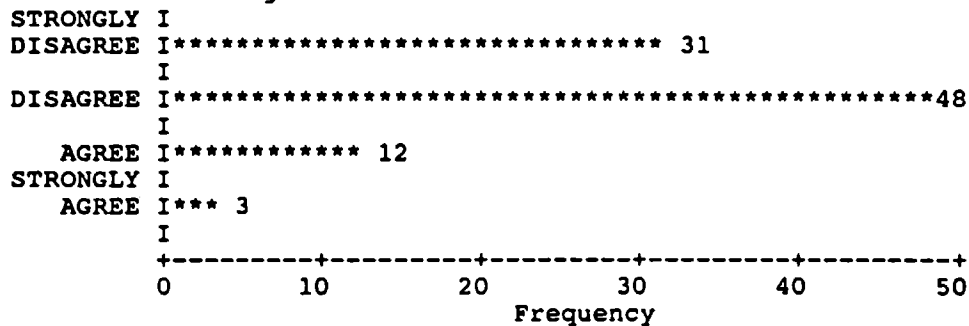


Figure 18

The responses to statement four, "When grading essays,

I grade holistically," were much more varied. An examination of Figure 19 indicates that teachers varied their responses to this statement. 23 of the teachers (26.4%) indicated that they strongly disagreed, 22 (25.3%) indicated that they disagreed, 31 (35.6%) indicated that they agreed, and 11 (12.6%) indicated that they agreed.

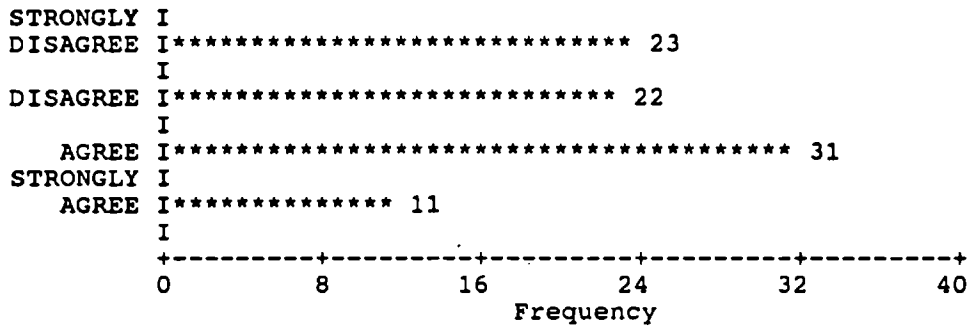


Figure 19

Statement five, "I teach writing as a process: pre-writing/invention, working rough draft, revision/evaluation, final draft," was agreed upon by 95.7% of the respondents. An examination of Figure 20 indicates that only four respondents strongly disagreed or disagreed. Of the other respondents 21 (22.6%) agreed with the statement and 68 (73.1%) strongly agreed with the statement.

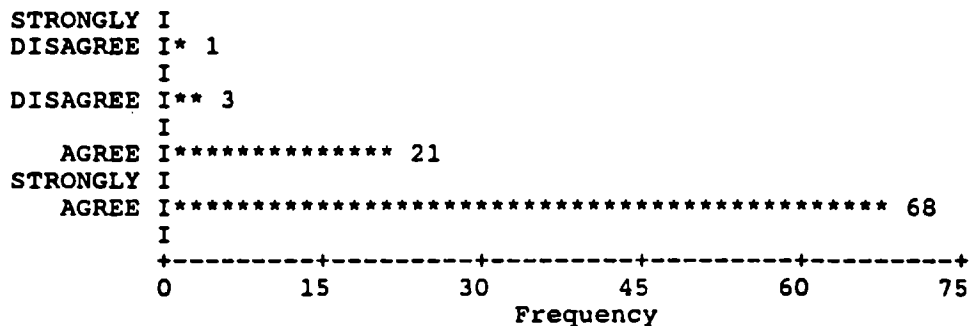


Figure 20

The responses to question six, "I split composition grades for content and grammar," were varied. An examination of Figure 21 indicates that each response was given by at least 20 teachers. However, 28 teachers (30.4%) indicated that they strongly agreed with the statement.

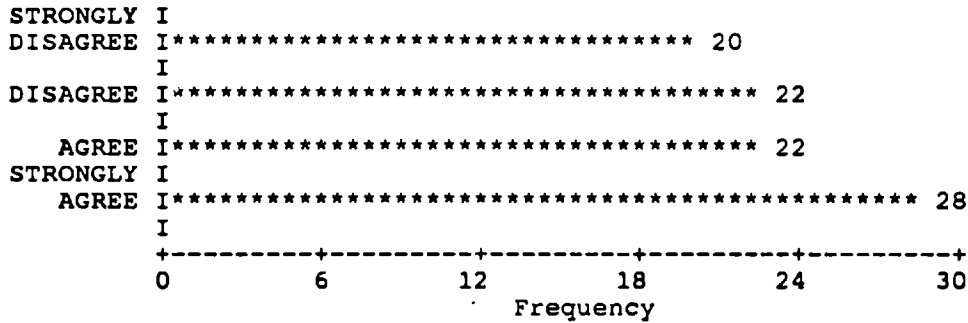


Figure 21

Statement seven, "I provide one inclusive grade for compositions," had varied responses. The majority, however, did agree with this statement. An examination of Figure 22, indicates that 23 teachers agreed and 30 strongly agreed (combined total of 60.2%). This statement asks the opposite of statement six; nevertheless, the majority of the teachers answered in agreement to statement six as well. It is

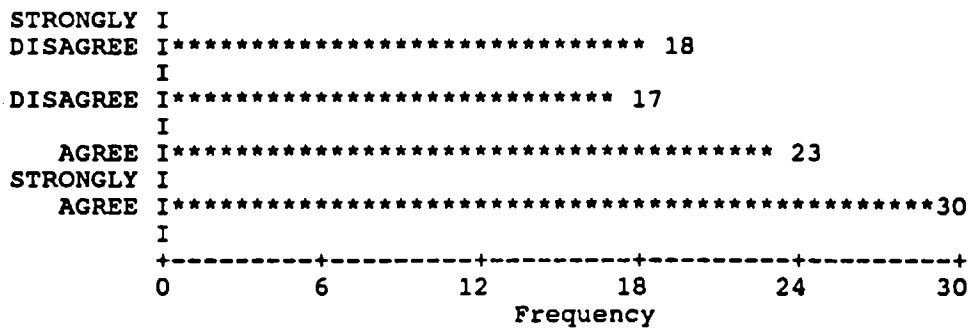


Figure 22

important to note that many teachers stated that, depending on the assignment, they use both methods of grading.

Statement eight, "I consider a paper successful if it addresses the appropriate audience, purpose and occasion even if errors traditionally considered egregious are present: one or more run-ons, one or more fragments," was answered with varied response. In reference to Figure 23, 41.8% of the teachers indicated that they strongly disagreed (6) or disagreed (32) with this statement; however, 58.2% of the teachers indicated that they agreed (37) or strongly agreed with this statement.

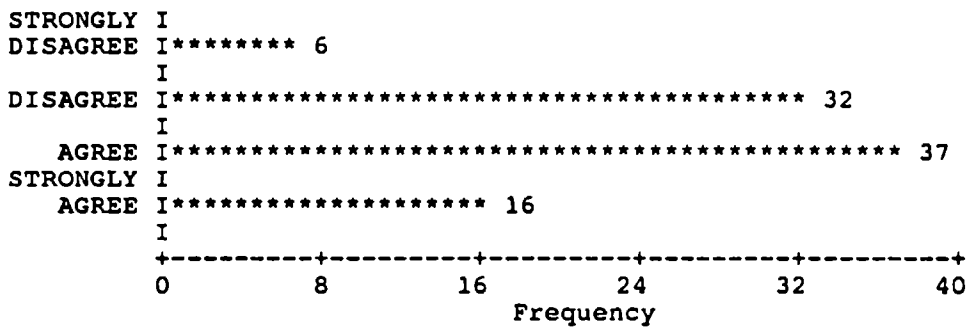


Figure 23

Statement nine, "I consider a paper unsuccessful if any of the traditional egregious errors are present," was disagreed with by the majority of the teachers. An examination of Figure 24 indicates that 79.1% of the teachers either strongly disagreed (32) or disagreed (40) with this statement. Only 20.9% of the teachers thought that a paper is "unsuccessful if any of the traditional egregious errors are present."

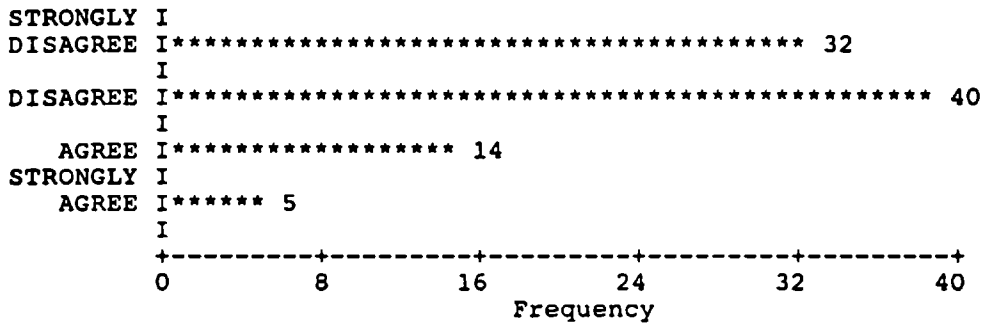


Figure 24

Statement ten, "I teach students to write according to the modes," was generally agreed upon by the majority of the teachers. An examination of Figure 25 indicates that only 15 teachers (16.2%) disagreed with this statement. The other 83.8% of the teachers agreed with the statement.

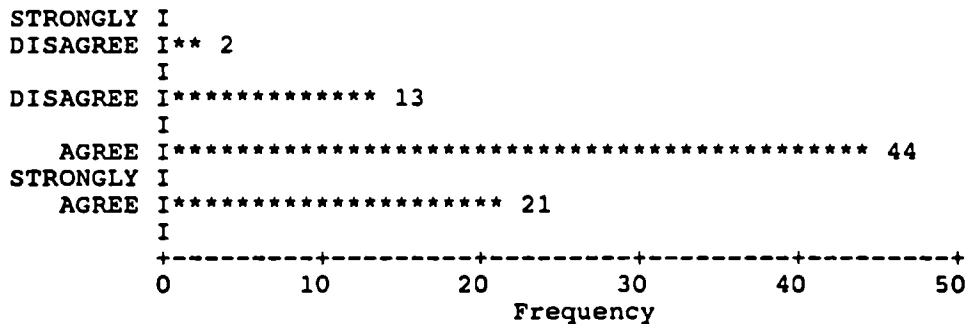


Figure 25

Frequency counts were also run on the forced-selection items from a predetermined list. The teachers were instructed to indicate which items were a regular part of their curriculum. An examination of Figure 26 indicates that the majority of the teachers teach persuasion, audience, purpose and occasion, compare and contrast, and brainstorming as a regular part of their curriculum. Very few teachers indicated that they taught the Toulmin Model,

Tagmemic Matrix (both rhetorical writing strategies), cubing or the Pentad (another rhetorical writing strategy) as a part of their curriculum.

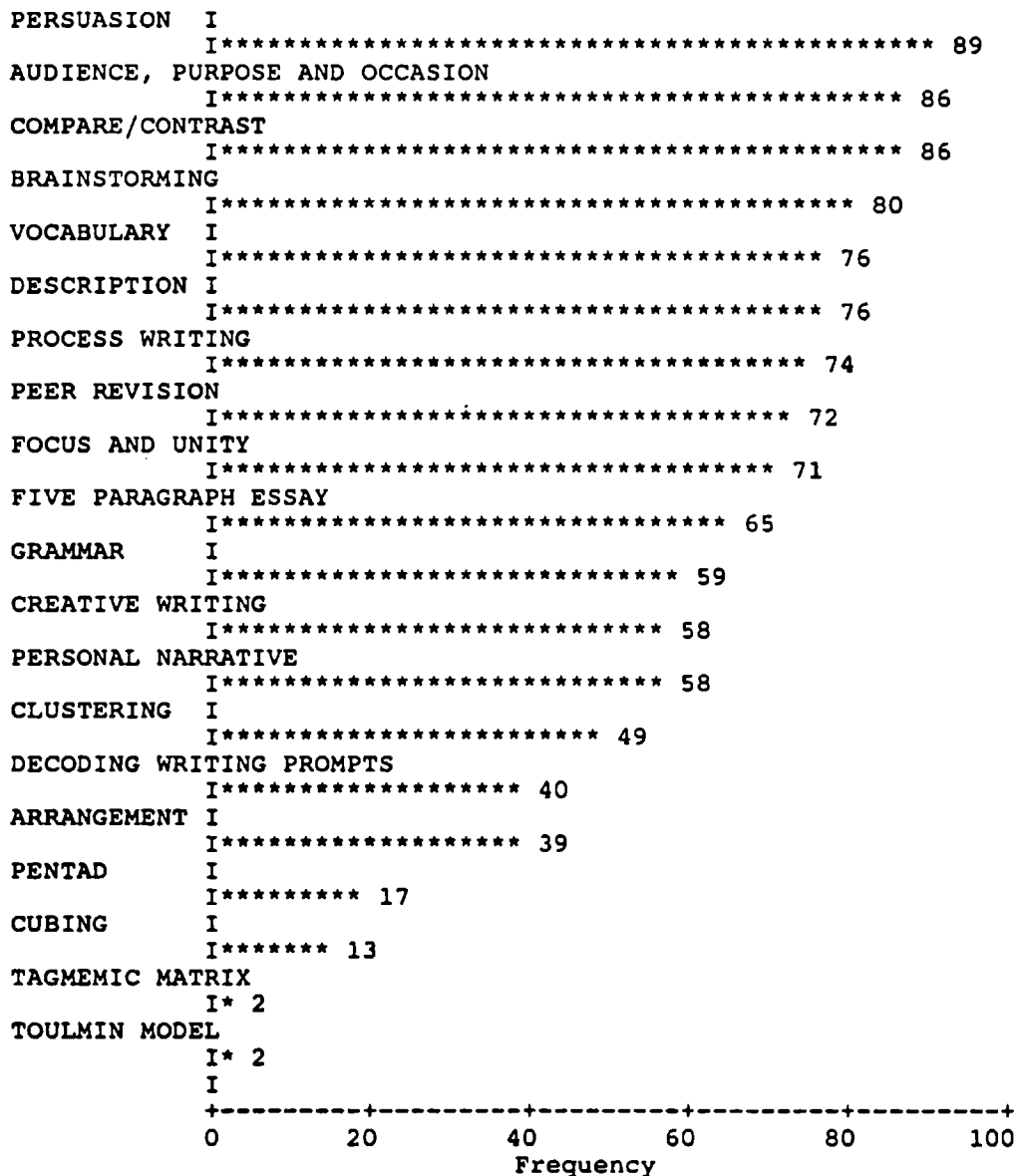


Figure 26

A frequency count was also run on the frequency of writing assignments. Teachers were asked to indicate how often their students engage in writing activities. Of the

teachers responding 38.3% (36) indicated that their students wrote more than once a week, 30.9% (29) indicated that their students wrote at least once a week, 21.3% (20) indicated that their students wrote once every two weeks, and 9.6% (9) indicated that their students only wrote once a month.

The teachers were also asked to indicate the types of discourse their students write. The most common type indicated was the essay. 93 teachers, 97.9% of the sample, indicated that their students wrote essays. The next most common answer was the research paper; 87 teachers (91.6%) indicated that their students wrote research papers. Creative writing with 66 responses (69.5%), journals with 54 responses (56.8%), and free writing with 53 responses (55.8%) were also common answers. Nine teachers (9.5%) indicated that their students also wrote other types of discourse not on the list.

Qualitative Analysis

Phase three of qualitative analysis involved analyzing the responses to the open ended question on the Composition Instruction Survey. The open ended question, "What role do you think composition should play in the classroom?" was designed to measure teacher perceptions of the nature of composition instruction. The ninety-five teachers who responded to the survey were grouped into two teacher types. Each of these teacher types were then further divided into three different sub-categories. This division resulted in

six categories of teacher perceptions of the role of composition in the classroom (see Appendix C for a chart summary).

The first type of teachers revealed were teachers who did not actively teach composition or make composition play an important role in the classroom. Fifty-one teachers, (54%) could be described as teachers who did not actively teach composition. The teachers who belonged to this type of teacher were further divided into three categories: the Literaturist, the Structurist, and the Tired Teacher.

The first category of teachers who did not actively teach composition was the Literaturist. Fourteen teachers, (15%) fulfilled this category. The Literaturists typically indicated that the study of literature was the focus of their instruction. Writing activities in the Literaturists' classrooms ordinarily included literary analysis, essay tests or creative responses to literature being read. The teachers generally assigned composition exercises once every two weeks to once every month, some teachers indicated that their students wrote even less frequently. These teachers typically had been teaching ten or more years and held a combination of Bachelor's and Master's degrees, in addition, one held a PhD in English. Teacher comments which exemplify this category of teacher were as follows:

Composition is a part of my class, but it is not everything. Reading and discussion literature and

relating that to their lives is a major part of my class. When these honors students come to me, they have been well instructed in the five paragraph essay and how to organize a paper. At the level I teach, I believe writing should complement the literature study. (Nancy, Gifted and Talented English teacher)

Students should respond to each piece of literature studied. Composition reinforces the lessons taught in the literature. (Jan, Gifted and Talented English teacher)

The role of composition in Senior English must be reduced if we believe that a survey of British Literature is important and I do. (Nancy, Senior English teacher)

Composition should be integrated into the study of literature. It should allow students to react to what they read. (Marilyn, AP English teacher)

The second category of teachers who did not actively teach composition was the Structurist category. Twenty teachers (21%) made up this category of teachers. The Structurists commonly stressed mechanical conventions such as grammar, punctuation and spelling when teaching. They

also placed much emphasis on correct form when writing. When grading, these teachers typically described marking grammatical errors or failing students for mechanical conventions. Typical comments which exemplify this teacher stance were as follows:

Composition should be to teach students to write logical, clear, correct prose with an eye toward mechanical correctness. If students are expected to succeed they must comply to mechanical conventions. The business world will begin to decry the lack of education of high school graduates if they cannot spell, punctuate and write grammatically correct sentences. (Beverly, Academic English teacher)

It would be nice if high school students were capable of analyzing literature, but the truth is -- they can't write! My students learn grammar, and I instruct sentence variety and parallelism to improve their writing. (Sharon, English teacher)

Written response is an important facet of instruction in my classroom. I stress a formula in writing five paragraph papers and I begin this with my freshmen. Consistency makes the difference! (Marcia, English teacher)

Though composition is extremely frustrating to teach, all students should know how to write correctly.

(Gaye, English teacher)

The last category of teachers who did not actively engage in teaching composition can be described as the Tired Teachers. There were 17 teachers (18%) who belonged to this category. These teachers, although they indicated that they think composition is important, typically used the excuse that class loads were too large to assign compositions. The teachers discussed the inability to grade or to teach large classes. The teachers also stated that the students will not find time to write, or that the students can not write. Overall, these teachers did not assign many writing assignments, the students wrote once a month or less. The teachers had been teaching for over ten years and held a combination of Bachelor's and Master's degrees. Comments which exemplify these teacher stances were as follows:

The role of composition is important. Unfortunately though, students will not find the time to seriously write/revise/etc--also with large classes, the grading load is too much. (Virginia, English teacher)

More, more, more time should be spent writing but it isn't practical to expect teachers to do any more until class loads reduce. (Linda, AP/GT English teacher)

The longer I struggle to improve student's writing, the more persuaded I am that writers are born not made. Without inborn talent to use the language effectively most students are doomed never to write well no matter what methods we use. (Becky, Academic English teacher)

Since it is the backbone of all written discourse, it is of supreme importance. Often the teacher is hindered because of a preponderance of students, and students are hampered because of a lack of background and aptitude. (Billie, English teacher)

Overall there were 51 teachers who did not actively teach composition. These teachers generally felt discouraged and stressed instructional areas other than composition. The Literaturists, Structurists and Tired Teachers were all categories of teachers which did not teach composition actively.

The other teacher type taught composition and made it an important part of their classes. These teachers made up 46% of the sample (44 teachers). These teachers were further divided into three categories of teachers: the Communicators, the Thinking, Reading, Writing Teachers, and the Processists.

The first category of teachers who actively taught composition was the communicators. These twelve teachers, 13% of the sample, consistently described composition as a

means of communication. They described composition as an every day skill which should be relevant to life after high school as well as a means to express their own ideas and thoughts. The teachers indicated that the students should engage in writing activities at least once a week.

Generally, these teachers had been teaching anywhere from one to over ten years. In addition, many of the teachers had Master's degrees as well as Bachelor's degrees.

Comments from these teachers which exemplify this category were as follows:

I believe composition should be central to the English classroom as well as valued by all instructors. The importance to students of acquiring good communication skills can not be measured. Regardless of a student's chosen career, the ability to write effectively will enhance his/her job performance. (Carol, Academic English teacher)

The primary role [of composition] must be to facilitate communication for the student or it serves little purpose except to future composition teachers. (Gary, Honors English and reading teacher)

I do not teach "composition," but I do have my students express themselves on current issues frequently. A student must learn to express himself well on paper.

It is in writing that students have the opportunity to share their ideas and to clarify for themselves the issue at hand. (Lou, History teacher)

Composition is vital in the classroom--in any subject area. Students must be articulate in writing as well as in speech, and how can that occur if students do not write, and write regularly. Part of the course of instruction in my classroom is not just the study of literature, but the practice of communicating with a variety of audiences and for a variety of purposes. If my students can write and write well, they can transfer that skill to any area, whether it be the interpretation of a work of literature or the production of a professional brochure, a quarterly report or a masterful business letter. (Kathleen, AP English teacher)

Composition should be taught as a tool. Our job is to teach communication, comprehension and coordination (of the first two). It is vital that composition be taught as a tool of everyday living--not just as a means to achieve scholastic ends. Some excellent teachers of composition cause composition to appear as a sterile object, to be used in a formal classroom setting only. Unless it is taught as a viable, living function, it

will slowly die as the student becomes the adult who needs desperately a command of the language. (Larry, Senior English teacher)

The second category of teachers who actively taught composition were the Thinking, Reading, and Writing teachers. These seventeen teachers (18%) typically stated that writing is not just a means of communication, but rather a tool for critical thinking. These teachers also indicated that the link between reading, writing and critical thinking in their classroom instruction was very strong. These teachers had been teaching a varied number of years and had a combination of Bachelor's and Master's degrees. The students of these teachers typically wrote at least once a week or more than once a week. Comments which exemplify these teacher stances were as follows:

Composition can form a strong link between reading and thinking in students' education. As students respond in organized fashion to things they have read, they learn to question and analyze other people's ideas and, hopefully, to shape new thoughts of their own. I believe that the best education is a matter of experience in reading, writing, and thinking.

Composition should form a key role in such a process for any discipline of learning. (Pat, CLA and Honors English teacher)

Composition is the most important part of the English curriculum since it encompasses reading, critical thinking and language skills. I tell my students that they can "live" without reading Macbeth, but their writing skills will determine their options for the future. (Shirley, Honors English teacher)

Since I firmly believe that writing is the instrument which provokes and deepens thought, I am convinced it is very important in the classroom. Composition writing demands organization, communication, and creativity. These skills are mandatory for success in and out of school. (Ellenore, English teacher)

The final category of teachers who actively teach composition was the Processist category. Fifteen teachers (15%) made up this category. These teachers typically indicated that composition played a major role in the classroom. They generally thought that composition was a skill the students needed to be taught. They integrated grammar lessons in the revision process and put a lot of stress on the composing process--from invention to delivery. The teaching experience of these teachers varied from one to over ten years. In addition, many of the teachers held Master's degrees and one had a PhD. The students of the Processists typically wrote once or more than once a week. Comments which exemplify this teacher stance were as

follows:

Composition plays a most important part--My students write for every assignment--vocabulary tests are sentence patterns, novel tests are essays, responses to poetry are paragraphs--students must learn to express their ideas in complete units of writing. They must practice invention, organization and development of ideas. (Patricia, English teacher)

Prior to the implementation of the writing process at my high school students responded negatively to writing assignments. Now, students enjoy writing and have improved markedly in their writing. (Lynn, English teacher)

For years I dared not admit that I thought grammar should be taught adjacent to composition rather than as a separate subject. (Kathy, English teacher)

I believe writing (all writing) should be taught as a process. Even the final "beautiful" copy that is graded is still not free from future revision. I also think grammar and mechanics should be taught within the context of the student's paper. (Susan, English teacher)

Overall, of the teachers who actively taught

composition, there were three types. The teachers in this category included the Communicators, the Thinking, Reading, and Writing Teachers, and the Processists. These teachers indicated that composition played an active role both in the classroom and the students' lives after school.

Summary

This chapter was a narrative of the findings of this study. This section of the chapter is a brief summary of the findings.

Phase one of data analysis involved the six Likert scale questions and the two open ended questions. Each of these questions was examined by course. The first course discussed was English 1200, the developmental writing course designed for students who failed the writing portion of the TASP test. The students in this course did not think that they had the opportunity to practice writing a variety of papers before they took the TASP test. In addition, these students also thought that their high school teachers did not prepare them for the TASP test; however, the students did indicate that they thought their high school teachers taught them to write well. These students also felt that they were not prepared to take the writing section of the TASP and felt that they did not do well on the writing portion of the test. The responses to the open ended questions indicated that the majority of the students felt their skills were below those of the average college

student; however, a large percentage did indicate that they thought their skills were average or above average when compared to other college students. In addition, only 25% of the students felt they performed well on the TASP while 75% indicated that they thought they did not perform well.

The second English course discussed was 1310, the first semester composition course. These students indicated that they thought they had the opportunity to practice writing a variety of papers before they took the TASP test. In addition, these students thought that their high school teachers prepared them well for the test and that their teachers taught them to write well. The students also felt that they were prepared to take the TASP and that they performed well on the TASP. The students also indicated that the majority of them thought their writing skills were average or above average when compared to other college students; however, a large percentage also thought that their skills were below average. In addition, 70% of the students thought they performed well on the TASP while only 30% thought that they did not perform well.

The third course discussed was English 1311, the first semester academic core course. These students were divided about whether or not they thought they had the opportunity to write a variety of papers in high school and if their high school teachers taught them to write well. However, the majority of the students did indicate that they thought

their high school teachers taught them to write well. These students also thought they were prepared to take the writing section and thought that they performed well on the test. The majority of the students felt that their writing skills were above average; however, a large percentage thought their skills were below average. In addition, 75% of these students thought they performed well on the test while only 25% of the students thought they did not perform well.

The last course discussed was English 1320, the second semester freshman composition course. The majority of these students thought they did not have the opportunity to write a variety of papers before taking the TASP and that their high school teachers did not prepare them to take the TASP. The majority did indicate, however, that they thought their high school English teachers taught them to write well. These students also thought that they were prepared to take the TASP test and performed well. The majority of the students thought that their writing skills were above average while a large percentage indicated that their skills were below average. In addition, 62% of the students thought that they performed well on the test while 38% thought that they did not perform well.

The responses to the first open-ended question indicated that the students who felt their skills were above average thought they had stronger vocabulary, better grammar, better organization, and more experience than other

students. Interestingly, all of these areas are instructional areas. In addition, these students indicated that they thought their skills were stronger than other college students because of their confidence, high school English teachers or additional instruction in journalism or creative writing courses. The students who indicated that they thought their skills were below average listed weak vocabulary, poor grammar, poor organization, poor spelling, little knowledge about writing, and limited writing experience as reasons for their below average skills. Interestingly, these areas are all instructional areas. In addition, these students indicated that they had no confidence in their writing ability and poor high school instruction.

The students who thought that they performed well on the test typically stated that they were confident in their writing ability, had strong writing backgrounds and were prepared by former teachers or a TASP preparation course. The students who thought that they did not perform well on the test typically commented that they had little confidence in their writing abilities, were tired by the end of the test, had weak writing skills and were unprepared to take the writing portion of the TASP.

Phase two of data analysis involved analyzing the responses given on Survey II and the student interviews. The responses on the survey indicated that the students felt

that their high school teachers influenced the way they write. The results of the survey also indicated that the students thought that confidence and composition instruction were the most influential factors on their performance on the TASP test.

The responses in the student interviews resulted in the emergence of three teacher types. The Literaturists typically taught and discussed literature. When writing, the students of the Literaturists wrote mainly literary analysis and creative responses to the literature. The Structurists typically stressed mechanics and form when teaching composition. These teachers typically only marked mechanical errors when grading and did not provide the students with comments or guidance to improve their writing skills. The Processists typically stressed the writing process when teaching composition. They guided students through all stages of writing with an emphasis on pre-writing and revision. These teachers generally allowed students to improve their essays for higher grades.

The students who had Literaturists and Structurists as teachers did not feel confident or secure in their writing abilities and thought that they needed more composition instruction in high school. The students who had Processists as teacher typically were more confident in their writing abilities and enjoyed writing.

Phase three of data analysis involved analyzing the

responses given on the Composition Instruction Survey and the responses to the open ended question. The responses on the survey indicated that the majority of the teachers spent most of their time discussing and writing about literature. These teachers also indicated that they stressed development and organization more than grammar and mechanics when teaching composition and do not spend much time teaching grammar. When grading, the teachers varied their practices. Some of the teachers grade holistically; others assign one grade for content and mechanics, and others assign two grades for content and mechanics. Many of the teachers indicated that they vary their grading according to the assignment. The teachers, with an overwhelming 95%, indicated that they taught writing as a process. Finally, the teachers divided their reaction to traditional egregious errors. Some of the teachers indicated that a paper was considered unsuccessful if these traditional egregious errors were present, while others indicated that a paper could be successful if these errors were present.

The responses to the open ended question resulted in two types of teachers: those who actively taught composition and those who did not. The teachers who did not actively teach composition included the Literaturists, the Structurists and the Tired Teachers. The Literaturists stressed teaching literature and their students typically wrote only literary analysis and creative responses to the

literature. The Structurists were mainly concerned with mechanics and form when teaching. The Tired Teachers were frustrated with teaching and indicated that the students could not learn to write or used the excuse that the class loads were too large to teach composition. These teachers generally felt discouraged and stressed instructional areas other than composition.

The teachers who actively taught composition were the Communicators, the Thinking, Reading and Writing Teachers, and the Processists. The Communicators taught composition as a life-long skill that students needed to succeed in life. They stressed the importance of being able to communicate their ideas clearly. The Thinking, Reading, and Writing Teachers taught composition as a means of enhancing critical thinking in their classroom. The Processists typically taught writing as a process and stressed the importance of students' ability to write and understand all stages of the writing process. These three teacher types indicated that composition played an important role in the classroom and in the students' lives after high school.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Overview of the Study

An interest in the relationships between the nature of composition instruction and student performance on the TASP Test prompted the research questions which guided this investigation. The researcher wanted to explore both teacher and student perceptions of the role of composition in high school classrooms, and how the differing perceptions of the role of composition affected student performance on the TASP Test.

To investigate these relationships, qualitative and quantitative procedures were used. Information from students and teachers was collected through the use of questionnaires employing Likert-scale questions, forced selection items, and open-ended questions. Information from students was also collected through interviews. Data collection and analysis were divided into phases by their specific foci. Phase I of data collection and analysis involved distributing, collecting, and analyzing Survey I, which was distributed throughout freshman English classes. Phase II of data collection and analysis consisted of meeting with students, who completed Survey II and

participated in interviews, and the subsequent analysis of the surveys and interviews. Phase III of data collection and analysis involved distributing, collecting and analyzing the Composition Instruction Surveys, which were distributed to high school teachers across the North Texas area.

This chapter discusses the significance of the findings from all three phases of data analysis for composition instruction. The discussion addresses the research questions identified in Chapter 1. These questions were:

1. What factors impact student performance on the writing portion of the TASP test?
2. How do methods of teaching writing affect student performance on the writing portion of the TASP test?
3. Which methods of teaching writing produce the best results on the writing portion of the TASP test?

This chapter is divided in three sections. In the first section, the research questions are discussed in relation to the research findings. In the second section, the significance and implications that this study has on the educational community is discussed. The third section addresses recommendations for future research.

Discussion of Findings

Central to this study were the factors that influence student performance on the writing portion of the TASP test, the nature of composition instruction as perceived by teachers and students, and the relationship between

composition instruction and student performance. First, the researcher examined the students' perceptions of what influenced their performance on the writing portion of the TASP test. Because composition instruction began to emerge as an influencing factor, the researcher wanted to determine student perceptions of their former instruction in composition. Finally, the researcher wanted to determine teacher perceptions of the role of composition in the classroom. The following discussion of findings first addresses student perceptions of factors that influenced their performance on the TASP test.

After completing data collection and analysis phases one and two, the researcher was able to conclude that the students' performance on the writing section of the TASP test was influenced by a number of factors. The two factors which the students stated most frequently were confidence and composition instruction. Generally, the students who were confident in their writing abilities also stated that they had good composition instruction while in high school. The students who failed the test typically stated that they were not confident in their writing ability and did not have good composition instruction. Although the majority of students who passed the test were confident in their writing ability and stated that they had good composition instruction, many of the students who passed the test were not confident in their writing ability and stated that they

did not have good composition instruction. These results led the researcher to believe that the type of writing instruction a student perceived as having been exposed to in high school coupled with confidence in writing ability were interrelated. Bandura's theory of self-efficacy (1982), and Weiner's theory that students' motivation toward a task is related to the manner in which they approach that task (1979; Weiner et al., 1983), further supports the idea that student confidence toward their performance on a task influences their performance. It would appear then, that the confidence does affect the student performance.

The question arises as to how these students develop strong or weak levels of confidence in their writing ability. Since writing is a skill that must be learned, and since students indicated that composition instruction was also an important factor influencing their performance on the test, the relationship between past instruction and confidence began to emerge. If students believed that their instruction was strong, it is likely that their levels of confidence in writing would increase.

The emerging relationships among past instruction, confidence and student performance led the researcher to examine the types of instruction that the students were receiving. The results of the open-ended questions on Survey I indicated that students gave different reasons for confidence, or lack thereof, in their writing abilities.

Students who were confident in their writing abilities thought that they had strong vocabulary, grammar, organization, development, and focus. In addition, the confident students indicated that they had strong writing backgrounds or had good teachers. The students who were not confident in their writing abilities thought that they had weaker writing skills, poor spelling, poor grammar, poor development, poor word usage, and limited writing backgrounds. The areas that students suggested as making their skills weak or strong are areas that teachers should regularly teach. These instructional areas are all listed as part of the Texas state Essential Elements for English IV (1987). By examining this information, it is evident that there is a discrepancy between the Essential Elements and actual instruction in the classroom.

Further information from the students who completed Survey II and participated in the interviews clarified the differences in high school composition instruction. The students described three different types of teachers: Structurists, Literaturists and Processists. The students indicated that the Structurists and Literaturists did not focus on teaching writing. These teachers were not active composition teachers. Instead, these teachers spent most of the time stressing mechanics, format, or literature. Thus, the teachers did not help to increase the confidence the students had in their writing abilities. Rather, the

Structurists, through their emphasis on mechanics and form, made the students dislike writing and lowered their confidence levels. The students described the Processists as teachers who placed a strong emphasis on writing in the classroom. These teachers typically approached writing as a process and encouraged students to improve their writing abilities through help with revision and support, rather than criticism. The students who indicated that their teachers were Processists generally felt much more confident in their writing abilities and performed well on the test.

After meeting with these students and analyzing the information, the researcher wanted to further examine the discrepancies in pedagogy that composition teachers employed. In order to do investigate further, it was necessary to determine teacher perceptions of the role composition should play in the classroom.

The responses on the Composition Instruction Survey led the researcher to expand on the categories of teachers the students discussed. Because the teachers had a more in-depth insight into their purposes for teaching composition, two types of teachers, and three sub-categories of teachers for each type, emerged. The first type of teacher was the inactive composition teacher. The teachers who could be called inactive teachers included the Literaturists, Structurists and Tired Teachers. The second type of teacher was the active composition teacher. The

teachers who could be called active teachers included the Communicators, Thinking, Reading, and Writing Teachers, and Processists. Appendix C is a summary of the different characteristics of these teacher categories.

The categories of teachers differed in many ways. The Structurists indicated that they taught mostly mechanics and rules of format. Through their research on formal grammar instruction, Braddock, Lloyd, Jones and Schoer (1963), Strom (1960), and Hillocks (1986), concluded that grammar instruction is an ineffective way to teach writing. This stress on mechanical rules is detrimental to the students' development as writers. The amount of time spent teaching and practicing rules of writing take away from the time that could be spent engaging in writing activities. In addition, Britton and his colleagues (1975) stated that the demands placed on student writing activities in schools stifles the students' abilities to write. Emig (1971) also asserted that the structured writing in most schools is a limiting experience for students.

The Structurists indicated that they grade for mechanical errors and consider such errors reasons to reduce a student's grade. This traditional form of grading, however, does not encourage a student to improve or help a student learn (Searle, & Dillon, 1980; Petty, & Finn, 1981; Sperling, & Freedman, 1987a).

The Structurists, through their emphasis on format and

mechanics, do not allow the students to create their own text or materialize their own original thoughts in writing. The emphasis on the rigid grammar rules and the marking of mechanical errors in their writing hinders the students from developing into competent writers. The students who described the Structurist as a former teacher generally did not feel confident in their writing abilities and did not perform well on the test.

The Literaturists, another category of teachers who do not actively teach composition, focus mainly on teaching literature. The Literaturists indicated that class periods are devoted mainly to the reading and discussion of literature. When the students in the Literaturists' classrooms do write, they write mainly literary analysis, creative responses to literature, or answers to essay questions about the literature.

The traditional literature lesson, which is part of over 70 percent of all English classes (Applebee, Langer, & Mullis, 1987b), utilizes lecture and discussion to guide students toward a canonical interpretation of the text (Applebee, Langer, & Mullis 1987a, Ravitch & Finn, 1987). Many English teachers continue to view themselves primarily as teachers of literature. A process approach to teaching which would allow students to choose their own topics is viewed as threatening by most English teachers (Applebee, 1986). The Literaturists, who think that teaching

literature is their main objective, do not allow students the freedom to interpret text or to develop their own ideas.

Squire and Applebee (1968) indicated that two thirds of the composition topics assigned in English classes were tied to literature. In addition, they concluded that the students were asked to write about the literature in a distant, structured way. The papers were structured with the typical thesis and support and the tone was impersonal (1968). In addition, Britton and his colleagues (1975) concluded that only until about the fifth grade were students allowed to express their ideas in writing. After the fifth year, writing, even in the English classes, became a tool for testing the students' knowledge. These essays and tests do not allow the students to explore their own analysis of the text; rather, these writing assignments become a means by which the teacher can criticize student products. This use of writing in the classroom stifles the students' writing and gives the students a negative attitude toward writing.

The Tired Teachers are another category of teachers who do not actively teach writing. These teachers do not value the instruction of writing in their classrooms. They indicated that they think the students could not or would not learn how to write. Rosenthal and Jacobson (1968), Brophy and Evertson (1981), and Brattesani, Marshall and Weinstien (1984) all found that the expectations a teacher

has for the students influences student achievement. If a teacher does not value the instruction or thinks that the students cannot learn the material, the students can perceive the teacher's attitude as negative and adopt a negative stance toward the material (Brattesani, Marshall, & Weinstein, 1984). The Tired Teachers could influence the students to perceive composition as a skill that has little value.

The Communicators are a group of teachers who could be described as active teachers of composition. These teachers typically teach composition as a life-long skill. They give writing practical meaning rather than isolating it in a formal academic setting. In addition, these teachers give writing assignments that have practical application and frequently allowed students to create their own text; thus, the students become more comfortable with writing as an everyday skill and more confident in their writing abilities. The teachers suggested that they want the students' goals to be that of communication, not grades. Similarly, Applebee (1984), Britton and his colleagues (1975), and Freedman (1987a) called for a move to the higher purpose of communication. The Communicators expect the students to be able to write well and communicate their own ideas.

The Thinking, Reading, and Writing teachers thought that not only was writing a means of communication, it was

also a tool to enhance critical thinking. These teachers stressed the connection between reading, writing and thinking (Applebee, Langer, & Mullis 1987b). They used composition as a means to help students explore their own ideas about the literature they were reading or other topics. By allowing the students the opportunity to use writing as a means to explore their own ideas, the teachers give the students more control over their learning and allow the students to develop confidence in their writing and thinking skills. It would appear that these teachers are using a more process-oriented approach of teaching literature and composition as Langer (1989) suggested was eminent.

The final category of teachers discussed was the Processists. These teachers were also active composition teachers. By approaching writing as a process, the teachers were able to help the students understand their own writing processes. These teachers, rather than teaching formal grammar to the students and hindering their development as writers (Strom, 1960; Braddock et al., 1963; Hillocks, 1986), integrate the grammar instruction in the composition process. The teachers also use pre-writing strategies such as free-writing (Macrorie, 1968) to help the students develop their ideas. They give the students freedom in writing and allowed the students to explore their ideas without worrying about the mechanical errors until

late in the process. This method gives the students opportunities to take risks in their writing and gain confidence. The teacher played a supportive role in the writing process rather than serving only as a critic (Emig, 1971).

The Processists use methods which Macrorie (1968), Murray (1968), Elbow (1973), Moffett (1968), Garrison (1974), Carnicelli (1980), and Emig (1971) suggested would allow students to gain control over their own writing experiences without being stifled by classroom instruction. As a result, students described these teachers as effective teachers of composition who taught them to write well and gave them confidence in their writing abilities.

A review of the literature indicated that much of the classroom writing instruction stifles student writing because of the restrictive, structured and prescribed nature of it (Emig, 1971; Britton et al., 1975; Applebee, Langer, & Mullis, 1986a, 1986b, 1987a, 1987b; and many others). Interestingly, the teachers who do not actively teach composition (Structurists, Literaturists, and Tired Teachers) immersed their students in these restrictive writing environments. The teachers who actively teach composition (Communicators, Thinking, Reading, and Writing Teachers, and Processists) do not limit the writing experiences of their students as Emig suggested many teachers did (1971). Rather, the active composition

teachers give composition meaning and purpose.

Overall, it can be concluded that a number of factors influence student performance on the writing portion of the TASP test. The two main factors which influenced the student performance were confidence in writing ability and previous writing instruction. Because writing is a skill which is learned, confidence and previous writing instruction are related. The students with higher levels of confidence generally performed better on the test and indicated that they had active teachers of composition. The students with lower levels of confidence generally performed poorer on the test and indicated that they had inactive teachers of composition.

Educational Implications

Findings from this study imply that the teaching of composition is a complex task. Teachers who teach composition affect the level of confidence students have about their writing skills. Bandura (1982) and Weiner (1979; Weiner et al., 1983) asserted that students who have confidence in tasks generally perform better on those tasks. The teachers who actively taught composition were able to encourage the students' confidence in their writing ability and therefore influence students' writing performances positively. Teachers who did not teach composition actively, however, were not able to instill confidence in students about their writing abilities.

Writing well is an important asset for a student's success throughout life. The educational system should do its best to ensure that students are taught to achieve proficiency in writing skills. Thus, the values that teachers place on the role of composition in the classroom should be examined. Composition should be taught as a life-long skill, practical to all aspects of life.

In order for all teachers to teach writing as a life-long skill, teacher in-services should be held which emphasize teaching writing as a life-long skill and describe how to provide students with opportunities in the classroom to write using composition as a life-long skill. Teaching writing as a useful and important skill will make learning composition real and not simply an academic activity. Overall, teachers should be trained to use writing with purpose in every classroom--writing should be an everyday/everywhere skill. Writing well is as important a part of communication as speaking--perhaps even more important in our society.

The educational community should ensure that all teachers, not only teachers of English, actively teach composition as a skill that is real and necessary, not just a part of the academic classroom. While the instruction of literature is important and should not be discarded, English teachers should remember that students must be able to understand the concepts the literature presents. Students

should not just simply know the canonized interpretations of great works of literature; they should be able to interpret the literature themselves. The English classroom should be a place where students can form their own ideas and be able to express them. Students will not learn to write critically or think critically by simply repeating the teacher's interpretation of a work. Perhaps Langer's process-oriented approach to teaching literature (1989), would be an option that will allow teachers to combine teaching composition with teaching literature and teach both effectively. By combining a process-oriented approach for both literature and composition, students will be encouraged to arrive, through their own processes, to an interpretation and give their writing skills a personalized meaning. Composition can be used by students to explore their own ideas and theories.

Because the issue of literacy is important to the field of education and to society, it is crucial that students learn basic competencies in writing. As our society moves toward technology and communication, and as the future of our country relies on our youth, it is imperative that the students of today are able to function in the world of tomorrow.

Some teachers are able to communicate the importance of writing and teach students the life-long skills they need to transfer the skills they learn in high school to practical

situations. This study is significant because it identifies the teachers who teach students these skills. The active teachers of composition, who give writing activities meaning and allow students to create text, teach writing much more effectively than the inactive teachers. Teachers should examine their own perceptions of composition and determine if they are encouraging students to grow through composition, or if they are instead stifling students' writing.

To ensure that students achieve writing competence, all teachers should provide students with a variety of writing opportunities. Students should be given opportunities to develop their own writing processes. They should be taught how to assess a writing assignment and determine if it is adequately supported and organized. The teachers should not simply be critics of the students' writing; rather the teachers should collaborate with the students as advisors to help the students learn from mistakes. Teachers should help students learn that writing helps them understand themselves, what they think, what they know, and what they feel. In addition, teachers should approach the language arts as an integrated field; composition, vocabulary, mechanics and sentence structure cannot be taught in isolation if they are to retain meaning for the student. Finally, reading should not be separated from writing. Writing is a process that can clarify a student's

understanding of the literature, and reading enhances a student's writing ability.

Recommendations for Further Research

Additional research would help substantiate or refute the findings of this study. Future research needs to broaden the design of the study through methodological adjustments. A more in-depth examination would investigate past writing experience as well as observe teachers engaging in the instruction of composition. An increase in the number of interviews held with student informants, and in the number of student informants would provide more information about student perceptions of composition instruction. In addition, an expansion of the students' past histories in writing will also enhance the picture of past composition instruction. Finally, by examining direct ties between teacher informants and student informants, the discrepancies between student perceptions and teacher perceptions could be revealed.

In addition to methodological concerns, future research could examine the relationship between teacher value of instruction and student achievement. A review of the literature indicated very little research on this topic; however, the results of this investigation suggest that the value a teacher places on composition was reflected in student attitude toward writing. Further research could investigate this issue regarding composition instruction, as

well as, instruction in all fields.

Further research could also investigate the effectiveness of teacher implementation of the Texas Essential Elements for high school English. The students who participated in this survey indicated that they thought they had weak skills in many of the areas required by the Essential Elements. Further research could investigate how teachers interpret the Essential Elements and determine if they are being covered adequately in class.

Conclusions

The findings of this study suggest a need to reevaluate the attitudes toward composition that teachers bring to the classroom. The researcher has learned that the pedagogical methods of teaching writing, as well as the affective messages a teacher sends, influence a student's writing ability.

The findings of this study further suggest that students perceive the value that teachers place on areas of instruction. The findings also indicate that students are much more confident in their writing abilities when writing leaves the sterility of academia. By teaching writing as a life-long skill that has meaning and purpose in the students' immediate and future lives, teachers will be able to teach students a skill they will use throughout their lives.

If educators are to teach students to write

effectively, it is important to teach the students to use writing as skill they will use throughout their lives, not merely as a way to be tested or evaluated. The educational community must value writing's crucial role in communication--especially as society moves toward technology and internationalism. After all, speech is only temporary, and the written word remains to its last letter.

APPENDIX A

Relationships between TASP Competencies
and Texas Essential Elements for
English IV

Essential Elements are excerpted from:

State Board of Education Rules for Curriculum. Austin:
Texas Education Agency. Subchapter D. Essential Elements:
Grades 9-12.

d) English IV (1 Unit). English IV shall include the following essential elements:

1. Writing concepts and skills. Students shall be provided opportunities to:

A) use the composing process to plan and generate writing;

TASP Correlation

All three of the TASP competencies reflect the need for prewriting, writing, and revision during the writing process (THECB, 1989, pp. 21-22).

B) refine sentences and paragraphs into compositions exhibiting unity, clarity, and coherence;

TASP Correlation

Develop an initial draft in which a controlling idea is supported in a unified and focused manner.

Re-evaluate the organization; determine whether the text has been effectively presented and adequately

elaborated. (THECB, 1989, p. 22)

- C) write longer compositions incorporating outside information with documentation;

TASP Correlation

Assess what is already known about a topic and what needs to be found out.

Recognize when information must come from other sources--a library or non-print sources including their views or experimentation.

Use library skills to develop an efficient plan for collecting needed information and to recognize possible need for documentation.

Use laboratory and field methods to search for and collect information. . . .

Use interview techniques to gather information from other people. . . .

Evaluate the process by which information was collected and decide whether more is needed. (THECB, 1989, p. 21)

- D) write a variety of forms of informative and persuasive discourse;

- E) write at least one form of literary discourse;

TASP Correlation

Recognize when necessary information must be

acquired through analysis of literary works or other works of art.

Recognize when ethical, emotional, or logical appeals are needed to achieve a specific purpose.

Determine appropriate purpose and rhetorical genre.

F) Use each of the commonly recognized patterns of organization;

TASP Correlation

Organize ideas into a logical and cohesive arrangement consistent with purpose, audience, and occasion. (THECB, 1989, p. 22)

G) achieve precision in meaning through sophisticated language and rhetorical choices;

TASP Correlation

Incorporate language and style appropriate to a given purpose, audience, and occasion.

Create and sustain the interest of the reader by effective stylistic decisions in diction, usage, and sentence structure. (THECB, 1989, pp. 21-22)

H) analyze the presentation of ideas in written discourse, including forms of logical reasoning, common fallacies of reasoning, and techniques of persuasive language

TASP Correlation

Recognize when ethical, emotional, or logical appeals are needed to achieve a specific purpose.

Re-evaluate the argument; eliminate any logical fallacies; clarify the distinction between fact and opinion.

Validate the logic of the conclusion. (THECB, 1989, pp. 21-22)

- I) use the forms and conventions of written language appropriately;

TASP Correlation

Proofread for adherence to conventions of edited American English. (THECB, 1989, p. 22)

- J) revise written work for content, organization, topic development, appropriate transition, clarity of language, and appropriate word and sentence choice according to the purpose and audience for which a piece is written;

TASP Correlation

Re-examine the draft, and if necessary, make changes to improve communication to a given audience.

Re-evaluate the argument; eliminate any logical fallacies; clarify the distinction between fact and opinion.

Re-evaluate the organization; determine whether the text has been effectively presented and adequately elaborated.

Re-evaluate the style; carry out necessary revisions including attention to matters of cohesion, consistency of point of view, appropriate language, and effective sentence structure.

Provide transitions among various components.

(THECB, 1989, pp. 21-22)

K) proofread written work for internal punctuation, spelling, grammatical and syntactical errors, paragraph indention, margins, and legibility of writing;

TASP Correlation

Proofread for adherence to conventions of edited American English. (THECB, 1989, p. 22)

L) evaluate one's own writing as well as that of others;

TASP Correlation

Read drafts objectively and critically and elicit reactions from others. (THECB, 1989, p. 22)

APPENDIX B

Fall 1991

Dear Freshman English Instructor:

I am beginning research for my Master's Thesis. I will be examining the relationship between student performance on the writing portion of the TASP Test and high school instruction. Please take a few minutes during your class period to administer the enclosed survey to all students who have taken the TASP Test. Please return the surveys, in this envelope, to the 1200 Tutor Box in the English office by Tuesday, September 10. Thank you for your cooperation. If you have any questions feel free to contact me at 565-2050.

Sincerely,

Susanne Vrba

Fall 1991

Initial Survey: TASP Writing Portion

This is a study being conducted about the writing portion of the TASP Test. If you would be willing to provide further information through a follow up survey and a short interview please sign your name and include your phone number on the spaces provided. Your name will be kept confidential at all times. If you do not wish to participate, please fill out the remaining portions of the survey. I would appreciate your help, however feel free to omit any questions with which you are uncomfortable. If you have any further questions feel free to contact me at 565-2050.
Susanne Vrba

English section _____ Signature _____

Phone Number _____ High School _____

JR/SR English Teacher _____

Overall HS GPA (A) (B) (C) (D) (F)

SAT Score _____ TASP _____
verbal/math math/read/writing

Favorite Subject _____ Least Favorite Subject _____

Gender (Male) (Female) Ethnicity _____

Please circle the number that best corresponds with your response to the following statements. 1 is the most positive, 5 is the most negative.

	Totally Agree			Totally Disagree	
1. To prepare for my TASP Test, I had an opportunity to practice writing a variety of papers.	1	2	3	4	5
2. In high school, the teachers prepared the students for the TAAS and the TASP.	1	2	3	4	5
3. I think that my writing skills are similar to most college students.	1	2	3	4	5
4. I think my high school English teachers taught me to write very well.	1	2	3	4	5
5. When I took the TASP test I was prepared to take the writing section.	1	2	3	4	5
6. When I left the TASP Testing center, I felt I did well on the writing section.	1	2	3	4	5

Statement three asked how similar your writing skills are to other college students, how are your writing skills similar or different? (You may use the back of this paper to answer.)

Statement number six asked you how well you felt you did on the test, why do you think you performed that way? (You may use the back of this paper to answer.)

Survey II

High School _____
 Teacher _____
 Student _____
 Phone Number _____

Please respond to the following statements according to the following scale.

4--Strongly Agree 3--Agree 2--Disagree 1--Strongly Disagree

- _____ 1. I do not think my high school teachers taught me to write well.
 _____ 2. My high school teachers influenced the way I write.
 _____ 3. My high school teachers spent a lot of time stressing grammar and mechanics.
 _____ 4. I do not have any confidence in my writing ability.
 _____ 5. I get nervous when I have to write in a timed situation.
 _____ 6. I think I should have had more writing instruction in high school.
 _____ 7. My high school teachers stressed the importance of development and organization when writing.
 _____ 8. I think that how I was taught to write influenced my performance on the writing portion of the TASP.

Please rank the following factors from 1-6 in order of their influence on your performance on the writing portion of the TASP.

1--greatest influence 6--least influence

- _____ Confidence
 _____ Attitude
 _____ Health
 _____ Test taking skills
 _____ Instruction in composition
 _____ Length of the test

Please check the items which you think you received adequate instruction in while in high school.

- | | |
|-----------------------|--------------------------------------|
| _____ grammar | _____ elaboration |
| _____ vocabulary | _____ pre-writing |
| _____ spelling | _____ writing as a process |
| _____ organization | _____ audience, purpose and occasion |
| _____ focus and unity | _____ using examples in writing |
| _____ development | _____ decoding writing prompts |

On the back, please list or describe any specific writing strategies your teachers taught you in high school.

December 12, 1991

Name
School
Address
City

Dear Name:

I am a graduate student at the University of North Texas. Currently, I am conducting research for my Master's Thesis. The relationship between student performance on the writing portion of the TASP Test and high school instruction is the topic of my thesis. After surveying and interviewing freshman English students about their perceptions of composition instruction in high school, I am continuing my research with teachers who were identified by the students.

You were mentioned by many of the students I interviewed. The students identified you as a teacher who influenced their ability to write well. I am now asking you to help me with my research by taking a few minutes to complete the enclosed survey. I assure you all information will be kept confidential; however, I would appreciate it if you would include a phone number where I can reach if I have further questions.

Please return the survey in the envelope provided as soon as possible. Thank you for your input and cooperation. If you have any questions regarding this study, please contact me at (817)565-4355.

Sincerely,

Susanne Vrba

enc

Composition Instruction Survey

Please respond to the following questions. Remember, all responses will be kept CONFIDENTIAL and ALL QUESTIONS ARE OPTIONAL.

Name _____ Phone number _____
 School _____ Classes taught _____
 Years of teaching experience _____
 _____ 1-3 _____ Highest Degree attained _____
 _____ 4-6 _____ Bachelor's in _____
 _____ 7-9 _____ Master's in _____
 _____ 10+ _____ Ph.D. in _____

Please respond to the following statements using the following scale.

4--Strongly Agree 3--Agree 2--Disagree 1--Strongly Disagree

- _____ 1. In my classes, I spend most of the year discussing and writing about literature.
 _____ 2. When teaching composition, I stress development and organization more than grammar and mechanics.
 _____ 3. I spend a lot of time teaching grammar and mechanics.
 _____ 4. When grading essays, I grade holistically.
 _____ 5. I teach writing as a process: prewriting/invention, working rough draft, revision/evaluation, final draft.
 _____ 6. I split composition grades for content and grammar.
 _____ 7. I provide one inclusive grade for compositions.
 _____ 8. I consider a paper successful if it addresses the appropriate audience, purpose and occasion even if errors traditionally considered egregious are present: one or more run-ons, one or more fragments.
 _____ 9. I consider a paper unsuccessful if any of the traditional egregious errors are present.
 _____ 10. I teach students to write according to the modes.

Please check the items which are a regular part of your curriculum.

_____ Pentad	_____ Tagmemic Matrix	_____ Brainstorming
_____ Clustering	_____ Compare/Contrast	_____ Vocabulary
_____ Arrangement	_____ Peer Revision	_____ Focus and unity
_____ Persuasion	_____ Process Writing	_____ Grammar
_____ Description	_____ Personal Narrative	_____ Creative Writing
_____ Cubing	_____ Toulmin Model	_____ Five paragraph essay
_____ Audience, Purpose and Occasion		_____ Decoding Writing prompts
_____ Other (please list)		

My students write frequently:

- _____ more than once a week
 _____ once a week
 _____ once every two weeks
 _____ once a month

My students write a variety of types of discourse:

- _____ journals _____ free writing
 _____ essays _____ research papers
 _____ creative writing
 _____ other (please list)

What role do you think composition should play in the classroom (you may use the back of this paper to answer)?

APPENDIX C

Teacher Categories

Inactive Composition Teachers:

- Structurists
- **focused on format
 - Five paragraph essay
 - notecards and bibliography
 - **focused on mechanics
 - grammar
 - spelling
 - punctuation
 - **graded mechanical errors
 - no comments for improvement
 - no revisions
 - **made few writing assignments
 - **students responded negatively to writing
- Literaturists
- **focused on literature
 - **made few writing assignments
 - literary analysis
 - creative responses
 - **students responded negatively to writing
- Tired Teachers
- **frustrated with teaching
 - **class loads too large to teach
 - **felt students could not write
 - **very few writing assignments

Active Composition Teachers:

- Communicators
- **composition as a means of communication
 - **life-long learning
 - **frequent assignments
 - **variety of practical assignments
- Thinking, Reading, Writing Teachers
- **composition as a means of communication
 - **composition as a tool to enhance critical thinking
 - **stressed reading, writing, and thinking connection
 - **frequent assignments
 - **variety of assignments

Processists

- **approached writing as a process
pre-writing
arrangement
revision
- **papers resubmitted for grading
after revisions were made
- **integrated mechanics in the
revision stage of writing
- **frequent writing assignments
- **variety of writing assignments
- **students felt less threatened by
writing assignments
- **students confident in writing
abilities

Table 11

REFERENCE LIST

- Applebee, A. (1974). Tradition and reform in the teaching of English: A history. Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English.
- Applebee, A. N. (1984). Writing and reasoning. Review of Educational Research, 54(4), 577-596.
- Applebee, A. N. (1981). Writing in the secondary school: English and the content areas (Research Report 21). Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English.
- Applebee, A. N., Langer, J. A., & Mullis, I. V. S. (1987a) Literature and U.S. history: The instructional experience and factual knowledge of high school juniors. Princeton, NJ: Educational Testing Service.
- Applebee, A. N., Langer, J. A., & Mullis, I. V. S. (1986b). The writing report card: Writing achievement in American schools. Princeton, NJ: Educational Testing Service.
- Applebee, A. N., Langer, J. A., & Mullis, I. V. S. (1986a). The reading report card: Progress toward excellence in our schools. Princeton, NJ: Educational Testing Service.
- Applebee, A. N., Langer, J. A., & Mullis, I. V. S. (1986c). Writing: Trends across the decade, 1974-1984. Princeton, NJ: National Assessment of Educational Progress.

- Applebee, A. N., Langer, J. A., & Mullis, I. V. S. (1987b). Learning to be literate in America: Reading, writing, and reasoning. Princeton, NJ: Educational Testing Service.
- Applebee, R. K. (1966). National study of high school English programs: A record of English teaching today. English Journal, 55, 273-281.
- Bandura, A. (1982). Self-efficacy mechanism in human agency. American Psychologist, 37, 122-148.
- Bogdan, R. C., & Biklen, S. K. (1982). Qualitative reseach for education: An introduction to theory and methods. Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon.
- Boyer, E. (1983). High school: A report on secondary education in America. New York: McGraw Hill.
- Brattesani, K. A. Weinstein, R.S., & Marshall, H. H. (1984). Student perceptions of differential teacher treatment as moderators of teacher expectation effects. Journal of Educational Psychology, 76(2), 236-247.
- Britton, J. (1989). Writing and reading in the classroom. In A. Haas Dryson (Ed.), Collaborating through writing and reading: Exporing possibilities, (pp. 217-246). Urbana, Il: National Council of Teachers of English.
- Britton, J., Martin, N., McLeod, A., & Rosen, H. (1975). The development of writing abilities. London: McMillan.
- Brophy, J. E., & Evertson, C. M. (1981). Student

- characteristics and teaching. New York: Longman.
- Carnicelli, T. (1980). The writing conference: A one-to-one conversation. In T. Donovan, B. McClelland (Eds), Eight approaches to teaching composition. Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English.
- Carroll, J.B., & Freedle, R.O. (Eds.). (1975). Toward a literate society. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Chadwick-Joshua, J. (1988). Philosophical and Pedagogical Changes in Today's Composition Classes: Hobgoblins, Composing, and TASP. English in Texas, 20(1), 25-28.
- Chadwick-Joshua, J., & Jones-Johnson, N. (1991). A Rhetoric for the Evolving Writer. Denton, TX: University of North Texas Press.
- Copperman, P. (1978). The literacy hoax. New York: William Morrow.
- Elbow, P. (1973). Writing without teachers. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Emig, J. (1971). The composing processes of twelfth graders. Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English.
- Fillion, B. (1986). Language across the curriculum: Examining the place of language in our schools. In T. Newkirk (Ed.) To compose: Teaching writing in high school and college. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Florio, S., & Clark, C. (1982). The functions of writing in an elementary classroom. Research in the Teaching of English, 16, 115-129.

- Freedman, S. with C. Greenleaf and M. Sperling. (1987).
Response to student writing (Research Report No. 12).
Berkeley: University of California, Center for the
Study of Writing.
- Garrison, R. (1974). One-to-one: Tutorial instruction in
freshman English. New Directions for Community
Colleges 2 (1) 55-84.
- Goodlad, J. (1984). A place called school: Prospects for
the future.
- Gray, J., & Myers, M. The Bay Area Writing Project. Phi
Delta Kappan, 59, 410-413.
- Hillocks, G. (1986). Research on written composition: New
directions for teaching. Urbana, Il: National Council
of Teachers of English.
- Huck, S. W., Cormier, W. H., & Bounds, W. G. (1974).
Reading statistics and research. New York: Harper and
Row.
- Langer, J. A. (1984). Literacy instruction in American
schools: Problems and perspectives, American Journal
of Education, 93 (1), 23-35.
- Langer, J. A. (1989). The process of understanding
literature. Report No. 2.1. Albany, NY: Center for
the Learning and Teaching of Literature, The
University of Albany, SUNY.
- Langer, J. A., & Applebee, A. N. (1987). How Writing
Shapes Thinking: A Study of Teaching and Learning.

- Research Report No. 22. Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English.
- Lyons, G. (1987, September). The higher illiteracy. Harper's, pp. 33-40.
- Macrorie, K. (1968). Writing to be read. Rochell Park, NJ: Hayden.
- Moffett, J. (1968). Teaching the universe of discourse. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.
- Morrison, C., & Austin, M. C. (1977). The torchlighters revisited. Newark, DE: International Reading Association.
- Muller, H. J. (1967). The uses of English. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston.
- Murray, D. (1968). A writer teaches writing. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.
- National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) (1981). Three national assessments of reading: Changes in performance 1970-80 (Rep. No. 11-R-01). Denver, CO: Education Commission of the States.
- National Commission on Excellence in Education (1983). A Nation at risk: The imperative for educational reform. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.
- Odell, I. (1980). Business writing: Observations and implications for teaching composition. Theory Into Practice, 19(3), 225-232.
- Petty & Finn. (1981). Classroom teachers' reports on

- teaching composition. In S. Haley-James (Ed.),
Perspectives on writing in grades 1-8 (pp. 19-34).
Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English.
- Ravitch, D., & Finn, C. E. (1987). What Do Our 17-Year Olds Know? New York: Harper & Row.
- Reading, Writing, and Thinking: Results from the 1979-1980 assessment of reading and literature. Denver, CO: National Assessment of Educational Progress.
- Redish, J. C. (1986). The language of the bureaucracy. In R. Bailey (Ed.), Literacy in the 1980's.
- Rosenthal, R., & Jacobson, L. (1968). Pygmalion in the classroom: Teacher expectations and pupils' intellectual development. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston.
- Sawyer, T. M. (1977). Why speech will not totally replace writing. College Composition and Communication, 28(1), 43-48.
- Searle, D., & Dillon, D. (1980). The message of marking: Teacher written responses to student writing at intermediate grade levels. Research in the Teaching of English, 14(3), 233-242.
- Shaughnessy, M. P. (1977). Errors and expectations: A guide for the teacher of basic writing. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Sheils, M. (1975, December 8). Why Johnny can't write. Newsweek, pp. 58-65.

- Sperling, M., & Freedman, S. (1987). A good girl writes like a good girl: Written response and clues to the teaching/learning process. Written Communication, 4, 343-369.
- Spradley, J. P. (1979). The ethnographic interview. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.
- Squire, J., & Applebee, R. (1968). High school English instruction today. New York: Appleton Crofts.
- Strom, I. (1960). Research in grammar and usage and some implications for teaching writing. Bulletin of the School of Education, Indiana University.
- Texas Education Agency. (1987). Essential Elements and list of approved courses, grades 9-12. State Board of Education Rules for Curriculum.
- Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. (1986). A Generation of Failure: The Case for Testing and Remediation in Texas Higher Education.
- Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. (1991). TASP Test: Writing Performance Standards.
- Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. (1989). Improvement for Undergraduate Education in Texas: College Level Competencies.
- Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (1991, February 14). Composite passing rate for the 1990 TASP Test. Austin, TX.
- U.S. Office of Education (1984). Digest of education

statistics. Washington, DC: National Center for
Education Statistics.

Weiner, B. (1979). A theory of motivation for some classroom
experiences. Journal of Educational Psychology, 71,
3-25.

Weiner, B., Graham, S., Taylor, S. E., & Meyer, W. U.
(1983). Social cognition in the classroom.
Educational Psychologist, 18, 109-124.

Wells, G. (1986). Variation in child language. In P.
Fletcher & M. Garman (Eds.), Language Acquisition,
(2nd ed.) (pp. 109-140). Cambridge: Cambridge
University Press.