minnesota english journal
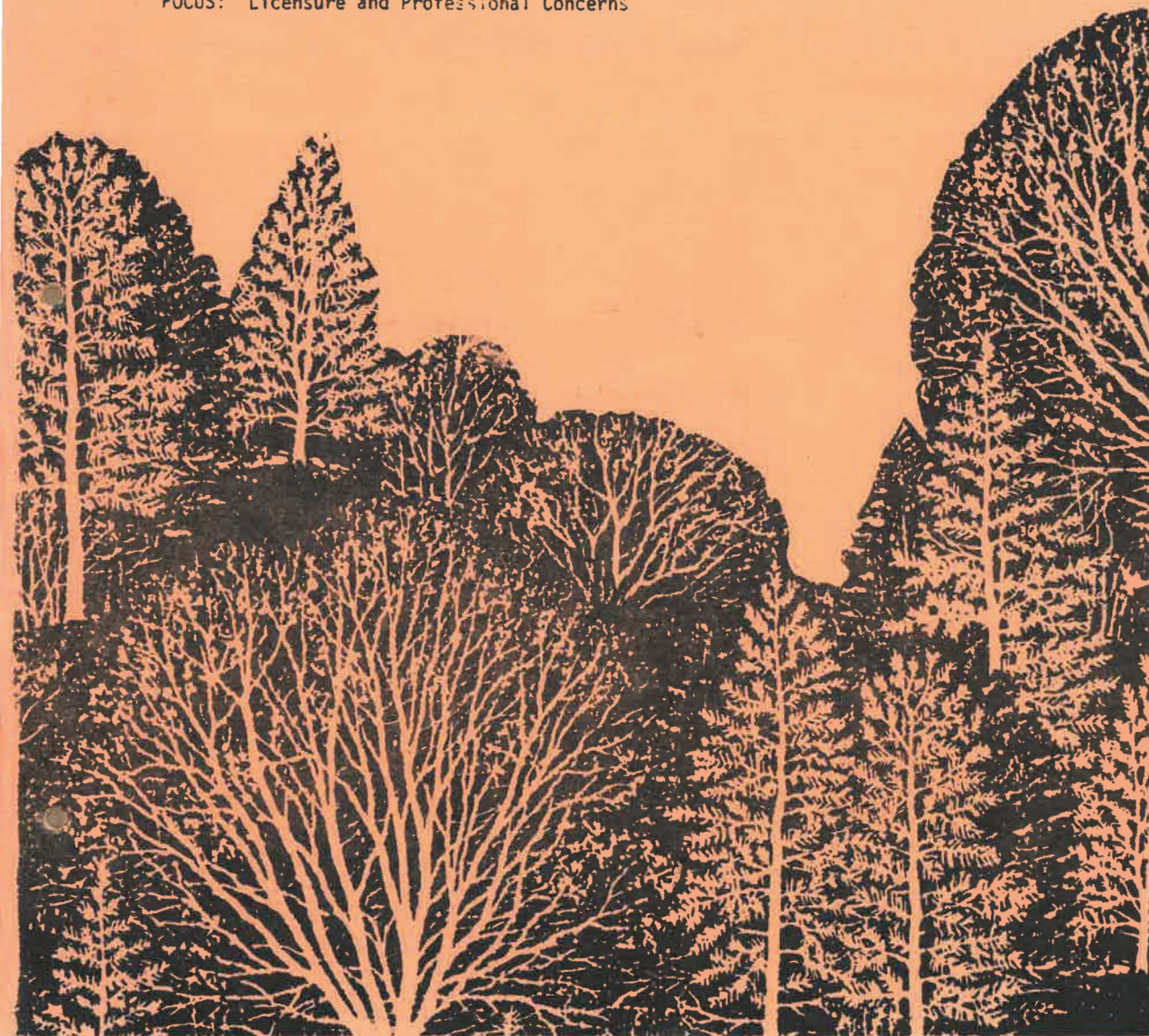
Published by the Minnesota Council of Teachers of English

THE MINNESOTA COUNCIL OF TEACHERS OF ENGLISH

TABLE OF CONTENTS

FINAL REPORT TO THE MINNESOTA COUNCIL OF TEACHERS
OF ENGLISH OF THE TASK FORCE ON TEACHER LICENSURE

Prepared by Thomas D. Bacig and Richard W. Beach

INTRODUCTION

In the fall of 1977 John Alexander, then president of the MCTE,
appointed a task force to explore the necessity of redrafting
Teacher Licensure Guidelines for English/Language Arts in Minnesota.
The Task Force began meeting in October of 1977 and has met regular-
ly ever since. Its deliberations examined the existing guidelines,
promulgated in 1967, to determine whether or not those guidelines
are adequate, given substantial changes in the theory and practice
of teaching English/Language Arts to secondary school students. In
addition the National Council of Teachers of English published, in
1976, A Statement on the Preparation of Teachers of English and the
Language Arts, a report of its committee on Teacher Preparation.
The purpose of that report was to encourage NCTE affiliates to up-
date certification requirements in the light of changing emphases
and new knowledge.

As a result of its initial deliberations, the MCTE Task Force
is recommending a new set of licensure guidelines which will, when
modified and/or ratified by the MCTE General Assembly at its Annual
Business Meeting, be forwarded to the State Board of Teaching for
their consideration. The Board of Teaching may either appoint its
own Task Force to develop new guidelines, using the MCTE proposal
as a starting point, or it may choose to consider the MCTE recom-
mendation directly. The MCTE Task Force has operated under the
assumption that a new Task Force will be appointed, and has formal-
ly requested that the Board of Teaching take up the licensure
regulations for the English/Language Arts at its earliest conveni-
ence. The Board of Teaching has agreed to do so. In addition,
the MCTE group has suggested nominees for the State Task Force to

1

the MCTE Executive Committee.

In preparing its recommendations, the MCTE Task Force has
tried to solicit the opinions of all members of the profession at
every opportunity. In 1978, at the Rochester Convention of the
MCTE, the Task Force held an open meeting to hear individual judge-
ments about the direction revisions ought to take. In 1979, at St.
Cloud, drafts of proposals were made available and a series of open
hearings held. Based on those hearings and committee deliberations,
the draft presented at the close of this article has been prepared
for full Council review. There will be an open hearing on the
draft at the MCTE convention on Friday, May 2 in Room D at 4:30 p.m.,
Normandy Hotel, Duluth. Finally, the proposal will be acted on at
the Annual Business Meeting in Room A at 9:00 a.m., Saturday, May 3.

In the judgement of the MCTE Task Force, the proposed guide-
lines represent a substantial improvement over the previous
guidelines in two regards. First, the proposed revisions provide a
much better match with the position of the Committee on Teacher
Preparation of the National Council of Teachers of English. Second,
since the proposed revision is couched in terms of the knowledge and
abilities which we would expect teacher preparation programs to
develop in prospective teachers, rather than in terms of
specific courses or specific areas of study, the new guidelines
should allow college programs greater flexibility in the selecting
means used to achieve the desired outcomes and provide the State
Board of Teaching with a better tool for evaluating program effec-
tiveness. Clearly, examining current teacher preparation programs
from the perspective of these guidelines will lead most institutions
to discover weaknesses and make changes. Professionals expect
evaluation to accomplish exactly that pair of objectives.

A Study of Teacher Attitudes
Purpose of the Survey

Before making recommendations regarding changes in the current
licensure guidelines, the MCTE Task Force believed that a survey of

2

the attitudes of secondary English teachers toward their prepara-
tion programs was essential.

In order to determine the necessity of adding new components,
and altering or deleting existing components, the Task Force wanted
to determine teacher attitudes towards those program components
based on existing guidelines, which represented areas of study be-
lieved to be important during the 1960's, and components not
included in the guidelines which have more recently been included
in teacher training programs in English. The results of the study
serve both as rationale for our recommendations and as information
useful to those considering changes in teacher preparation programs.

Development of the Attitude Scale

In order to develop items for the attitude scale, the Task
Force turned to the existing guidelines for the English major:

Minimum Requirements for Preparation of Teachers in Certain
Fields

These requirements shall constitute minimum programs of
preparation in the teaching fields to be set up by the
colleges. Each prospective teacher shall have at least the
amount of preparation indicated in each of the fields. The
standard requirements for credits in professional education
shall apply except where requirements are specifically men-
tioned. All new requirements are effective September 1,
1968 unless otherwise specified.

   (c) English or Language Arts. The prospective teacher
   of English or Language Arts shall have:

      (1) A teaching major in English or Language Arts
      of not less than 36 semester (54 quarter)
      hours to include academic instruction in
      language, literature, and composition beyond
      the freshman English requirement in (aa), (bb),
      and (cc) below, plus academic instruction in
      speech in each of the two following areas, (1)
      theory and practice of public address and (2)
      oral interpretation or play production and
      direction, addition to such demonstration of
      speaking proficiency as the individual institu-
      tion may normally consider appropriate. This
      major should include the following areas:

         (aa) Expository writing.

      (bb) The nature of language, and the histori-
      cal development and present structure of
      English language, especially as used in
      the United States.

      (cc) Development of English and American
      Literature; intensive study of at least
      one major English or American author;
      theory and practice of literary criticism;
      analysis and interpretation of the various
      literary genres; literature for adoles-
      cents; literature of the 20th century and
      of at least one other century.

OR:

   (2) A teaching minor in English or Language Arts of
   at least 18 semester (27 quarter) hours, includ-
   ing academic instruction in language, litera-
   ture and composition beyond the freshman English
   requirement, plus academic instruction in speech
   as defined in the major English or Language Arts
   (c) (1).

Each teaching-training institution differs in the specific
courses it requires students to take in order to meet these guide-
lines. Therefore, the Task Force refers to the items on this survey
as "components," so as not to imply that these items are equivalent
to specific course offerings, although, at many institutions, many
of the items name content that comprise course offerings. The Task
Force also examined a number of books and articles on current theory
of English instruction and curricula, particularly the MCTE state-
ment mentioned above.

In early discussions and in a letter sent to the Board of Teach-
ing, the Task Force also noted that language arts curriculum theory
of the 1960's stressed knowledge of the history and development of
literature, rhetorical and literary critical analysis, and the study
of language. More recent theory defines English less as a body of
knowledge and more as those responding, composing, speaking, listen-
ing, inferring processes involved in producing and understanding
discourse. The Task Force also noted that many curriculum theorists
and supervisory personnel felt that secondary school English-
Language Arts teachers are often not familiar with current theory
and research related to composition and reading instruction. Finally,

members of the Task Force were aware of the public's and, to some degree, the media's popularized conception of English as "the basics," i.e., traditional grammar, spelling, reading of traditional literary texts ("Silas Marner," etc.) and "correct" usage, a conception that historically predates either of the two conceptions described above.

Given this background, analysis of existing secondary curricula, and the current guidelines, a large item pool was developed. Out of that pool, 35 items were selected. The Task Force believed these items represented the existing guidelines, current instructional offerings and various conceptions of English instruction. The wording of the items was then analyzed in order to eliminate any implied positive or negative bias. In addition, the arrangement of items in the list was randomized to avoid clusterings which might produce tendencies to respond to items as collections, rather than individually.

Using lists of all the secondary English teachers in Minnesota, a random sample was selected. The staff at the computing center of the State Department of Education ran a computer program which ramdomly selected a sample of 1150 names from its list of 4600 Minnesota English Teachers. Teachers were asked to rate each of the items according to its relative importance in preparing English teachers; on a scale from "1" ("least important") to "5" ("most important"). The attitude inventories were mailed to the selected sample along with a self-return envelope. Based on one mailing, we had a 53% return rate. Of the 609 who completed the survey, 224 (37%) taught in grades 7-9; 25 (4%), middle school; 267 (44%) 10-12, and 93 (15%) 7-12. 263 (43%) had tuaght for 1-9 years and 348 (57%) had taught for 10 or more years. 181 (30%) had a least a BA or BS; 203 (33%) had a BAS plus 30 hours; 130 (21%) had a Master's degree, and 99 (16%) had a Master's plus 30 hours. This data suggests that the sample fairly represented the different grade levels, years of preparation and level of preparation within the overall population.

5

Table I: Mean Ratings for Teacher Preparation Components in Rank Order

	Components:	Mean
1.	Methods of teaching writing	4.5
2.	Methods for diagnosing and assessing writing skills	4.2
3.	Methods for diagnosing and assessing reading skills	4.0
3.	Methods for teaching usage, spelling, punctuation	4.0
5.	Methods of teaching literature	3.9
6.	Knowledge of "traditional" grammar	3.8
7.	Literature for adolescents	3.7
7.	Sentence-combining activities	3.7
9.	Characterisitics of literary genres (novel, short story, poetry)	3.6
9.	Methods of individualizing reading programs	3.6
11.	Methods of teaching listening skills	3.5
11.	Methods of teaching speaking skills	3.5
13.	Theory of composing and revising processes	3.4
14.	Advanced composition	3.3
14.	Public Speaking	3.3
16.	Methods for diagnosing and assessing speaking skills	3.2
16.	Cognitive and social development in adolescence	3.2
18.	Knowledge of phonetics	3.1
19.	Methods of teaching film, television, media	3.0
20.	Knowledge of social uses of language	2.9
20.	Oral interpretation	2.9
22.	Language development in adolescence	2.8
22.	Historical development of American literature	2.8
22.	Application of literary critical analysis	2.8
22.	Minority literature (Black, Indian, Chicano)	2.8
27.	Theater arts (play production and direction)	2.7
27.	Fiction writing	2.7
29.	Poetry writing	2.6
29.	Theory of language arts curriculum	2.6

6

(Table I - continued)

Components:	Mean
31. Creative dramatics and role play	2.5
32. Historical development of British literature	2.3
33. Knowledge of transformational grammar	2.1
35. History of the English language	2.0
35. Rhetorical theory	2.0

Discussion of Results

The five components receiving the highest ratings were: "methods of teaching writing," "methods for diagnosing and assessing writing skills," "methods for diagnosing and assessing reading skills," "methods for teaching usage, spelling, punctuations," and "methods of teaching literature," suggest teachers believe that methods components in these areas are of the highest priority.

Our speculations about the reasons for the high rating of these components is that theory and research informing these components is, in contrast to some of the other components, constantly changing. Teachers may believe that it is important to keep abreast of current instructional techniques that apply directly to their teaching. Many teachers who have never taken a writing methods course may now, given the increased interest in new methods for teaching writing, believe that it is important to be familiar with such current methods.

We also speculated that teachers' experiences may have increased their awareness of individual differences in students' reading and writing abilities. The practical problems presented by such differences, and the new public laws holding teachers accountable for developing programs for "mainstreamed" learning disabled students, may have led respondents to conclude that prospective teachers need better preparation in diagnosing and providing for such differences. Finally, we were fairly certain that the high

ratings for usage, punctuation, and spelling, as well as for "traditional grammar," (item #6), were produced by the public demand for and teacher responses to the call for greater emphasis on instruction in the "basic skills." All of these inferences, however, are open to question without some additional data on teachers' attitudes towards secondary English/Language Arts curriculum and instruction.

Turning to those five items rated lowest, "history of the English language," "rhetorical theory," "knowledge of tranformational grammar," "concentration on a major author," and "historical development of British literature," it is interesting to note that four of these components are presently included in the required guidelines. These components received relatively high priority in the 1960's, when the present guidelines were being formulated.

Again, we speculated that while theorists would argue that knowledge of transformational grammar provides students with a knowledge of a more competent grammar, is of use in understanding the development of syntactic complexity, and of use in constructing composing exercises such as sentence combining activities, teachers rated it low because they were exposed to training that assumed that transformational grammar would be taught rather than used as background knowledge, or that did not explore such applications. Similarly, we wondered if the low ratings for components related to the "historical development" of British and American literature might reflect a shift in the prevailing modes of literature instruction in the secondary schools. For example, teachers who viewed instruction in literature as directed at fostering students' critical understanding of and response to texts might rate historical approaches or major figure courses lower.

We thought the low rating given to the history of the English language component resulted from the general failure of this material to win any place in most secondary school programs, but

it seems possible that the general lack of interest in historical approaches might explain this result as easily. The most perplexing of these ratings is the low rating given to "rhetorical theory." In light of the relatively high rating received by "theory of composing and revising" one would have expected a somewhat better rating for this component. Coupled with the relatively high ratings given to "knowledge of phonetics," one begins to suspect that terminology may be confusing respondents on some survey items. Perhaps phonetics, perceived as phonics, is profiting from the general concern with reading, and rhetoric suffers from being associated with demagoguery. As noted previously, while such speculations are tantalizing, what they suggest is that more information would be helpful.

In summary, the only things the ratings make clear are that, for experienced teachers, methods components in writing and reading are of paramount importance in the preparation of English-Language Arts teachers and that components relating to the historical development of British and American literature, intensive study of a single author, and the history of the English language are less important. These results suggest that the current guidelines may not be maximally helpful to those designing and evaluating teacher preparation programs for English/Language Arts licensure.

At the very least it would seem that the guidelines should be revised to require increased attention to methods of teaching reading, writing, various grammars, usage, spelling, punctuation, the diagnosis of reading and writing problems, and the assessment of reading and writing development. In addition, the results of the study suggest that training programs have yet to make the case for training in transformational grammar and the history of the English language, and that some examination of the approaches used in studying major literary figures and the history of British and American Literature is necessary. Subsequent analysis of differences between the views of junior and senior high teachers about

literature components will clarify the problem, but will not solve it. In our opinion, these lower ratings suggest a careful evaluation of existing courses rather than revisions in the guidelines. It seemed to the committee that revitalizing courses in language and literature study could do much to improve the applicability of such courses in teaching secondary school English-Language Arts, especially for junior high teachers.

All of these results are made somewhat more understandable if one examines another set of comparisons. The study revealed some important differences between the views of junior and senior high teachers as they rated the importance of various components. Since these results may be suggestive for those charged with evaluating and designing programs leading to licensure, we felt they should be part of this report. As part of the initial analysis the researchers had frequency tables run which compared ratings for various subgroups of the respondents. The computer analysis provided non-parametic tests of significance (Kendalls-Tau). The results suggested that while no significant differences realted to experiences or level of training existed, differences related to grade level taught were worth exploring. Intuition suggests this would be likely as well. Since there was overlap for those who were teaching at both the junior and senior high levels and since the number of respondents at the middle school level was small and the licensure requirements for such teachers is different, the experimenters ran a simple t - test on the differences between those teaching exclusively at the junior high level and those teaching exclusively at the senior high level.

Table II: **Significant Differences - Junior High vs. Senior High**

Items Rated Higher by Junior High Teachers

Item	Means		Prob.
	7-9	10-12	
Methods - usage, etc.	4.1	3.9	.05
Cog.-Soc. Dev.	3.3	3.1	.04
Lit. for Adolescents	3.9	3.6	.00
Method-Diagn.-Assess. Reading	4.2	3.9	.00

Items Rated Higher by Senior High Teachers

Item	Means		Prob.
	7-9	10-12	
Advanced Comp.	3.0	3.5	.00
History of Eng. Language	1.8	2.0	.04
Rhetorical Theory	1.8	2.1	.00
Theory of Comp. & Rev.	3.1	3.7	.00
History of Amer. Lit.	2.5	3.0	.00
Appl. Lit. Crit.	2.5	3.1	.00
Methods-film, etc.	2.8	3.1	.00
Char. of Lit. Genres	3.4	3.7	.01
Theatre Arts	2.5	2.8	.01
Methods-Diag-Assess Writing	4.0	4.3	.00
Major Author	2.0	2.2	.00
Theory of Curriculum	2.5	2.8	.01
Methods-Diag-Assess. Speaking	3.1	3.3	.05
Minority Lit.	2.7	3.0	.00
History-Brit. Lit.	2.0	2.6	.00
Public Speaking	3.1	3.3	.03

These grade level differences do include both the highest and the lowest rated items. The chief explanation for these differences seems to be that teachers differed on items reflecting differences between junior and senior high instruction. The junior high teachers are more likely to be teaching adolescent or transitional literature and devote more attention to reading skills, (both of which require a background in cognitive and social development) than senior high school teachers. High school teachers would be more likely to be teaching survey literature courses involving literary critical analysis and devote more attention to writing skills.

The rather substantial differences between junior and senior high teachers' ratings of reading and writing related items, it should be noted, indicate that both groups assign relatively high priorities to these categories. The other areas of substantial difference help to explain the lower ratings assigned to literature study components.

THE TASK FORCE RECOMMENDATION

Consideration of the results of the study, the task force's deliberations and study of relevant materials, and various discussions and open hearings with colleagues have culminated in the following recommendation, presented to the Minnesota Council of Teachers of English for its approval.

TO BE ELIGIBLE FOR APPROVAL IN ENGLISH/LANGUAGE ARTS EDUCATION, A PROGRAM SHALL BE DESIGNED TO EFFECTIVELY PROVIDE CANDIDATES RECOMMENDED FOR LICENSURE WITH KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS IN THE FOLLOWING:

Teachers of English/Language Arts must know:

1. the processes by which students develop in their ability to acquire, understand and use written and oral language from early childhood onwards.

2. the relations between students' learning of language and the social, cultural, and economic conditions within which they are reared.

3. the interest areas and ranges of reading, listening, and viewing abilities of students.

4. how to select materials and arrange instruction in reading, writing, speaking, listening, and viewing to meet their responsibilities to adjust instruction and to the needs of students on all ability levels, especially those identified as exceptionally able or disabled.

5. a variety of reading philosophies, strategies, and techniques, and how these are used to construct developmental basal reading programs. (Readiness experiences, phonetic implications,

vocabulary development, scope and sequence, mastery, criterion referenced testing.)

6. not only the ways in which literature may be enjoyed on a personal level, but also how to encourage the expression of enjoyment of literature through oral forms such as readings, drama and song.

7. that one of the end results of reading is enjoyment of literature, and that this derives largely from the variety of experiences and viewpoints encountered (for example, those of non-western authors, various ethnic groups, and writers from particular historic periods in English and American literature), and the felicity of the styles in which they are expressed.

8. the value of intensive knowledge of an author through study of two or more in depth.

9. linguistic, rhetorical, and stylistic concepts that furnish useful ways of understanding and talking about the substance, structure, development, and manner of expression in written and oral discourse.

10. the activities that make up the process of written and oral composing.

11. the varieties of oral discourse ranging from interpersonal communication to task-oriented group work and informal and formal public speaking.

12. the process, materials, and supportive services to help students improve their listening efficiency.

13. the workings (phonological, grammatical, semantic) and uses of language in general and of the English language in particular; and the processes of development and change in language.

14. the relationship of film, television, and media study to instruction in reading, writing, speaking, listening and viewing.

15. characteristics of media genres and media production techniques.

16. the influence of cultural, political, and economic forces on media and individuals' response to media.

Teachers of English/Language Arts must be able:

1. to diagnose by identifying and interpreting student progress in reading, writing, speaking, listening and viewing.

2. to help students improve their skill in responding to and using oral, written and visual language.

3. to incorporate the teaching of reading, writing, speaking, listening and viewing skills so they all support and reinforce each other.

13

4. to help students use, identify and weigh facts, implications, inferences, and judgements in spoken and written discourse.

5. to help students practice the speaking and listening habits which show respect for each person's dignity.

6. to motivate students to read for pleasure and to teach them that reading is a life-long activity.

7. to use techniques that can promote content area reading improvement.

8. to use readability formulae to analyze instructional materials.

9. to use the various methods of interpretation and critical approaches in teaching literary genres.

10. to guide students in producing oral and written discourse that satisfies their own distinctive needs and improves interpersonal communications.

11. to respond specifically and constructively to students' oral and written discourse.

12. to employ vocal skills including a pleasing voice, accurate pronunciation and articulation, effective use of tone, pitch and stress.

13. to help students identify and employ various writing and speaking strategies and structures.

14. to compose effective written and oral discourse in a variety of forms and to describe their own composing processes.

15. to help students acquire a wide range of effective language options in both the spoken and written language, including skill in using "standard" English.

16. create writing and speaking activities that develop students' awareness of the differing demands made on speaking and writing by different contexts, audiences and purposes.

17. engage students in writing and speaking using a wide variety of types of discourse ranging from the expressive mode to persuasive and informative modes.

18. to help students learn to listen effectively by selecting the level of listening (marginal, appreciative, attentive, critical) appropriate to a given situation.

19. to identify and explain problems in students' syntax, usage, mechanics, spelling, punctuation and handwriting as well as devising activities to help students develop these skills.

20. to assist students in media production and provide instruction in media techniques.

21. to help students understand and critically respond to media in terms of their historical development; cultural, political and economic forces; and financial or commerical determinants.

14

Presented by:

MINNESOTA COUNCIL OF TEACHERS OF ENGLISH - TEACHER LICENSURE TASK FORCE

VICE-CHAIRPERSON

Sr. Jean Dummer
College of St. Catherine

SECRETARY

Mary Jean Kirk
Department of English
Bemidji Senior High

MEMBERS

John Alexander
Department of Language and Literature
College of Saint Scholastica

Sr. Andre Marthaler
Department of English
Bemidji State University

Carlton Anderson
Department of English
Park Rapids High School

Donna McBrian
Coordinator for the Gifted
St. Louis Park Public Schools

Richard Beach
Department of English Education
University of Minnesota

James Nelson
Princeton Jr. High School

Karsten Braaten
Sauk Rapids High School

John Schifsky
Department of Language & Literature
College of St. Scholastica

James Gottshall
Department of English
St. Cloud State University

Mary Ann Spear
Annondale Public Schools

Sue Warren
President MCTE
Rochester Public Schools

To all of those listed above and to Donald Fogelberg of the Burnsville Schools, who served for two years as Task Force Secretary, the Minnesoa Council of Teachers of English owes special thanks for time freely given.

Thomas D. Bacig
Chair MCTE Teacher Licensure Task Force

THE MINNESOTA WRITING ASSESSMENT

By

Donald D. Fogelberg, Ph.D.
Minneapolis, Minnesota
A paper presented at NCTE, San Francisco
November 1979

What is the Minnesota Writing Assessment?

The Minnesota Writing Assessment is one part of a comprehensive program of assessment of educational progress in Minnesota which also includes reading, math, social studies and science. Assessment of student performance has always been part of the educational process, but criterion referenced assessment on a state wide basis is a fairly new approach to information gathering and reporting.

State assessment in Minnesota is modeled on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) which began survey work in the late 1960's. The goals of state educational assessment are essentially the same as those of national assessment. The goals are to

1. make available on a continuing basis comprehensive information on the educational achievement of young . . . (Minnesotans).

2. measure and report changes in the educational achievement of young . . . (Minnesotans).

3. conduct special 'probes' or special surveys into selected areas of educational achievement . . . such as . . . (writing).

4. provide data, analysis of the data and reports for various audiences . . . .

5. aid in the use of . . . (state assessment) technology at . . . (district and school) levels.

6. further develop and refine the technologies necessary for gathering and analyzing . . . (achievement data).[1]

[1] Q and A About the National Assessment of Educational Progress. Denver: National Assessment of Educational Progress, 1977, p. 1.

The Minnesota Writing assessment is a survey of the skills and understandings of public school students in writing. This school year the writing assessment program is being administered to fourth, eighth and eleventh graders. Subsequently, the results will be evaluated and reported to the public.

The statewide writing assessment is the first such survey conducted on writing in Minnesota. Data gathered in this survey will reveal how well students write at present, and it will also provide a data-base for comparison with the results of future Minnesota writing assessments. Moreover, as some of the Minnesota test items (exercises) are the same as those used in the NAEP surveys, it will be possible to make some comparisons of the writing performance of Minnesota students with students nationally. NAEP has assessed by age (9, 13, 17) rather than grade level, but adequate allowance for this difference has been made to permit fair comparisons.

Inter-grade level comparisons of Minnesota student writing will also be possible in certain respects as some of the same items are used at grades four, eight and eleven.

2. Why is a Minnesota Writing Assessment necessary?

The people of Minnesota who pay for public education have a need and a right to know how well students are doing. Without this knowledge there is no way for taxpayers to judge what they are getting for their money. Assessment is also necessary to provide educators with factual data about the outcomes of instruction so that they may formulate sound plans for improvement.

The State of Minnesota Department of Education provides a "piggyback" option for local school district assessment.

Individual school districts wishing to determine performance levels of groups of students on a district or school basis, may elect the "piggyback" option. For a fee (to cover the cost of materials and scoring), arrangements may be made to test all or a representative sample of students in all or some of the test areas. Results from this option are reported back to the school district; no other use or dissemination is made. Comparisons are possible with national, state and school districts of a similar size or type. A unique feature of this program is that it encourages the district to involve

its staff in setting local standards for student performance.[2]

3. Who is doing the Assessment?

The writing assessment is conducted by the State of Minnesota Department of Education, Division of Special Services in cooperation with the Department's Communication Specialist from the Division of Instruction.

4. Who made the policy decisions about the project?

The policy decisions are of two kinds: (1) decisions concerning the design of the assessment instrument and, (2) the procedures for carrying out the assessment process. The design decisions were the responsibility of a committee assembled and led by the Communication Specialist for the Department of Education. The group was composed of experienced teachers of composition from all levels of instruction (K-college). The committee had an approximately even balance of men and women, and included persons from urban, suburban and rurban communities. A consultant from the Division of Special Services of the Department of Education served as the group's advisor for survey design.

The decisions governing the procedures for conducting the assessment were made by the Division of Special Services and resulted in essentially the same procedures as for the assessments in math, reading and so on.

5. What are the major steps in the Assessment process?

First, the goals and objectives of writing instruction were determined; second, exercises which would provide a data base for evaluating student performance were selected or developed and assembled into booklets called packages; third, the exercises are being administered to a representative sample of students state wide; fourth, the data will be evaluated; and, fifth, the results will be reported.

_____

[2]Information Sheet, State Assessment Program. St. Paul. State of Minnesota Department of Education, Division of Special Services, 1978, p. 2.

6. How many students are being assessed?

The writing survey includes approximately 4,800 participants with 1,600 involved at each of the three grade levels. Four hundred students will take each of the four packages at each grade level.

7. How are student participants selected?

The students who participate are scientifically selected using stratified, probability sampling techniques to insure that they are representative of the state student population.

8. How are student participants identified?

Participants are not identified by name, course, teacher's name, administrator,school or district. The are identified by grade level and by size and type of community (2,000/surburban, for example). The community identification classifications used are: (1) size: 1-499, 500-999, 1,000-2,000, 2,000+, and (2) type: urban, suburban and rurban.

Students, teachers, courses, administrators, schools and districts are not identified in either the national or state assessment reports.

9. What are the in-school test conditions?

Students are assessed in their schools by specially trained school personnel.

A package of exercises is given to each student in an assessment group. An audio-cassette recording called a pace-tape is used by the assessment administrator to give directions to students. Pre-recorded messages are placed on the pace-tape at set intervals to standardize exercise times as well as directions.

Complete student directions are printed in the student exercise packages and students read along in their booklets as they hear the directions given by the pace-tape. The aural directions eliminate possible inconsistencies in the directions given to students and reduces comprehension problems encountered by students of low read-

ing ability.

Students actually write in the Minnesota Writing Assessment. No objective exercises, such as multiple choice, completion and listing items are used. Students write notes, letters, stories and essays. Each writing exercise approximates a real-life writing situation as much as possible. Each package takes about 30 minutes to complete-including the time required for directions and student writing.

10. What information about student writing is being sought?

The Minnesota Writing Assessment is an attempt to find out on the state level what NAEP found out about student writing on the national level: (1) how well students write "to reveal personal feelings and ideas-through free expression and through the use of conventional modes of discourse,"[3] and (2) how well students write " . . . in response to . . . societal demands and obligations . . . (using correct) usage, punctuation, spelling, and form or conventions . . . appropriate to particular writing tasks, e.g. manuscripts, letters."[4]

Student writing is to be assessed in seven categories using appropriate criteria. The table on the following page shows the categories and the criteria.

---

[3]Rexford Brown. Expressive Writing, Writing Report No. 05-W-02. Denver: National Assessment of Education Progress, 1977, p. 35.

[4]ibid.

Writing Categories	Evaluation Criteria
A. Recording	accurate, complete, coherent and appropriate content
B. Responding	Appropriate content and form
C. Describing	explanatory ordering through detail
D. Analyzing	logical explications; development, organization
E. Persuading/Arguing	defended point of view; utilization of: facts, opinions, appeals
F. Narrating	narrative, sensory detail, point of view, insights, fantasy, dialogue, role
G. Summarizing	condensation, fidelity to original

11. What is the makeup of the Assessment packages?

The assessment is composed of four different packages, one for each quarter of the students being assessed at each grade level. In this way it is possible to quadruple the amount of information gathered and quarter the time required of the participating students and school personnel.

Each package is composed of several exercises and each student participant is to do all the exercises in his/her package. Some of the exercises to be used are, as noted earlier, NAEP items, some are Minnesota items. NAEP items are not copyrighted and may be used without permission or cost. The Minnesota items were developed by the Writing Assessment Committee; they are not copyrighted and, may be obtained upon request from the Assessment Office, Minnesota State Department of Education.

There are four types of writing responses required of students in the Minnesota Writing Assessment: notes, letters, stories and essays.

Exercise item features include prewriting, writing and rewriting; open topics; proof reading; picture stimulus; semantics and the conversion of oral messages into written ones.

Four different types of writing evaluation are employed: primary-trait, expert preference, holistic and structure/mechanics. Primary-trait scoring is a procedure for judging a piece of writing by whether or not it contains the element essential for a specific communication purpose. The primary purpose of a thank you note, for example, is to say "thank you" and a piece of writing that has this trait would be judged satisfactory. Expert preference scoring is a check on whether a student agrees with writing experts that a particular specimen of writing is the best of a set. Holistic scoring is a method for judging the overall quality of a piece of writing which employs specially trained readers to rank papers. The final method of evaluation used is structure/mechanics scoring. Structure/mechanics scoring is an error tally system covering organization, punctuation, spelling, capitalization usage and so forth.

That concludes the factual description of the Minnesota Writing Assessment. At this point permit me to make a few personal, subjective observations:

1. The Minnesota Writing Assessment will certainly generate some new data that may or may not be used to improve student writing, but it will make us better informed than we are at present about student writing in Minnesota. In this respect the effort is decidedly positive. However, there is a decidedly negative side to the Assessment as well.

2. The Minnesota Writing Assessment is flawed in at least two major respects.

    a. It is flawed in that there is no sample of the writing of Minnesota adults taken at the same time so that the achievement - or lack of achievement - of students can be reported in proper context. The teachers on the Minnesota Writing Assessment Committee insisted that adults be assessed along with students because we knew that if this were not done we would be helping to load the gun of criticism that would eventually be pointed at their own heads. The adult assessment was promised but in the end State of Minnesota Department of Education officials said it could not be done.

    b. The Minnesota Writing Assessment is also flawed

in that it contains no opportunities for
students to do any rewriting-despite the in-
sistence of teacher members of the committee
that rewriting was a critical phase in the
writing process. Again, officials of the
Minnesota State Department of Education vetoed
the request of the teachers. There was no in-
tention to sabotage the effort, just a lack of
appreciation for the special features of
writing assessment as distinct from assessment
in reading, math, social studies, etc.

In short, the Minnesota Writing Assessment is significantly
less than a perfect process. Any interpretations made of the sampl-
ing results must, therefore, be qualified by allowance for a least
two major limitations: the absence of a comparable adult writing
sample, and the absence of rewrite opportunities for student writers.

At present, the Minnesota Writing Assessment Project seems to
be a worthwhile enterprise, but it is hoped that if the writing
assessment program continues in Minnesota, there will be an oppor-
tunity for the aforementioned imperfections to be eliminated - along
with the others which would most assuredly crop up.

REFERENCES

Brown, Rexford, Expressive Writing, Writing Report No. 05-W-02
    (National Assessment of Educational Progress, 1977).

Information Sheet, State Assessment Program. (State of Minnesota,
    Department of Education, Division of Planning and Development,
    1978).

Q & A About the National Assessment of Education Progress (National
    Assessment of Educational Progress, 1977).

TIRED TEACHERS: SOME SUGGESTIONS

Lorraine Perkins
Saint Cloud State University
Saint Cloud, Minnesota

Because a tired teacher is often a dull teacher, I believe it
is worthwhile for us to lighten our load deliberately when we can
do so without impeding our students' progress.

That we have a time problem is undeniable; even those in
other disciplines offer sympathy. If, as Conant says, the average
English load is 120 students, and if each student writes one two-
page paper a week for a twelve-week semester, then one teacher
reads 1440 papers. If each paper takes ten minutes to grade, then
240 hours of work--20 hours per week--are added to a schedule al-
ready filled with five classes and a study hall. Did someone
mention preparation? Or conferences?

But students need to write to learn to write. No denying
that. Filling in blanks or underlining the right word won't do it.
How can we reduce the paper load to a manageable size? Not light,
just manageable?

By listening to teachers and by reading, I've discovered six
ways to save time, and I'll begin with the most radical suggestion,
one I first read in Don Murray's book A Writer Teaches Writing:
we can give only a mid-term and final grade in composition
classes. In that way we can save the time and energy we use in
frequent debates between, for example, a C- and a D+.

But suppose we must, for some reason, grade more than twice
a period. Then we can try a second approach: grading only some
of the papers. We can select at random the ones to be graded, or
we can announce that we will correct and grade every second or
third paper, or we can let students choose from among groups of
their papers the ones they want graded. Responding to journal
writing adds to our time dilemma but, here again, selectivity can

help. We can have the student put a paper clip on the "page of the week," the one he or she most wants us to see.

A third time-saving suggestion is this: during workshops when students are writing at their desks while we are at ours, we can have individual students bring us their short papers--a paragraph or two--and skim through the writing quickly as they watch. We can explain immediately what we see as strengths and weaknesses. Occasionally, the workshops may become read-aloud days for short papers, with perhaps four students responding to selected readers each day.

A fourth attack on the time problem is to ensure as far as possible well-written papers that are fun to read and easy to grade. To this end, we can have students correct one another's papers. Not the final copies--no, then it is too late to help the writers. It's the rough draft that should be exchanged. For this method to succeed, we must give careful directions. One teacher I know has each paper critiqued by two classmates, not always the same ones. She has the writer include two blank pages for his or her commentors, and she gives examples of the kind of comments that are useful, such as "You need a plural pronoun in sentence 3," or "The metaphor in paragraph 2 is vivid." In a similar way, small groups can also correct their members' papers.

A fifth time-saving method is not over-correcting papers. The early papers might have only commentary concerning the ideas; gradually we can wrestle with the errors in usage and editing, focusing on the most serious or frequent ones first. In noting these errors we can save time by not doing our students' corrections for them.

Finally, in spite of advice from writers such as John Ciardi and Janet Emig, I believe that having students make informal scratch outlines for their expository work is a useful practice that saves time for both teacher and student. After students have worked through the pre-writing phase of composition, some sort of order must be imposed on their material, and making a sketch outline

to show relationships serves most students well. By checking for errors in the logic of the outline, I save the students some time; I save mine because the final paper is then more unified and coherent.

Let's try at least some of these approaches with our students, for reducing our paper load may well help us to become better teachers.

CALL FOR PAPERS

In an attempt to solicit timely and thematically appropriate manuscripts, the editor announces the following themes for the 1980-81 Journal and issues a call for manuscripts.

Fall 1980--Interdisciplinary Concerns and English-- manuscripts should be submitted before September 1, 1980.

Winter/Spring 1981--Special Students: The Troubled, The Gifted, The Learning Disabled--manuscripts should be submitted before January 30, 1981.

Please include with your manuscript a SASE. Efforts will be made to acknowledge your manuscript upon receipt and to evaluate it promptly.

SEND TO: Eleanor M. Hoffman, Editor
Minnesota English Journal
English Department
University of Minnesota, Duluth
Duluth, Minnesota 55812

MCTE

Spring Conference

NORMANDY INN - DULUTH

MAY 2-3, 1980

HIGHLIGHTS

"Licensure"   Doctor Thomas Bacig
               University of Minnesota
               Duluth

Robert Newton Peck   "Adolescent Literature"

          Doctor Julie Jensen
          University of Texas
          Austin

          Doctor F.E.H. Schroeder
          National Humanities Faculty

Sample Speakers

Sharon Botello-K-12 Writing Curriculum

Harriet Azemove-Creative Writing to Teach Reading

Jane Greco-Project HA-LO

Linda Jeska-Writing for the Gifted

Sister Jean Drummer-Adolescent Literature

Jim Arnott-Basic Skills/State of Minnesota

Nicholas Karolides-Reading & Discussion

          And much more

Including. . . .

"Brunch with the Bookmen"   A chance to relax and talk over texts and new material available to you as educator.

Information/Idea Exchange   Contribute your favorite ideas and suggestions and get a ticket enabling you to share in the ideas of others.

Tour/Dessert at GLENSHEEN   Special tour of the Congdon Mansion with cordials and dessert in elegant settings.

Normandy Mall Shops   Delightfully different shops all under one roof are waiting for you in Duluth.

* * * * * * *

GUEST ROOM RESERVATION REQUEST

Arrival Date _____ Departure Date_____
Name _____ Telephone_____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Type of Accomodations: One Person   Two Persons
          Regular $37.50 $43.50
          King $39.50 $44.50
          Poolside $43.50 $48.50

Reservation Cutoff Date: April 18, 1980
Advance deposit is required for arrival after 6 pm.
There is a 3 PM check-in time.

- -

MCTE SPRING CONFERENCE REGISTRATION

Name_____
School Address_____

Check One: Elementary___ Secondary___ College_____

FEES
Members/MRA with card   Non-members
Pre-registration $10.00   On-site $17.50
On-site $12.50
                                     Students
Non-members   Registration $5.00
Pre-registration $15.00

                              Total Enclosed $_____

LUNCHEON

Fried Chicken
Potatoe Balls
Waldorf Salad
Green Beans

_____ $6.60

BANQUET

Roast Beef/Popover
Baked Potato
Carrots
Ceasar Salad

_____ $9.65

Send Registration forms and check or money order to:

Mrs. Mary Lewerenz
22 N. 28th Avenue E
Duluth, MN 55812

describe some general characteristics of the teaching procedures and the research.

The work has three general characteristics. First, the procedures investigated are intended to be used by teachers whose primary interest is teaching content, for example, English, rather than teaching reading, and are feasible for use by teachers with heterogeneous classes of 30 or so students. Second, the procedures are designed for use with relatively short selections such as short stories rather than longer selections such as novels. And, third, the procedures are ones which experience and common sense strongly suggest would work but about which we lack hard evidence.

The study described here exemplifies each of these characteristics. As noted above, the study investigates the effect of pre-teaching potentially difficult vocabulary from a selection immediately before students read that selection. Such a procedure is certainly feasible for English teachers; it is appropriate for use with short selections; and it is widely recommended (Cushenberry, 1972; Graves, Palmer, & Furniss, 1976; Herber, 1970, 1978; Lundby, 1972; Strang, McCullough, & Traxler, 1967). The belief is that preteaching vocabulary will assist students in both learning the vocabulary and in better comprehending the selection from which the vocabulary is taken. This study investigates both of these beliefs.

Method

This section describes the students who took part in the study, the materials used, the procedures followed, and the variables investigated and analysis of the results.

Students

Students participating in the study were 96 ninth graders and 96 eleventh graders attending a coeducational Catholic high school in a middle-class Minneapolis suburb. Within each grade level students were divided into three equal size ability groups based on

their total scores on the Nelson-Denny Reading Test (Nelson & Denny, 1960). Within each grade and ability level, half of the students were randomly assigned to the experimental group and half to the control group.

Materials Used

The materials used included two biographical sketches, a vocabulary knowledge survey, and vocabulary lessons, comprehension tests, and vocabulary tests for each biographical sketch.

The biographical sketches were "Triumph Over a Cold, Cruel Sea," an account of Florence Chadwick's attempt to swim the Irish Sea, and "Them As Has 'Em, Wears 'Em," an account of the extravagant life style of Diamond Jim Brady. Each sketch was about 1600 words long and written at the ninth-tenth grade level according to the Dale-Chall Formula (Dale & Chall, 1948). Both were taken from the Controlled Reader Study Guide, Level Lk (Taylor, Frackenpohl, Schleich, & Dungan, 1963).

The vocabulary knowledge survey was a multiple-choice test of 25 words taken from the two selections and subjectively identified by the researchers as likely to be difficult for the students. This test was given to all ninth and eleventh grade students in the school six weeks prior to the study. Those ten words from each selection known by fewer than 50% of the students were selected to be pretaught.

The vocabulary lessons consisted of eight-minute taped lessons and lesson answer sheets on ten words from each selection. On the tape one of the researchers pronounced each word, used it in a 20-50 word paragraph, paused to let students pick one of four possible synonyms for it on the answer sheet, gave the correct answer, and repeated the word with the correct answer. The complete text of the lesson was printed on the lesson answer sheet so that students could follow along as the taped lesson proceeded. A sample item as it appeared on the lesson answer sheet is shown on the following page.

impede   The avalanche impeded the progress of the mountain climbers. They were forced to detour around the slide. As a result, they reached the summit three days later than they had planned.

Impede means to _____ a. hinder _____ b. help

_____ c. discourage _____ d. stop

The paragraphs were not taken from the selections, but they did illustrate the meaning of the words as they were used in the selections.

The comprehension tests consisted of ten multiple-choice, sentence completion questions for each selection. These were taken intact from the Controlled Reader Study Guide, Level Lk.

The vocabulary tests consisted of ten multiple-choice, synonym matching items for each selection.

Procedures Followed

Students in both the experimental and control groups completed the study in a single forty-minute period, with half of the students in each group reading one selection and half reading the other. Students in the experimental group listened to the taped lesson, which included an explanation of the task, marked their responses on the lesson answer sheet, read the selection, and took the comprehension and vocabulary tests. Students in the control group received an explanation of the task, read the selection, and took the comprehension and vocabulary tests.

Variables and Analysis

The variables used in the study were grade (ninth, eleventh), ability (high, middle, low), selection (Chadwick, Brady), and treatment (vocabulary, no vocabulary). The analyses used to determine whether or not there were significant differences due to any of these factors were the analysis of variance and Newman-Keuls procedures. The results on the comprehension test and those on the vocabulary test were analyzed separately. Differences reported as

significant are significant at the p $<$ .01 level; that is, these differences could be expected to occur by chance less than one in one hundred times and could thus be reasonably attributed to the factors employed in the study.

Results

As noted above, the results on the comprehension test and those on the vocabulary test were analyzed separately. The analysis of variance for comprehension scores showed significant effects (p $<$ .01) for treatment, grade, selection, and ability. As shown in Table One below, students who were pretaught vocabulary

Table One

Comprehension Test Results:
Mean Percentage Correct for Each Factor

Treatment	Vocabulary 69.1%	No Vocabulary 60.3%	
Grade	Ninth 60.2%	Eleventh 68.6%	
Selection	Chadwick 67.8%	Brady 61.0%	
Ability	High 69.1%	Middle 68.6%	Low 55.3%

scored significantly higher than those who were not, eleventh graders scored significantly higher than ninth graders, and scores on the Chadwick sketch were significantly higher than those on the Brady sketch. The Newman-Keuls test indicated that high and middle ability students scored significantly higher (p $<$ .01) than low ability students but did not score significantly differently from each other.

The analysis of variance for vocabulary scores showed significant effects (p $<$ .01) for treatment, grade, and ability. The effect of selection was not significant at p $<$ .01. As shown in Table Two

below,

Table Two

Vocabulary Test Results:
Mean Percentage Correct for Each Factor

Treatment	Vocabulary 90.0%	No Vocabulary 50.8%	
Grade	Ninth 65.9%	Eleventh 74.9%	
Selection	Chadwick 67.9%	Brady 72.9%	
Ability	High 76.6%	Middle 71.6%	Low 63.1%

students who were pretaught vocabulary scored significantly higher than those who were not and eleventh graders scored significantly higher than ninth graders. The Newman-Keuls test indicated that high ability students scored significantly higher (p $<$ .01) than low ability students but that students in the middle ability group did not score significantly differently from those in the high ability group and that students in the middle and low ability groups did not score significantly differently from each other.

Discussion

The major finding of the study is, of course, that a procedure for preteaching vocabulary which did not require an impractical amount of teacher time to create or an excessive amount of student time to complete served to increase students' comprehension of the selections read. Moreover, the increase in comprehension scores was substantial, with students who were pretaught vocabulary producing approximately 15% more correct responses than those who were not pretaught vocabulary. While this increase may not appear huge, note that if we could find some method of increasing the general effectiveness of schooling by 15%, students could learn what now takes

them 12 years in just over 10 years.

A secondary finding is that the procedure for preteaching vocabulary did result in students learning the vocabulary taught. Students taught the vocabulary produced 80% more correct responses than those not taught it and demonstrated knowledge of 90% of the words taught. Of course, the fact that students learned what they were taught is hardly astounding. At the same time, all of us who teach know that our teaching isn't always successful. For this reason it is worth identifying a procedure that works.

The findings with respect to the other two variables are predictable. With respect to the two selections, there was no reason to expect that either the comprehension scores or the vocabulary scores for each would be identical, and they were not. With respect to the ability levels, there was reason to expect that higher ability students would do better than lower ability students, and higher ability students did consistently do better even though not all differences were statistically significant.

By way of conclusion we wish to make two points. First, the procedure for preteaching vocabulary described here was effective, and we encourage its use. Toward that end, the complete set of materials used in the study are available from the senior author on request. We encourage you to obtain these materials and adopt the procedures for use with your students and the literature you use. Second, the present study is just one in a series of studies designed to validate procedures used by teachers in secondary content areas. We would appreciate your assistance in suggesting additional procedures which need to be validated and in helping validate procedures. We are hopeful that with the assistance of a variety of teachers we can validate many more procedures.

References

Aukerman, R.C. Readings in the Secondary School Classroom. McGraw Hill: New York, 1972.

Burmeister, L. E. Reading Strategies for Secondary School Teachers. Addison-Wesley Publishing Co.: Reading, Mass., 1974.

Cushenberry, D.C. Remedial Reading in the Secondary School. West Nyak, NY: 1972.

Early, M. Changing Content in the English Curriculum: Reading in Secondary Schools. In J.R. Squire (Ed.), The Teaching of English-Preschool to College, 76th Yearbook, National Society for the Study of Education, 1975, 189-196.

Estes, T.H. and Vaughan, J.L. Reading and Learning in the Content Classroom. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, Inc., 1978.

Graves, M.F. Validating Specific Teaching Procedures to be Used by Secondary Content Area Teachers. Paper presented at the NCTE preconvention conference on research. New York, 1977.

Graves, M.F. Validating Specific Teaching Procedures Designed to Facilitate Secondary Students' Reading of Content Area Materials. Paper presented at the NCTE preconvention conference on research. Kansas City, 1978.

Graves, M.F. Palmer, R.J., and Furniss, D.W. Structuring Reading Activities for English Classes. Champaign, Illinois: NCTE, 1976.

Herber, H. Teaching Reading in Content Areas. Prentice Hall: Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1970, 1978.

Lundby, E. "Improving Reading Instruction to Secondary Content Areas." Minnesota Reading Quarterly, 1972, 16, 144-151.

Nelson, J.J. and Enny, E.C. The Nelson-Denny Reading Test (revised by James I. Brown), Form A. Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 1960.

Strang, R., McCullough, C., and Traxler, A. The Improvement of Reading (4th Edition). New York: McGraw-Hill, 1967.

Taylor, S., Frackenpohl, H., Schleich, M., & Dungan, J. Controlled Reading Study Guide, Set Lk. Huntington, New York: Educational Development Laboratories, 1963.

Thomas, E.L. and Robinson, H.A. Improving Reading in Every Class. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1972, 1977.

RONALD PRIMEAU. THE RHETORIC OF TELEVISION.
NEW YORK: LONGMAN, 1979.

Reviewed By

Kenneth Risdon
University of Minnesota, Duluth

In The Rhetoric of Television Ronald Primeau applies the
basics of classical rhetoric--invention, arrangement, style, de-
livery, and memory--to TV as a means to make students better TV
viewers. By providing tools to be better viewers, the text pre-
sents an alternative to "umplugging" the set, which is probably
not a real solution to the problems associated with TV anyway.
The text is based on the premise "that understanding and enjoyment
depend on the ability to take control over one's own experience."

The text is divided into three parts: "Putting Viewers Back
in Control," "Classical Rhetoric in the Media," and "Rhetorical
Strategies in Television." The three chapters of Part I give an
overview of what TV is, the major problems related to it, and a
brief suggestion that classical rhetoric can provide a sensible
solution to some of the problems. Part II, "Classical Rhetoric in
the Media" use classical rhetoric to critique various aspects of
TV. For example, Chapter 4, "Where Do They Get Those Ideas?" dis-
cusses how invention is used in the creation of ads and programs.
Chapter 5, "It's the Order that Counts," explains how arrangement
works in TV to persuade and how TV arrangement relates to arrange-
ment as found in books and speech. The chapter on style describes
typical heroes and heroines and how they are used in TV. The
chapter on delivery explains the basics of TV production. The main
feature of this chapter is a sample "shooting script." The chapter
on memory suggests that the art of memory is being lost because of
the "instant replay" mentality of TV.

Part III of the text applies classical rhetoric, with special

emphasis on persuasion, to each of the types of programs and the ads
on TV. This section of the text begins with advertising, moves to
news, and works on through game shows, sit-coms, soaps, sports talk
shows, specials, TV movies, and PBS. The pattern used to explain
each of these types of TV material is the same. Each chapter con-
tains a section on invention, arrangement, style, delivery, and
memory. The emphasis shifts according to which feature plays the
most important role in that type of show. For example, in the dis-
cussion of news shows the emphasis is on invention--the source of
the news, while for game shows the emphasis is on memory.

It is not the content described thus far that makes the text
so interesting and potentially useful in a variety of classes. The
text also contains an excellent set of apparatus to be used by the
student to practice the techniques presented of the text. For
example, the chapter on arrangement has a worksheet; a heuristic if
you will, to be filled out by the student that forces a comparison
of the typical arrangement of TV programs, books, record albums, ads,
etc. Students are asked to answer the same questions about each of
the types of media. The questions include, "How is the materials
directed into parts?" "If you are being persuaded, what proof is
there for the argument?" and, "How is the conclusion presented?"

At several stages in the text, the students are asked to take a
detailed inventory of how much of various types of information they
get from TV. For example, how much news they get from various
sources, including TV. These inventories are collected by means of
detailed worksheets that are, in some cases, divided into assignments
as small as 30 seconds. Excessive repetition is avoided in the
assignments by providing worksheets which stress different aspects of
TV for each different type of program. Also, in order to make it
clear to the student what is expected in each of the worksheets, com-
pleted examples of nearly all of them are included in the text.

All of the material in the text is clear, but not oversimplified.
Neither the presentation of the classical rhetoric nor the explana-
tion of what TV production and planning involves are highly technical.

However, they are complete enough to be understood by students with
little experience beyond being normal TV viewers. The text pro-
vides tools to be used in the classroom and in front of the TV.
The application of classical rhetoric to TV provides a method
for teachers to help TV viewers become more critical and thus able
to make TV viewing a positive experience.

CALL FOR PAPERS

The Committee on Classroom Practices in Teaching English in-
vites educators at all levels--elementary, secondary and
college--to submit manuscripts for the 1980 Classroom Practices
publication which will focus on the theme, "Dealing with
Differences in the English Classroom." Articles should describe
in detail a single lesson, method or strategy for building the
English competence of students in the regular classroom who are
physically, emotionally, or mentally handicapped, who are non-
native speakers of English, who speak a nonstandard dialect, who
are gifted and talented, or who are nontraditional students.
Manuscripts can range in length from two to ten pages. Two
copies should be submitted with the author's name and address
appearing only on a title page attached to the front of each
copy. Manuscripts should be mailed before April 15, 1980 to the
committee chair, Dr. Gene Stanford, Director, Child Life and
Education, Children's Hospital, 219 Bryant Street, Buffalo,
New York 14222.

LESSON PLANS

Mary L. Westerberg
Censorship Chairperson
MCTE

Today, all of us are affected by censorship, both overt and
covert. If we have not been the object of a censor, we have had
the symtoms -- sweating palms and quickening heart -- as we have
read or seen what a censor can do. As the censor will not go away,
English teachers must prepare themselves with strategies and
direction.

One course of action is inaction. Where will this lead? It
will lead to frustrated teachers, cheated students, and advanced
"Dick and Jane" materials in the classroom.

To take informed action is a better course. One source of
information on positive action is the NCTE. Through is pamphlets,
"The Students' Right to Read" and ""Censorship: Don't Let It
Become an Issue in Your Schools," NCTE can show teachers how to be
prepared. These pamphlets have sections on such important issues
as setting up book selection policies, dealing with complaints, and
developing community support for Language Arts programs.

A second source of help is the Minnesota Coalition Against
Censorship (MCTE is a member). Soon the MCAC will offer a service
to schools. School districts will be able to check their book
selection policies against a check list of minimum requirements.
On April 26, 1980, the MCAC is sponsoring a workshop--Censorship in
a Democratic Society. One section will concentrate on dealing with
pressure groups.

A third source is the MCTE. The Censorship Committee will
sponsor a session, "The Politics of Censorship" at the spring con-
ference. Also, teachers will have the opportunity to record, on a
questionnaire, any attempts at censorship with which they have
dealt.

By using these sources, informed teachers will have positive plans and courses of action to combat attempts at censorship. Without information and plans, teachers will be at the mercies of the censor.

Please direct further questions to:

Mary L. Westerberg
MCTE Censorship Chairperson
Anoka Senior High
3939 - 7th Avenue North
Anoka, Minnesota 55303

CALL FOR PAPERS

Great River Review, a journal of midcontinental literature, welcomes submissions of articles on midwestern writers of signif- cance. Contemporary writers and worthy authors from the past, some of whom have been neglected, are of interest to us. The best length for such pieces is a maximum of 5,000 words. In addition, we continue to be interested in submissions of quality fiction and poetry. Send to: Great River Review, P. O. Box 14805, Minneapolis, Minnesota 55414. Include a self-addressed, stamped envelope large enough to accommodate your manuscript if it should be returned.

ACROSS-THE-BOARD AND BED ARE DIRTY WORDS?

Edward B. Jenkinson
Professor of English Education
Director of the English Curriculum Study Center
Indiana University

A high school teacher of business education at Palm Bay High School (Rockledge, Florida) charged that The Random House Dictionary of the English Language--College Edition contains 23 "vulgarities." She filed a formal complaint with the school board of Brevard County, requesting that the dictionary not be used in the schools. The teacher warned that continued use of the dictionary in classrooms "could lead to widespread usage of these vulgarities by students. They could feel that these words are permissible language since they are included in classroom diction- aries."[1]

The task force appointed by the superintendent to review the dictionary disagreed with the business teacher. The teachers, administrators, and parent on the task force concluded that students would not use the words frequently nor think they were permissible simply because they are in a dictionary. "Children of this age have already learned what is appropriate or inappropriate language," the task force noted. "This dictionary clearly labels the words slang or vulgar. The definitions are not sensationalized."[2]

Thus, the RHD is probably safe at Palm Bay High School for the remainder of 1979 at least. But what will be its fate elsewhere? Will concerned teachers and parents in other communities look up

---

[1] Orlando Sentinel-Star, January 17, 1979.
[2] Ibid.

40

the "vulgarities" in the RHD and file formal complaints against the
dictionary in their school districts? Or, more likely, will con-
cerned parents write to a national "textbook review clearing house,"
requesting a review of the RHD that can be modified for their own
use and can be presented to the local school board as if they had
done the research? Will the RHD become the target of the censors
in 1979 and 1980, replacing the AHD (The American Heritage Diction-
ary of the English Language) as the number one dictionary on the
censors' hatelist?

The censors of school materials are self-appointed protectors
of the young. As such, they know that they can attract attention
and attain a great deal of publicity by pointing out every "dirty"
word in every literary work, textbook, film, or resource book used
in school. They know that many parents will rise to protest books
that contain, or allegedly contain, "dirty" words. The censors
then might enlist the enraged parents in the campaign against some
of their major targets: values clarification, psychology, mytholo-
gy, sociology, anthropology, realistic history, and novels for
adolescents that deal with current problems.

The "dirty" word, then, becomes the censors' stepping stone
across what one outspoken critic calls the "river of pollution"[3]--
public school education. By mounting successful campaigns against
books that contain so-called objectionable language, the censors
can pick up recruits throughout the land who will help them dry up
the "river of pollution" and destroy the public schools. But what
is a "dirty" word? What can the censors use as examples of langu-
age that will arouse parents to the point that they would attempt
to censor books?

The obscenity obliterators abhor words like hot, horny, and
hooker. They disapprove of crocked, coke, and clap. Across-the-
board leaves them aghast. Specific definitions of deflower and bed

---

[3]Joseph P. Bean, Public Education: River of Pollution.
Fullerton, California: Educator Publications (undated).

join several dozen other words on lists that the guardians of
virtue classify as "blatantly offensive language."

In June of 1976, the school board voted four to three to re-
move the AHD from classrooms in Anchorage, Alaska. The decision
was precipitated by complaints from a group of parents who called
themselves "People for Better Education." The organization said
that definitions for the following words, among others, are offen-
sive: ass, tail, ball, bed, knocker, and nut.[4]

Responding to the protest, the superintendent of schools
appointed a reviewing committee that examined the AHD and approved
it unanimously. Appearing before the school board, an assistant
superintendent reported the findings of the committee, noted that
"the ability of a child to look up 'dirty words' helped diffuse
excitement and curiosity about them." and explained that the dic-
tionary is "an excellent resource for advanced students, especially
for scientific terms."[5] As the assistant superintendent presented
his arguments, four members of the school board sat with a list of
definitions of "objectionable" words in front of them. The four
voted against the dictionary.[6]

After several parents charged that "seventy or eighty" words
in the AHD are obscene or otherwise inappropriate for high school
students, the school board ordered the dictionary removed from the
high school in Cedar Lake, Indiana.[7] In Eldon, Missouri, after
twenty-four parents filed a complaint noting that thirty-nine words
in the AHD are "objectionable," the school board voted to remove
the dictionary from a junior high school. [8]

---

[4]Newsletter on Intellectual Freedom, September 1976, pp. 115-
116.

[5]Ibid., p. 116.
[6]Ibid.
[7]Ibid., November 1976, p. 145.
[8]St. Louis Post-Dispatch, April 18, 1977.

The dictionary protesters obviously overlooked almost all of the 155,000 words in the nearly 1,600 pages of the AHD and focused only on the so-called dirty words. One parent in Eldon was reported as having said: "If people learn words like that it ought to be where you and I learned it--in the street and in the gutter."[9] A school board member in Cedar Lake noted: "We're not a bunch of weirdo book burners out here, but we think this one (the AHD) goes too far."[10] The school board in Cedar Lake later reconsidered its decision and reinstated the AHD.

Bed was one of the more frequently criticized entry words in the Cedar Lake controversy. Among the definitions are "a place for lovemaking." "a marital relationship, with its rights and intimacies," and "to have sexual intercourse with."[11]

Anticipating a protest against the AHD and other dictionaries in 1976, Texas Education Commissioner Marlin Brockette stated that no works would be purchased that "present material which would cause embarrassing situations or interfere in the learning atmosphere in the classroom." By quoting that sub-section of the Texas textbook adoption proclamation, Commissioner Brockette apparently justified the removal of these five dictionaries from the purchase list in Texas: the AHD, The Doubleday Dictionary, the RHD, Webster's New World Dictionary--Students' Edition, and Webster's Seventh Collegiate Dictionary.[12]

Commissioner Brockette's decision was reported in various Texas newspapers on November 12, 13, and 14, 1976. Four months before he announced that the five dictionaries would not be on the purchase list, Dr. Brockette received bills of particulars from various groups of citizens about the dictionaries that had been

---

[9] Ibid.
[10] Newsletter on Intellectual Freedom, November 1976, p. 145.
[11] Ibid.
[12] Ibid.

submitted for adoption by the State of Texas. Six of the cover letters which I have examined that accompanied the bills of particulars cited these two sub-sections of the Texas textbook adoption proclamation:

1.7 Textbooks offered for adoption shall not include blatantly offensive language or illustrations.

1.8 Textbooks offered for adoption shall not present material which would cause embarrassing situations or interference in the learning atmosphere of the classroom.

The chairperson of a textbook committee of a prominent organization of women wrote this about Webster's New World Dictionary of the American Language:

Reviewer is shocked that a supposedly reputable publisher would offer for adoption a book which is debasing the English language. Students need the basics rather than sub-standard language.[13]

The chairperson of the organization's reviewing committee listed these twelve words, among others, as examples of the "objectionable material" she found in the dictionary:

Word	Reason for Objection
across-the-board	betting on horse racing in Texas is illegal
attempt	ties word into subject of murder
banana republic	insulting to Latins
bawdy house	unnecessary
bed	Why is sexual intercourse mentioned?
the big house	slang--unnecessary
brain	definition denotes violence
bucket	slang--the buttocks
clap - 2	refers to a brothel (claper) and ghonorrhea--slang
coke	slang for cocaine
crocked	slang for intoxicated

---

[13] Undated "Bill of Particulars" submitted to the Texas Education Commissioner by the Textbook Chairman of the Texas Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution.

Word	Reason for Objection
deflower	to cause loss of virginity: slang?

Lovers of language and frequent users of dictionaries would probably not consider those words to be "objectionable material;" nor would they consider the following words, and/or specific definitions of them, to be "blatantly offensive language:"

bastard	john (a customer of a prostitute)
easy rider	lay
fag	queer
fairy	shack
gay	slut
G-string	tail
head (as in acidhead)	tail-end

The removal of the five dictionaries from the purchase list in Texas did not go unnoticed. Several organizations concerned with what is taught in the schools hailed the removal as a major victory. One such organization noted:[14]

> God gave parents a number of victories. In Texas alone, the State Textbook Committee did a good job of selecting the best of the available books. Then, the State Commissioner of Education removed 10 books, including the dictionaries with vulgar language and unreasonable definitions.

That statement was included in an announcement distributed by Educational Research Analysts in Longview, Texas. Founded by Norma and Mel Gabler, ERA is billed as "the nation's largest textbook review clearing house,"[15] providing "thousands of textbook reviews"[16]

---

[14]See green printed sheet distributed by Educational Research Analysts. The sheet is entitled "THE MEL GABLERS--Consumer Advocates for Education."

[15]Ibid.

[16]Ibid.

that "concentrate on pointing out 'questionable' content."[17]

A person concerned with specific words and/or definitions in dictionaries can send a contribution to ERA and receive copies of the bills of particulars that led Dr. Brockette to place the five dictionaries on the no-purchase list. A concerned person can also request reviews of hundreds of textbooks.

The ERA-distributed reviews concentrate on what's wrong--not with what's right--with textbooks and dictionaries. Using such reviews as guidelines, concerned parents can underscore "objectionable" passages in textbooks and take the books to school board meetings to point out why children should not have to study such works. The concerned parents do not have to indicate the sources of the objections; rather, all they have to do is get the ear of a sympathetic school board member and hope to get a book or dictionary removed from a public school.

The tactic works. Concerned citizens in a number of states have used ERA-distributed reviews to complain about "objectionable" books that contain "blatantly offensive language." Fortunately, the critics of education are not always successful with their attacks on books. However, the victories are more and more frequent, and each victory gives the censors renewed purpose.

As I write and speak about the new wave of censorship in the public schools, I frequently ask myself, or I am asked, "What can be done to prevent the removal of dictionaries and textbooks from the schools?" Here are six steps that every person can take:

1. Check the wording of the state's textbook adoption bill to make certain that the language in it does not permit the removal of dictionaries and textbooks simply because they contain a few words that some people would construe to be "blatantly offensive."

2. Attend meetings of the school board (or school committee) and speak out, at appropriate times, for academic freedom and the students' right to learn.

---

[17]Ibid.

3. Attend state or local hearings on textbooks submitted for adoption.

4. Form a local organization for the preservation of academic freedom and the students' right to know.

5. Write letters to the editor protesting the removal (or attempts at removal) of any books from the local schools.

6. Make certain that the local school system has an effective set of procedures for dealing with parental complaints about books.

Note: This article was written for the July 1979 issue of the Newsletter on Intellectual Freedom of the American Library Association. Permission to reprint it in other journals will be granted by the author and the editors of the Newsletter.

THE WRITING OF STUDENTS IN A MINNESOTA HIGH SCHOOL: REPORT ON A PILOT STUDY

John Schifsky
College of St. Scholastica
Duluth, Minnesota

Eleanor M. Hoffman
University of Minnesota, Duluth
Duluth, Minnesota

There is general agreement that competence in reading and writing are not only desirable but necessary (for an individual) in our complex society. However, there is widespread concern, backed by no little evidence, that young adults lack these skills. National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) analyst Dan Phillips says: "Seventeen-year-olds can read, write, and compute in well-structured situations, but they have difficulty applying their knowledge to new situations. They don't do well on problems that require more than one step and can't organize their thoughts in writing" (NAEP Newsletter, April 1977).

In his impressive study, The Development of Writing Abilities (11-18), James Britton discovered that nearly 90% of student writing in Britain fell into two categories: teacher-learner dialogue and pupil to examiner discourse. But does such writing equip a student to write for a variety of audiences and to sound like someone who has something to say. School writing, considering Britton's findings, is primarily a means to convey information efficiently and effectively.

In the light of these and similar findings, we began a close study of student prose generated by 10th and 12th graders in a Minnesota high school. All subjects were enrolled in writing classes and were chosen at random by their teachers who provided us with unmarked copies of the student papers as well as a copy of the assignment which generated the papers. Each student paper was

subjected to the same type of analysis. The sentences were typed simple, compound, complex, compound-complex and the number of words per sentence was established. Within each clause, subject, verb, and phrasal modifiers were counted and classified. Particular attention was paid to sentence openers and to the verb to be. Pronouns, prepositions and infinitives were counted. Finally, the sentences were counted and the number of sentences and words per paper determined.

Once the counts were completed, we first compared the 10th grade prose with the 12th grade prose and attempted to account for the differences noted. The prose pieces were also examined in relation to the assignment which elicited them. Second, the prose pieces by students were compared with a few pieces of similar professional prose, appearing in magazines such as Ladies Home Journal, Common Cause, and Minnesota Motorist. This prose was subjected to the same sort of analysis as the student prose.

Our study attempts to address issues raised by the NAEP examiners and Britton. It inquires what the students write about, for whom, and what degree of skill is displayed in the writing. We predicted we would find a lack of variety in prose style, no matter whether the student was writing narrative or expository prose. We expected the assignments would be directed to requiring the student to explain some understanding to the instructor in most instances; and we suspected there would be some probable developmental differences evident in the prose of 10th and 12th graders and identifiable differences between student prose and the prose of published writers in popular journals or magazines.

Our view is pedagogical rather than theoretical. We wished to know whether analysis of student prose suggests what can and should be taught, and when and how. Prior study of psychologists Jean Piaget (1962) and Lev Vygotsky (1963, pp. 58-69) suggest that comlex concepts are formed later in adolescence-young adulthood than

has been generally realized. Because the written language is among the more complex of concepts, the developmental aspects of learning to write carry significant pedagogical implications.

We studied the following sets of papers: 2 Senior (CC_1, CC_2) and one Sophomore (CC_3) assignment employing Comparison-Contrast as the organizing device; 1 Senior (D_1) and 1 Sophomore (D_2) description; a Senior Narrative (N). Because there was no Sophomore equivalent for this paper, the narrative does not figure heavily in our findings, although it contributes to remarks about the general nature of the student prose.

Results:

Table 1

Word-Sentence Totals

Averages	CC_1	CC_2	CC_3	D_1	D_2	N	Pub. Prose*
Total words	359.5	342.6	140	409.1	284.3	242.5	287.5
words per sentence	16.3	15.3	15.1	15.94	16.1	11.6	23.9
sentences per paper**	24.2	22.3	9.4	25.7	17.7	28.35	12

*published prose samples

**published prose samples were selections from longer pieces rather than complete articles

The number of words, number of sentences appears to be more a function of the assignment than of anything else. With the exception of N, sentence length doesn't vary much, regardless of the purpose of the assignment. One might account for the shorter sentences in N by saying that this is a fantasy assignment where the student doesn't have to concern herself with audience; thus, shorter sentences may reflect writer-oriented narrative (Flower, 1979). Compared with the work of published writers, the student sentence is 8 words shorter. The student segments her thought into more chunks (sentences) than does the published writer, perhaps because her experience is less complex. Or perhaps the student says less per sentence because she has not yet learned to use the more complex tools of the written language.

One might also ask the question whether the number of words per sentence should be roughly the same for both descriptive and comparison-contrast prose.

Table 2

A Description of Sentences

Percentages	CC_1	CC_2	CC_3	D_1	D_2	N	Pub. Prose
Sentence types							
Simple	49	47	43	37	36	51	20
Complex	37	43	23	46	34	29	48
Compound	9	7	30	9	12	12	19
Compound-complex	4	3	2	8	19	8	13
Simple + Compound	58	54	73	46	48	63	39
Complex + Compound-complex	43	46	25	54	53	37	61

There is a larger percentage of simple and compound sentences for comparison-contrast, in particular of simple sentences. This is not true for the descriptive prose. This seems to us a function

of the necessity to juxtapose ideas in the C-C papers; however, this is done mechanically by means of the juxtaposition of sentences rather than because of any true juxtaposition of ideas. This suggests that Sophomore and Senior students may not understand the concept of comparison-contrast even though they can employ its structure (Vygotsky, 1969). Citations from the student writing add weight to this explanation.

Sample 1 (CC_1): The nuns' characters are revealed in the description of their eyes. DeAlarcon's nun's eyes were "ink-black" suns "while Chaucer's nun's were "gray as glass." DeAlarcon's nun possessed a religious intensity. She was in a near continual religious trance.
....
Chaucer's nun's religious character is much less severe. Her religion wasn't of her own discovering. It was but a reflection of the thoughts and efforts of others.

Sample (CC_3): There are two submarines named Nautilus. The submarines were 85 years apart. One was mde up and was in the story 20,000 Leagues Under the Sea. The other one was real and was launched in 1954 by the United States. Jules Verne wrote 20,000 Leagues Under the Sea in 1870.

This example is typical. While students employ the C-C structure in a very simple list-type fashion, they are unable to include within the structure an actual contrast in meaning. Moreover, the descriptive prose elicited a higher percentage of complex sentences, perhaps because the students have more fully mastered the locational relationships required for these descriptions.

The outstanding feature of the narrative (N) is the plurality of simple sentences, perhaps reflecting the writer's self-orientation remarked upon earlier. In the published prose, the bulk of the sentences are complex, indicating significant linking of ideas in ways other than enumerative. The increased structural complexity results from the writer's attempt not only to convey information and/or experience completely but in a manner that the reader can process most readily (Williams, 1979).

Table 3

Matters Internal to the Sentence

Sentence Opener	CC_1	CC_2	CC_3	D_1	D_2	N	Pub. Prose
Subject	39 9/24*	57 13/22	84 8/9	65 17/26	66 12/18	67 19/28	35 4/12
Subject + Verb	32 8/24	52 12/22	67 6/9	54 11/18	62 11/18	58 16/28	31 4/12
Main Verb-to be	33	2	66	29	27	21	29

*First figure is percent of sentences which began in that fashion. x/y translates that into x times in y sentences (9 times in 24 sentences).

In each set of papers but one, students began sentences with subjects and the subject-verb combination nearly twice as often as did the published writers. In the Senior CC_1 samples, the percentage is lower because there were an unusually large number of adjectival openers, probably as a result of the particular assignment. The frequency of subject and subject verb openers, no doubt, is reason for the high proportion of simple and compound sentences. This frequency also results in repetitive, distracting patterns, and a general sense on the reader's part that the writer's grasp of information and/or experience is superficial.

Students used some form of "to be" as the main verb at about the same rate as published writers, except in the case of Sophomore CC. In that particular sample, the combination of a high percentage of simple and compound sentences (73%) and high incidence of some form of the verb "to be" as the main verb may have been a function of the assignment. However, the resulting discourse is monotonous, difficult to read with interest and not the kind of prose we want students to produce.

Table 4

A Comparison of 25 Word Samples on Selected Features

25 Wd. Sample	CC_1	CC_2	CC_3	D_1	D_2	N	Pub. Writers
Prep	2 1/2	2 1/2	2/3	2 1/3	2	2	2 2/3
Coor Conj	1/2	2/3	1	1/2	1	1 1/2	1
Sub conj	1	1	1/4	1	1	1	1 1/3
Pro	2	2	3/4	2	3	4	1 1/2
Total	6	6 1/6	4 2/3	5 5/6	7	3 1/2	6 1/2

The twenty-five word sample gives us a sort of across-the-board comparison of the student prose with published prose. In general, the published prose employs 5 connectors (subordinator, coordinators, and prepositions) per 25 words whereas student prose employs about 4 connectors per 25 words. Coupled with the finding of fewer words per student sentence, this suggests that student writing is "thin" when compared with ordinary published prose. Students use more sentences with fewer words per sentence. Students use fewer connectors per 25 words and thus establish fewer relationships of any type other than enumerative (sentence following sentence). In general, students also use more pronouns per 25 words. Since pronouns refer to a prior noun, they may also be seen as linking devices. Perhaps students substitute pronouns for more appropriate linking devices which would require complex rewriting to employ. A look at the student prose suggests this might be so.

Example CC_1: Chaucer's nun's religious character is much less severe. Her religion wasn't of her own discovering. It was but a reflection of the thoughts and efforts of others. "She liked to chant the services diving; but then, in truth, she sang straight through her nose." She couldn't have her fill of the real world. She surrounded herself by people and animals.

The writer of this 60 word sample uses about 4 pronouns to every 25 words, far higher than the published writers, and higher even than is typical for his peers on this assignment. Moreover, the writer's ideas are listed rather than linked to lead toward some purpose.

Implications: Our findings suggest the need for further studies directed at specific elements of writing pedagogy. They suggest first, that such studies can be pedagogically useful; they can lead us to teaching writing better. They can isolate developmental stages in the process of writing and of learning to write. Our findings confirm also that students need a wider variety of writing experiences so they do not treat all forms of writing alike. Our findings argue also that more attention needs to be given to the design of writing assignments in order to effect the necessary range and variety for maximum value to the student. They suggest further that 25 word samples analyzed for connectors, including pronouns, can tell the teacher whether or not the student is learning--moving toward writing more mature prose. Because our findings correlate with the findings of cognitive psychologists such as Vygotsky and of specialists in the psychology of writing such as Linda Flower, they suggest the work being done in these fields is most important to us as teachers.

References

Britton, James. The Development of Writing Abilities (11-18). London: MacMillan Education, 1975.

Flower, Linda. Writer-Based Prose: A Cognitive Basis for Problems in Writing. College English, 41 (Sept. 1979),19-37.

National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) Newsletter, April 1977.

Piaget, Jean. The Language and Thought of the Child, 3rd Edition. New Jersey: Humanities Press, Inc., 1959.

Vygotsky, Lev. Thought and Language. Cambridge, MA: Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, 1962.

Williams, Joseph M. Defining Complexity. College English, 40, (Feb. 1979), 595-609.