1981

An Evaluation of a Humanities-Oriented, Cognitive Stimulation Model to Improve Descriptive Writing Development of Underprepared College Freshmen.

Charlotte Smith Phillips
Louisiana State University and Agricultural & Mechanical College

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AN EVALUATION OF A HUMANITIES-ORIENTED, COGNITIVE
STIMULATION MODEL TO IMPROVE DESCRIPTIVE WRITING
DEVELOPMENT OF UNDERPREPARED COLLEGE FRESHMEN

The Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical Col. PH.D. 1981

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AN EVALUATION OF A HUMANITIES-ORIENTED, COGNITIVE STIMULATION MODEL TO IMPROVE DESCRIPTIVE WRITING DEVELOPMENT OF UNDERPREPARED COLLEGE FRESHMEN

A Dissertation
Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in The Interdepartmental Programs in Education

by
Charlotte Smith Phillips
B.S., Louisiana State University, 1968
M.Ed., Louisiana State University, 1976
May, 1981
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ABSTRACT

The primary purpose of this investigation was to test the efficacy of a humanities-oriented, cognitive stimulation unit, incorporating visual and verbal stimuli, observation practice, inferencing skills, and prewriting, on underprepared college students' ability to write descriptive compositions.

Two randomly assigned 0006 freshman composition classes at Louisiana State University represented the population group. These students were judged to be deficient in basic level composition skills after having been tested on the ACT and after having written diagnostic compositions. During the Fall, 1979 semester, the forty-five students tested in this investigation represented a larger population group of 1,219 students identified as "Basic Skills" students who were enrolled in a total of fifty-eight sections of remedial-level courses. Both the experimental and the control groups wrote descriptive compositions during a fifty-minute class period before and after the nine-week treatment period. The experimental group experienced a humanities-oriented, cognitive stimulation unit, constructed and taught by the investigator, while the control group received the traditional, grammar-centered, writing practice instruction drawn from the course syllabus recommended for 0006 English students by the Freshman Departmental Staff at LSU.
An original, pilot-tested analytical rating scale, listing eight criteria for effective descriptive writing, was used by five readers in a controlled reading setting to measure the effectiveness of pre and posttest compositions. An analysis of covariance and t-tests were used to determine what statistically significant differences occurred between the two groups. An additional treatment by level analysis of gain scores was used to ascertain a possible interaction effect of English ACT scores on high and low student responses to the experimental treatment. In addition to these statistical analyses, a subjective analysis of six selected posttest themes, the three best ones from each group, was conducted to determine what, if any, rhetorical differences existed in the experimental and the control group compositions.

Consideration of the statistical data compiled during this investigation appeared to warrant the following conclusions:

1. The experimental group and the control group both improved their descriptive writing skills significantly.

2. Although mean scores pointed toward slightly greater improvement in descriptive writing skill among students in the experimental group, these gains were not statistically significant at the .05 level.

3. A treatment by level analysis of the gain scores suggested a differential effect of the experimental treatment on reluctant writers whose ACT verbal aptitude scores were above and below the group median of twelve. Maximum gains were made by the higher ACT group (with scores of 13-17). Minimum gains were made by the lower ACT group (with scores of 12 or below).

The primary implication for teaching and research revolved around the third conclusion. The positive response to the experimental treatment by the more capable writers suggested that the humanities-oriented, cognitive skills approach may be an effective tool for teaching descriptive writing. This conclusion is
strengthened further by the fact that the high ACT group under the controlled, grammar-centered treatment failed to demonstrate comparable writing growth.

The subjective analysis of six selected compositions indicated superior ability among the experimental group writers to do the following tasks when writing:

1. to focus their descriptions around a controlling idea or dominant impression;

2. to expand their compositions by including more relevant, supportive, and representative facts, details, and observations, thereby producing more inclusive, unified compositions than their counterparts in the control group;

3. to approach their subjects with more intense imagery, more engaging voice, and more effectively organized frameworks.
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In his advice to young writers, Henry James described the essence of the writer's task:

Oh, do something from your own point of view; ... an ounce of example is worth a ton of generalities. ... Do something with life. Any point of view is interesting that is a direct impression of life. You each have an impression colored by your individual conditions; make that into a picture, a picture framed by your own personal wisdom, your glimpse of the American world. The field is vast for freedom, for study, for observation, for satire, for truth. (as cited by Miller, 1978: 53)

James' advice contains several elements of the philosophical system that prompted and shaped this investigation, An Evaluation of a Humanities-Oriented, Cognitive Stimulation Model to Improve Descriptive Writing Development of Underprepared College Freshmen. The fact that underprepared students were chosen to be the subject of this experimental study was determined, in part, by the belief that every student possesses "personal wisdom" and a unique world view, but that the basic writer (also termed underprepared, reluctant, inexperienced, developmental, or remedial writer) often fails to express his ideas because he does not possess the tools for producing meaningful, effective discourse. (Shaughnessy, 1972) Thus, one aim of this investigation was to discover which one of two instructional approaches would give the basic writer the more effective tools he needs to express his thoughts -- his "personal wisdom."
A second belief that directed this research was that the abilities to observe and study people, artifacts, surroundings, paintings, and readings, accompanied by recording these sensory and factual data, and the ability to draw inferences based on these data, coupled with writing practice, would facilitate reluctant writers' abilities to create more focused, expanded, well-supported, and engaging descriptions, or "pictures," than they would otherwise produce. Forrest Burt, co-author of *Invention and Design*, praised such invention strategies in his October 4, 1980 address to teachers at the Louisiana Association of Post Secondary Language Arts conference. He stated that the chief virtue of such stimulation models lay in their use as cognitive tools which could enhance writing fluency. Thus, one purpose of the investigation was to test the efficacy of a model which was designed to stimulate cognitive thinking and writing skills prompted by various humanities-oriented stimuli and practice in prewriting. The art experiences were designed to condition, promote, and intensify recall of concrete detail drawn from the writer's own experience. The cognitive stimulation model (combining observation, prewriting, and inferencing practice) was thus designed to help reluctant writers retrieve, order and abstract their experiences. Both Jean Piaget's studies of cognitive stages and Anthony Petrosky's research on student responses to literature and writing indicated that late adolescents need some blend of concrete operational and abstract experiences. In other words, reluctant writers need many opportunities "to sort out, classify, ... abstract, reflect, and intellectualize" their experiences. (Petrosky, 1977) Essentially, then, the experimental instruction model was designed to present, as James suggested, a "vast field" of stimuli "for study, for observation"
so that students could describe their "direct impressions," their "pictures" framed by their own "personal wisdom."

And finally, the descriptive writing tasks that students were assigned before, during, and after the treatment period were given to them because of a belief that descriptive writing provided a valuable, powerful tool that could help reluctant writers bridge the gap from purely self-expressive, self-discovery purposes in writing to other academically practical or transactional purposes, such as writing to inform an audience or to enlist audience agreement with one's own judgment, impression, or analysis. (D'Angelo, 1976; Britton, 1978; Cooper and Odell, 1978; Steinmann, 1979; Lavazzi, 1979) The writer was to transform personal impressions (writer-based prose—writing for self-discovery) into reader-based prose (writing which reflected a writer's confrontation with a purpose and an audience). (Flower and Hayes, 1977) In this light, a student was to assume the role of writer-participant, perhaps employing in the process Vygotsky's "inner speech" mechanism. He was to seek audience agreement with his perceptions of a subject on the basis of the clarity, effectiveness, referential truth, or validity of his information. (Britton, 1978; Vygotsky, 1962; Steinmann, 1979) Thus, the underprepared writer was asked to draw upon his own "impressions of life," to produce "pictures" framed by his own "personal wisdom," so that others may share his insights -- ideas that were previously trapped within his mind, simply because he lacked the tools to express them.
Statement of the Problem

The primary purpose of this investigation centered around the following question: Would a significant difference in descriptive writing scores result between two groups of remedial level college freshmen if Group "A" (the experimental group) received a special instructional sequence incorporating visual and verbal stimulation, observation practice, inferencing skills and prewriting while Group "B" (the control group) followed the grammar-centered 1979 course outline recommended for 0006 English classes at Louisiana State University? Implicit in this question were several additional questions which guided the writing and application of the instructional sequence, the design and instrumentation of the investigation, and the analysis of the results.

1. What theoretical rationale justified the assumptions and activities that were included in the experimental instruction?

2. What criteria and instrument(s) could be devised which could yield valid and reliable data to measure results of the treatments?

3. What specific research questions could be answered by the analysis of the data?

(a) Would students who experienced the nine-week experimental treatment significantly improve their descriptive writing skills?

(b) Would students in the control group improve their descriptive writing skills following nine weeks of instruction recommended in the 0006 English course syllabus at LSU?
(c) Would the experimental treatment produce results which were superior to those produced in the control group?

(d) Would the experimental treatment produce a differential effect on remedial students whose verbal aptitude scores on the ACT were split above and below the group median of twelve?

(e) Would the objective and the subjective analyses of the results reveal differences?

Design of the Experiment:
PreTest, PostTest with Control Group

Sample
Two randomly assigned 0006 freshman composition classes at Louisiana State University represented the population group. During the Fall, 1979 semester, the forty-five students tested in this investigation represented a larger population group of 1,219 students identified as "Basic Skills" students who were enrolled in a total of fifty-eight sections of remedial-level courses. These subjects were placed in 0006 classes because their low composite ACT scores (20-32 in the American College Testing Program), their low English scores on the ACT (10-16), and their performances on diagnostic compositions indicated the need for remediation in English composition. These students were representative of the many varied socio-economic and racial backgrounds that characterize any large public, state university.

Procedure
First, all students in the experimental and the control groups wrote descriptive compositions during a fifty-minute class period.
Then, the experimental group experienced a nine-week, humanities-oriented, cognitive stimulation unit, constructed and taught by the investigator. (The theoretical rationale, the content, and the application of this unit are described in more detail in Chapter III of this investigation.) During this same nine-week period, the control group received the traditional, grammar-centered, writing practice instruction drawn from the course syllabus recommended for 0006 English students by the Freshman Departmental Staff at LSU. (See Appendix "A" for this outline, and see Chapter III for a more detailed discussion of the content and application of the experimental treatment.)

Following the treatment period, students in both groups wrote descriptive themes again. The assignment was the same as that given in the pretest; thus, the posttest was designed to assess the efficacy of the two instructional modes for improving the descriptive writing of underdeveloped college freshmen.

**Instrumentation**

The instrument used to assess growth in writing skills was an analytical rating scale, patterned after those constructed by Diederich, Adler, and Buxton in their research (Diederich, 1974; Cooper, 1975; Buxton, 1958). This instrument was researched, modified, pilot-tested, and simplified specifically for this investigation before it was used. All criteria included on the scale were researched and defined to insure uniform application of the instrument by five selected readers in their controlled reading and scoring of the pre and posttests. (See Appendices "B" and "C" for the Analytical Rating Scale and the definitions of the criteria.) Chapter IV of this research presents the pilot-testing and analysis of the instrument for its validity, reliability, and usability.
Analysis

An analysis of covariance was used to correct for initial differences between the two classes. Gains in writing growth were tested and analyzed for significant statistical differences at the .05 level. A treatment by level analysis of the gain scores was used to determine whether a possible interaction effect occurred between ACT levels and the experimental treatment. Chapter IV of this volume contains all statistical analyses performed on the data generated by the pre and post-test scores.

Yet, because of the small group sampling, statistically significant differences in writing growth were difficult to achieve. But the treatment by level analysis of gain scores, the analysis of the interaction effect of English ACT scores on high and low student responses to the experimental treatment, as well as the descriptive data including mean scores and standard deviations, all pointed toward the need for a closer, subjective analysis of differences in the posttest themes of the control and experimental groups. Thus, this investigation contains a fifth chapter -- a more holistic and subjective analysis (consistent with, and yet a synthesis of, the criteria outlined and defined by the analytical rating scale). The three highest scoring themes from each group were compared in an attempt to determine, describe, and analyze what key differences occurred in the two sets of descriptions, and to determine whether these differences were significant from a rhetorical viewpoint.

Definitions of Terms

Humanities-oriented: This term is used to describe the experimental instruction because art slides and short reading selections were used to
stimulate student writing. Thus, the unit is interdisciplinary in con-
tent.

Cognitive: The term "cognition," used in its broadest sense, applies to the way one learns or understands whatever he encounters. The following Piagetian and Brunerian theoretical assumptions about cognitive-developmental psychology governed the construction of the exper-
imental unit: humans actively construct knowledge through interaction with the world via adaptive functions such as "assimilation and accommoda-
tion"; these adaptations result in a "structured system of under-
standing as knowledge is built up into increasingly organized and differentiated schemes." (Barritt and Kroll, 1978:50)

Stimulation: "Stimulus" defined simply means "something which stirs to action or effort." (Thorndike, Barnhart, 1974:829) Although de-
scribed in detail in Chapter II of this investigation, "stimulation" here refers to the instructional model which was designed to "stir" or arouse students' discovery of ideas and of ways to express those ideas.

Prewriting: The term "prewriting" in this model applies to a process which often (but need not always) precedes the actual writing of a composition. The activities in this process include (1) a confrontation with a problem, a subject, a stimulus that creates the need to write, (2) the retrieval of relevant information already known, (3) the obser-
vation and analysis of the collected data, and (4) the tentative arrange-
ment or approach to the data by considering the rhetorical context, particularly the purpose for writing, the scope and limitations of the subject, and the audience.
Underprepared College Freshmen: The subjects of this investigation were the ones enrolled in English 0006 who were judged to be deficient in basic level composition skills after having been tested on the ACT and after having written diagnostic compositions. The term "underprepared" was chosen to describe these students, instead of other terms, such as "Basic Writers," "developmental writers," "remedial writers," or "reluctant writers," since most students seemed to lack basic writing skills because they had not had enough preparation and experience in writing. Thus, most of them did not demonstrate the learning disabilities that many lower-level English 0003 students demonstrate, nor did they perform as competently as the higher-level, English 1001, students did.

Descriptive Writing: The term "descriptive writing" in this study applies to the type of writing that students were asked to produce. A passage may be said to be descriptive when it depicts or portrays someone, some place, or something in such vivid detail that either the reader can visualize the subject himself or he believes in the representative and interpretive truth of the writer's impressions. Practice in producing the kind of focused, concrete detail necessary for effective descriptive writing was intended to function as a basic level composition tool that could facilitate other aims or purposes in writing.

Analytical Rating Scale: This term applies to the instrument used to assess writing growth in this research. Such an instrument lists the criteria used to examine student competences in specific skills, such as focusing, organizing, and/or expanding a piece of writing. Scores are generated by the numerical values assigned to the student on each
criterion. In this investigation, low scores indicated deficient performance and high scores indicated proficient performance. (Appendix "B" contains a model of the scale used in this investigation.)

Controlled Reading: This term describes the process used to score student writing. The five readers and the forty-five students were assigned numbers in order to maintain anonymity and to insure objective measurement in the readings. Furthermore, all marks and remarks that the readers made were placed on their score sheets; thereby preventing marked copies from circulating through the readers and influencing their judgments.

Overview

This chapter describes the primary questions asked during this investigation; the remaining chapters attempt to answer those questions. Chapter II includes those studies most directly instrumental in framing the theoretical and experimental basis for this research. Chapter III describes the content, theoretical rationale, and application of the two treatments tested in the experiment. Chapter IV presents the statistical analysis and the conclusions that resulted from the analysis. Chapter V attempts a subjective exploration of six selected essays to discover on another level the significant differences in the post-tests of the experimental and the control group. Chapter VI summarizes the conclusions, implications, and further questions prompted by the information yielded in the investigation.
CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

An evaluation of a cognitive stimulation sequence on the writing development of underprepared college freshmen demanded investigation of basically three areas of research: (1) those studies dealing with the characteristics and problems of underprepared writers, (2) those studies concerned with stimulation theories and strategies (particularly prewriting as a primary means for stimulating thinking and discovery mechanisms before writing), and (3) those relating to the procedure and criteria used to measure writing development.

Underprepared Writers

... Basic writing students write the way they do, not because they are slow or non-verbal, indifferent to or incapable of academic excellence, but because they are beginners and must, like all beginners, learn by making mistakes. (Shaughnessy, 1977: 5)

The term "basic writers," for those students who are unprepared to enter the traditional college composition classroom, was popularized by Mina Shaughnessy, a pioneer in the area of writing remediation in her book Errors and Expectations. Shaughnessy described several problems of "inexperienced" writers. Those problems of specific concern to this investigation included the following:

- students' inability to elaborate, to exhibit play among ideas; often their essays tend to be short and disjointed. (p. 226)
- students' "difficulty with framing and holding on to a central or organizing idea" (p. 227)
- pupils' generalizing and lack of play between abstract and concrete statements; (p. 240)
- beginning writers' inability to find a place to start writing. (p. 245)

George Hillocks noted similar traits in the works of junior and senior high school students in his Observing and Writing. (1975) He reported that training in observation, followed by opportunities to write, helped students to write more detailed descriptions. If one accepts Shaughnessy's premise that the prime difference between basic writers and "good" writers is experience, then one may find Hillocks' research with young writers beneficial in constructing learning strategies for the classroom.

Sandra Schor and Judith Fishman, in their Random House Guide to Basic Writing, underscored one student's remedial struggles with writer's block, past failure, and organization in the following passage:

When I start to write, it presents a lot of problems. For example, I am self conscious of what I am writing and I am always fearful of using incorrect grammar. Another problem I have is staying on the main topic. When I write, it's like having mini-explosions going off in my mind. Thousands of words, sentences, and ideas keep flashing in and out of my head. It is a nuclear war between my hand and my brain. The actual results usually amaze me. In my mind it is clear and concise -- on paper it becomes a jumble. (Schor and Fishman, 1978: xi)

It was interesting to note that the author of this passage could not control or retain his ideas. One of the primary functions of this investigation was to help such students develop a procedure for retaining and controlling their ideas after they had retrieved them.
While innumerable workbooks and texts flooded the market to aid underprepared students in their quest for writing competence, actual research about the acquisition of writing skills, about the characteristics of weak writers, and about writing remediation remained somewhat sparse. (Gudas, 1977; Shaughnessy, 1976). More research modeled after the case studies that Janet Emig completed in *The Composing Processes of Twelfth Graders* (1971) needs to be completed specifically for reluctant writers. She isolated ten steps in the composing process. Can these same steps be observed in deficient writers? Under what conditions can they be observed?

1. prewriting gestation
2. planning
3. getting started
4. making continuous decisions about diction, syntax, and rhetoric in relation to the intended meaning taking shape
5. reviewing what has accumulated
6. anticipating and rehearsing what comes next
7. tinkering and reformulation
8. stopping
9. contemplating the finished piece
10. revising (Emig, 1971; Cooper, 1975)

Both Sondra Perl and Richard Steinacher reported less extensive, but illuminating case studies of the composing processes of "unskilled" writers at the college levels. (Perl, 1977; Steinacher, 1976) Perl taped, observed, and charted writing behaviors in four sessions. Then she examined student papers. She found four consistent patterns in unskilled writers: (1) they were more fluent in the "reflexive" mode, (2) they used little planning or prewriting, (3) they had little sense of audience, and (4) they were unable to explain stylistic changes. Primary implications of Perl's first and second observations substantiated the need for developing a practical prewriting strategy for reluctant writers and for selecting a discourse mode that could bridge the
gap from "reflexive" concerns to more "transactional" concerns. (Cooper and Odell, 1978; Britton, 1978; D'Angelo, 1976: 120, 132; Snipes, 1975)

Richard Steinacher's observations of nineteen students in a "basic composition program" at Florida State University yielded further evidence that underprepared students compose best when they engage in prewriting/planning activities, when they can choose their own topics, when they can reformulate writing, and when they can edit their compositions. While prewriting was a focal point of the experimental program designed for this investigation, the instructional sequence included opportunities for sentence combining and sentence modification. Furthermore, students were required to formulate their own topics following very general task assignments. For example, they were asked to describe a person, place, or object on the pre and post-tests. Part of the test of the experiment was to develop a strategy which could help students to select and limit topics of their own. (Steinacher, 1976)

Some experimental courses provided insight as to what techniques worked with inexperienced writers. In "Eliminating the Negatives in Basic Writing," Donna Correll reported at the Annual Meeting of the Conference on College Composition and Communication in Spring, 1978, the success of a basic writing course which consisted of journal writing, grammar instruction, in-class paragraph writing, and controlled composition. (Gorrell, 1978) LaVerne Gonzalez also described a successful developmental writing course at Purdue University which contained these basic elements: motivation and a desire to learn writing on the part of the students, communication, careful diagnosis, organization, an organized plan for student mastery, a provision for transferral of skills, and reward. (Gonzalez, 1976)
Responding to recent Piagetian research projects which indicated that a majority of adolescent and adult students have not reached a formal level of cognitive functioning, Karl Taylor tested the cognitive skills of an "average" group of students at Illinois Central College; then he conducted an intensive three-week session that required students to paraphrase sentences, to summarize short paragraphs, to summarize passages of two to six paragraphs, and then to summarize longer passages. He found in examining their summaries that students increased their cognitive abilities to grasp and to reflect accurately the intended meanings of the passages. (Taylor, 1978) One most important implication of Taylor's work for remedial programs was that students may be moved (if ready) from one level of cognition to another.

One of the most massive experimental approaches to remedial writing instruction occurred at the City University of New York. The study involved seventy-one (71) teachers of remedial English and 2,066 pupils. The primary purpose of the experiment was to improve expository writing by means of a highly structured reading and writing program. Richard Bossone and Lynn Troyka reported in "A Strategy for Coping with High School and College Remedial English Problems" that approximately 80% of the experimental group, but only 45% of the control group improved in their written work by the end of the semester. (Bossone, 1976) Pedagogically, the study was also significant because it emphasized a need for training the teachers of remedial students.

Andrea Lunsford noted in "What We Know - and Don't Know - About Remedial Writing" that the level of syntactic maturity in basic writing was low, that the papers were laden with errors, and that the
strategies that the writers used to compose just as often obstructed their success as aided them. To remediate syntactic problems, she recommended that all courses employ appropriate level sentence-combining exercises and higher level reading materials than those currently used in remedial courses. (Lunsford, 1977)

Charles Stallard's research on the composing processes of "good writers" (labeled "good" on the basis of high rank on the Sequential Test of Educational Progress, STEP test) attempted to compare writing behaviors of "good" and "average" high school seniors. He observed differences between the good writers and the comparison group in length of prewriting time, numbers and types of revisions, speed and contemplation time spent in re-reading. (Stallard, 1974) Such information pointed again toward the prewriting emphasis of this investigation. Later, in "Composing: A Cognitive Process Theory," Stallard noted that the "amount of conscious and considered effort expended" in search of "knowledge, concepts, attitudes, and beliefs" related to a topic, depended upon the "giftedness, experience, and work habits of the writer." (Stallard, 1976: 183)

Another potential source of information on the development of writing abilities, but one that did not address the needs of verbally disadvantaged students, was James Britton's classification and analysis of 2,122 pieces of writing produced by students in the British secondary schools. Britton's concerns centered around students' awareness of audience and purpose in writing as they produced copies which were labeled according to functions as transactional, expressive, or poetic. (Britton, 1975; Rystrom, 1977)
Responding to Britton's massive study revealing characteristics of writers at various developmental stages, Kenneth Kantor and Dan Kirby reported that they were currently involved in an analysis of a sample of writings collected from students in grades seven, nine, and twelve. (Kantor, 1979: NCTE research seminar) Because of the inherent potential of this study to uncover characteristics of inexperienced writers, as well as experienced writers, and because this information yielded insight into the nature of writers who need remediation at the college level, the five factors for judging writing maturity plotted on Kantor's continuum are presented in Table I.

"DE-CENTERING": DEVELOPMENTAL PROCESSES IN WRITING

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FLUENCY</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>uncertain voice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>halting, blocked expression</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>authoritative voice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>smooth, readable style</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>facile production of language</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INVolVEMENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&quot;cold&quot;: perfunctory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;hot&quot;: reactive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>engaged,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tempered/reflective</td>
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</tbody>
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<tr>
<th>INVENTION</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>lack of resources,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lack of development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>creativity (inner resources)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+ discovery (knowledge):</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>marshalling of &quot;arguments&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<th>COMMAND OF FUNCTION</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>lack of coordination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lack of versatility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lack of sense of purpose (wavering)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mode-shifting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>coordinated: strength &amp; balance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sustained intent/focus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>purposeful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mode differentiation &amp; support</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>SENSE OF AUDIENCE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>egocentric: restricted to self</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>subjective: one point of view</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>undifferentiated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sense of other (role-taking)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;objective&quot;: considers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>several points of view</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>differentiated</td>
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</table>
The primary value of the continuum illustrated in Table I for research with reluctant writers lay with the fact that the content of the instructional package was created, in part, to move students from immature performance toward mature performance measured by criteria similar to those on Kantor's continuum in the areas of fluency, involvement, invention, command of function (particularly intent, purpose, development, and support) and to a limited extent, sense of audience.

In another attempt to learn more about the backgrounds and writing problems of basic writing students, this investigator conducted an informal questionnaire with seventy-six (76) students scheduled to take English 0006, a remedial level composition course at the university. The survey was designed to determine what types of writing experiences students had encountered in high school. Given a list of eleven classroom participation roles, each student was asked to check those traits which most aptly described his own attitude toward his experiences in high school. Interestingly, nearly half of the students saw themselves as cooperative, hard working, but bored. Most of the other students admitted frustration, confusion and contentment with just "getting by" classroom demands. Although too much speculation over these findings seemed unwarranted, these responses indicated that such varying attitudes demanded the inclusion of varied activities to promote student interest and a clearly organized structure to keep students aware of what was happening and why it was happening in the instructional sequence.

Another outgrowth of this informal profile of seventy-six 0006 students at LSU, and one which was most directly related to the questions inherent in this investigation, grew out of the question: "Which
three phases of writing do you find most difficult?" Out of seven phases listed, the most frequently checked problem areas were these:

- Thinking of something to say about the topic
- Writing clearly (saying what I want to say)
- Organizing my ideas
- Correcting grammatical errors

Indeed, the instructional program was specifically designed to help students overcome deficiencies in those areas. This survey did not contradict, but rather, it reaffirmed on a local level many of those observations of basic writers that Mina Shaughnessy made in her book and in her essay, "Basic Writing." (Shaughnessy, 1976) These students are pessimistic "about the possibility of ever learning anything or ever being understood in school. It comes from experience, the experience of not having been noticed nor respected nor heard in too many classrooms, the experience of becoming used to not understanding what books and teachers are saying, of being passed on but never encouraged, of feeling dumb and bored in school." (Shaughnessy, 1976: 140)
Stimulation Models: Part I

...Given the limited amount of time available for learning... there must be some emphasis placed on economy and transfer and the learning of general rules. Cleverness in a particular activity almost universally connotes strategy, economy, heuristics, highly generalized skills.

- Jerome Bruner

The following examination of related literature centered, first, around "stimulation" as it applied to the learning format of the experimental unit and, second, around the literature related to various pre-writing models.

Because so many paradigms of learning exist, and because an attempt to satisfy the theoretical demands of each seem impossible for any single instructional unit to meet, the often confused teacher asks "What approach can one feel sure about?" In his chapter with the same title, "What Approach...," Goodwin Watson answers the question by summarizing fifty research statements supported by behaviorists, Gestalt theorists, cognitive psychologists, and psychoanalysts. The following statements helped to form part of the theoretical foundation for the learning unit in this investigation.

(1) "Opportunity for fresh, novel, stimulating experience is a kind of reward and is quite effective in conditioning and learning." (Watson, 1975: 93-95) The experimental model included opportunities to make observations about different people, places, and objects (including paintings, readings, rocks, and objects taken from a fictionalized suicide victim's purse), and it encouraged students, first, to react freely to their experiences and, second, to react logically to their observations.
(2) "The experience of learning by sudden insight into a previously confused or puzzling situation arises when (a) there has been sufficient background and preparation; (b) attention is given to the relationship operative in the whole situation; (c) the perceptual structure "frees" the key elements to be fitted into new patterns; and (d) the task is meaningful and within the range and ability of the subject." (Watson, 1975) As far as "sufficient background and preparation" were concerned and the task's meaningfulness determined by range and ability of the subject, research for the activities included in the instructional sequence was guided by the current characteristics and composing abilities of reluctant writers.

The primary relationship operative in the current investigation centered around two chained assumptions:

(1) - that capable reluctant writers can learn to write effectively if they learn logical thinking procedures based on careful observations and interpretations of
  - concrete stimuli (such as rocks, local settings, real people)
  - abstract symbolic stimuli (such as paintings of people, places, things)
  - organizing structures and meanings inherent in utterances that depict and analyze people, places and things;

(2) - and that given the sensitizing that occurs in the observational phases, students can practice transforming their observations of structures and images into meaningful discourse based on substantive generalizations which can thus be supported by factual and sensory details.
Further foundation for the unit tested in this investigation was established upon the pedagogical implications of Jerome Bruner's learning theories. Bruner's views influenced the experimental unit in three ways. First, the overall structure of the unit, including the types of activities involved in the sequence, was formulated around his ideas. Second, the specific prewriting model advocated in the unit drew strength from Bruner's observations. And third, the use of art as a medium in developing observation and inferencing skills seemed a natural outgrowth of Bruner's own views of art and creativity.

In a sense, the primary purpose of the experimental unit could be summarized in what Bruner terms "the heart of the educational process which consists of providing aids and dialogues for transplanting experience into more powerful systems of notation and ordering." (Bruner, 1966: 21) Bruner maintained that readiness (which consists of mastery of those simple skills that permit one to reach higher skills) can be nurtured; "one does not simply wait for it." (Bruner, 1966: 28) Therefore, with descriptive writing centered first around expressive discourse, as a beginning point for writing skills, and progressing toward referential and transactional discourse, particularly concentrating on observations and judgments, the instructional unit sought to stimulate readiness for more difficult writing skills by offering a flexible prewriting mechanism, and a descriptive writing facility which emphasized the importance of focus and expansion, the two key problems in any discourse, according to James Moffett. (1968)

In "Resources for Teaching Rhetorical Invention," David Harrington and his associates recognized four main theories of rhetorical invention: neo-classical invention, prewriting, tagmemic invention, and dramatist
invention. (Harrington, 1978) Harrington proposed another category of invention based on speech communication. However, the area of invention that this study explored was a particular model of prewriting, a seemingly more flexible, more widely interpreted, and more accessible one for reluctant writers.

The term "Stimulation Model" in the present study refers to two levels of application. In the larger and structural sense, the entire instructional unit (with the exclusion of routine work on sentence fragments and run-on sentences) was designed to stimulate students' learning by having the subjects observe various sentence patterns and functions, examine and analyze descriptive passages and study art media. Then, based on their observations of these interdisciplinary stimuli, students were to infer meaning for writing by associating the new stimuli with their own knowledge. Having derived some level of meaning from the stimuli and adopted an appropriate rhetorical context, they were to practice writing various descriptive passages.

On another level, "stimulation model" is interpreted by this investigation to mean the specific prewriting technique advocated in the experimental sequence. This strategy was recommended to the students as a retrieval and organizational mechanism which could help them to produce fuller, more focused papers than they would otherwise produce if they continued to use the prewriting devices (if, in fact, any were used) they employed on the diagnostic papers. This more specific use of the term "stimulation" is more aptly described as a prewriting method for descriptive composition and may be depicted in the following diagram.
Table 2: Prewriting Model for Experimental Group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>the subject to describe (person, place, artifact, art slide)</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>4. Recording</th>
<th>5. Inferencing &amp; Interpretation of data</th>
<th>6. Limiting by rhetorical context which includes purpose, audience, subject-matter, voice/attitude</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(all factual and sensory details, all dominant impressions)</td>
<td>(determining dominant impressions, judgments, purpose)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

After following these steps, students used the information they retrieved throughout the entire composing process; thus the term "prewriting" in this investigation may be characterized as a retrieval and organizational mechanism which was to be employed in the development of the entire composition influenced by, but not confined to, the very broadly defined self-discovery and transformation concept of "pre-writing" that Gordon Rohman and Albert O. Wlecke espoused in their seminal examination of this invention strategy, Pre-Writing: The Construction and Application of Models for Concept Formation in Writing. The specific invention strategy (illustrated in Table 2) also resembles those brainstorming and cubing methods that Forrest Burt recommended in his address to composition teachers (1980 Louisiana Association of Post Secondary Language Arts Meeting, LSU). But, like Rohman and Wlecke's research, it attempts to provide a feasible, theoretical rationale for prewriting. Also similar to the Rohman and Wlecke study, it applies the theory in an experimental context and then follows this application with subjective and objective evaluation of its effectiveness.

Rohman and Wlecke based their assessment of 635 pieces of writing upon the assumption that prewriting is that "stage of discovery in the
writing process when a person transforms a subject into his own categories." (Rohman and Wlecke, 1964: 13) Their concept of prewriting was based on the dual importance of self-actualization and discovery as prerequisite for composing. Their use of the journal, the emphasis on using concrete detail in writing, and their insistence upon a point of focus or "seed idea" seemed especially appropriate for the instructional sequence used in the current investigation. Unfortunately, while the Rohman-Wlecke analysis clearly suggested superior performance among students in their prewriting experimental group, their choice of reading material and methods were far too esoteric for the subjects of this investigation. Their inclusion of readings from Thoreau, Conrad, Kierkegaard, Cyrano DeBergerac, and Bacon (among others) rendered a replicative study of their experiment impossible with reluctant writers (who are often reluctant readers as well).

James Britton, in "Composing Processes and the Functions of Writing," reiterated his belief that expressive writing is important, "particularly in its educational value as a matrix from which...both transactional and poetic writing are developed." (Cooper and Odel, 1978: 18) Frank J. D'Angelo in his bibliographic essay on "Modes of Discourse" summarized pedagogical implications of several discourse theorists whose works pointed toward descriptive-expressive modes as beginning places to develop writing competence. He said of Sterling Leonard that he would have the student begin with the more 'concrete' modes, such as description and narration, and base his writing on these modes, on sense impressions, for example, and on bits of narrative that increase in complexity and generality. Then the student would move on to more abstract modes which deal with generalization
and interpretation. (D'Angelo, 1976: 120) Because Kinneavy's "aims of discourse" are grounded in the nature of reality, they coincide with aims of everyday life (to instruct, to convince or persuade, to please, etc.); so D'Angelo suggested that one possible approach to writing was to begin with expressive discourse. He ultimately concluded, "Whatever the plan, however, we can envisage a sequence of linguistic and rhetorical forms and subject matter ranging from the personal to the objective, from the less difficult to the more difficult." (D'Angelo, 1976: 132) Thus, the instructional framework tested in this research attempted to combine writing readiness skills as they were interpreted from pedagogical and rhetorical theories which employed the following assumption about an "optimal structure" for learning:

...the merit of a structure depends upon its power for simplifying information, for generating new propositions, and for increasing the manipulatability of a body of knowledge. (Bruner, 1966: 41)

Bruner's research on intellectual development supported the feasibility of the prewriting strategy which was one primary tool of the instructional unit. The observing, brainstorming, inferencing, and organizing strategy that students used to precede their writing was designed to help them "deal with several alternatives simultaneously," to manage several sequences during the same period of time, and "to allocate time and attention in a manner appropriate to these multiple demands," skills which encourage cognitive development. (Bruner, 1966: 5-6) Bruner went on to say that since learning and problem solving depend upon the exploration of alternatives (such as those yielded by brainstorming in the prewriting model), "instruction must facilitate and regulate the exploration by incorporating three elements: "activation," something to get it started; "maintenance," something to
keep it going; and "direction," something to keep it from being random. (Bruner, 1966: 43) He supported the use of such a system because of its capacity to expose possibilities of a subject of exploration (applied in this investigation to mean, possibilities of a topic).

The crutch provided by a matrix that gets all the combinations out of the head onto paper or the blackboard makes it possible to look at the group structure as a whole, to go beyond it to the task of seeing whether it has interesting properties and familiar isomorphs. Good representation, then, is a release from intellectual bondage. (Bruner, 1969: 26)

The prewriting strategy employed in this experiment could have been appropriately termed a discovery method which could lead writers toward organization and focus in their compositions. Bruner says that such discovery methods lead the learner to be a

... constructionist, to organize what he is encountering in a manner not only designed to discover regularity and relatedness, but also to avoid the kind of information drift that fails to keep account of the uses to which information might have to be put. (Bruner, 1969: 87)

Another integral part of the instructional sequence which received theoretical reinforcement from Bruner's theories is the use of art slides to stimulate observation, inferencing, and descriptive writing skills. Essentially, Bruner saw art as a "Mode of Knowing" or as a means of perceiving and understanding experience because art creates an image "connecting things that were previously separate in experience"; (it creates) an image that bridges (the gap between) rationality and impulse." He maintained that the "principle of economy in art produces the compact image or symbol that, by its genius, travels great distances to connect ostensible disparities." (Bruner, 1969: 62-65)

In the following passage, he captured the essence of artistic power as a tool to arouse curiosity and to retrieve past experiences with their
accompanied feelings -- responses considered vital to committed, involved writing according to Baden (1975) and Holbrook (1978).

One type of cognitive activity set in train when a need is aroused (such as the need to understand a particular painting or to write about a given subject) is a flow of rich and surprising fantasy, a tangled reticle of associations that gives fleeting glimpses of past occasions, of disappointments and triumphs, of pleasure and unpleasures. ... Thinking is more symphonic than logical, one suggesting the next by a rule of letting parts stand for wholes. Where art achieves its genius is in providing an image or a symbol whereby the fusion can be comprehended and bound. (Bruner, 1969: 71-72)

Related to Bruner's speculations on the use of art as a "mode of knowing," were further implications in the use of art as a vehicle for encouraging observation and writing which utilizes both hemispheres of the human brain. If the right hemisphere of the human brain manipulates "metaphorical, intuitive, analogic and affective" processes and the "left hemisphere controls 'rational, cognitive and linear functions,'" then concerted integrative efforts toward cultivation of both seemed essential in the experimental stimulation model. (Gere, 1976: 30; Samples, 1978; Crowley, 1978)

That art embodies both cognitive and affective power in its "representational symbolism" and that art is a "projection of our cognitive-cum-affective responses to experience" were focal components in Susanne Langer's attempts to describe principles that produce tensions and resolutions in art. Langer's speculations about the "rhetoric of imagination" prompted her call for a combination of all rhetorical modes in the classroom. (Langer, 1975: 65; Britton, 1978)

Thus, the inclusion of art stimuli in the experimental unit proceeded on belief in the potential of art to facilitate students' abilities to write effectively. It was hoped that art experiences might promote and
condition recall of concrete detail drawn from the writer's own experience, a skill so necessary for reluctant writers. (Shaughnessy, 1977; Paull, 1974; Gage, 1977; Hanna, 1977; Montag, 1969) The investigator felt that art work could generate and intensify student recall of personal experiences, the details of which would alter the initial aesthetic response. This intensification (which the student may not have perceived himself) could have motivated more powerful description than the student would have produced had he received no such stimulation. Ideally, this combination of art-stimulated response and intensified personal memories would encourage the reluctant writer to transcend his specific experience—to see general themes, symbols, and motifs (a mark of a less egocentric and more de-centered thinker and writer).

Furthermore, the combination of art with the descriptive assignment as one source of stimulation with the experimental group was designed to help students order and abstract experience. Both Jean Piaget's studies of cognitive stages and Anthony Petrosky's research on student responses to literature and writing indicate that late adolescents need some blend of concrete operational and abstract experiences. In other words, reluctant and immature writers need opportunities to sense, order, classify, and intellectualize their experiences. Joseph Comprone, in his book *From Experience to Expression* (1974), developed composition assignments stimulated by various media and drew upon Michael Paull's similar cognitive process for ordering experience; that process progressed in three stages from sensation to perception and finally to conception.
Finally, continued art stimulation and descriptive exercises at the beginning of the composition course were designed to foster original approaches to the subject the author wished to describe. Piaget rated creative potential in his subjects as their ability, not only to incorporate details that they saw in a picture or object, but also on their ability to transform that object into some kind of reflection or projection beyond the literal scope of the stimulus. Although creativity, as a highly abstract and formal operation, may have been beyond the ability level of the subjects of this research, the art stimuli followed by the prewriting device for organizing student perceptions, which was, in turn, followed by practice in describing these perceptions, could have, in some instances, "created a new level of awareness or knowing as the result of self-initiated exploration of objects, processes, or conditions."

(Sample, 1978)
Since the development and testing of a specific prewriting tool was one primary function of the experimental package, examination of related prewriting techniques became essential. Many articles and research statements acknowledged the need for prewriting as an integral part of the composing process. Numerous articles and investigations proposed techniques for prewriting. However, only a few significant pieces of research were conducted to develop theoretical frameworks for the use of a prewriting system, and of those, "too few" investigations yielded and tested empirical data to confirm the feasibility of using one particular invention strategy. (Young, 1976)

Descriptions of "prewriting" varied considerably in the literature, as did models of stimulation. All of them, however, helped to clarify the purposes and components that should be included in a new model of prewriting. Charles Stallard acknowledged the importance of prewriting in his "Analysis of the Writing of Good Students" which showed that his "good" writers spent 4.18 minutes of 40.8 minutes in a prewriting phase as opposed to his random group's average of 1.20 minutes in prewriting out of their 22.6 minutes total writing time. The implication in "protocol analyses" such as Stallard's (and in Janet Emig's earlier one) is that the better writers used more time to engage in prewriting than weaker writers. It stands to reason, then, that underprepared writers need to engage in profitable prewriting exercises before writing. Stallard defined this prewriting interval as that period of time which lapsed "between receiving the assignment and the commencement of writing on paper." (Stallard, 1974: 211)
Thomas Gage, in his paper presented at the San Francisco Sociolinguistic Conference, July, 1977, defined prewriting loosely as that stage before formal composing; he saw this process as an expressive stage when the writer should feel free to spell out "lumps of think" on paper. He emphasized the importance of memories and experiences as means of knowing which should not be impeded by worry about correct spelling and mechanics. (Gage, 1977)

Aline Wolff's similar description of prewriting as an "outpouring on paper of every thought connected with a given topic," was followed by three procedures for structuring the ideas: selecting ideas, formulating a thesis, and establishing a writing pattern. (Wolff, 1975)

Dennis Hannan's prewriting suggestions harmonized with the concept of prewriting advanced by both Wolff and Gage. (In fact, they contained several identical elements included in the stimulation model developed in the current investigation.) In his paper, "Learning to Juggle Oranges: The Pre-Writing Experience," Hannan maintained that teachers should prepare students for the act of writing by providing for motivation, collection of data, and ordering of data. He specifically recommended brainstorming as an effective tool for recalling and listing images, small group discussions for generating data, and journal notation for ordering responses to experience. (Hannan, 1977) Although more specific than the Gage and Wolff methods, Hannan's procedures, like theirs, were not formally tested and evaluated.

Donald Murray referred to prewriting as a time of rehearsal, largely invisible and compelled by eight principal signals to which writers must respond: genre, point of view, voice, news, line, image, pattern, and problem. (Murray, 1978) And while Murray implied that
much of the response to those signals occurred in students' minds, other sources recommended the use of prewriting worksheets to elicit such information as occasion, audience, purpose, and related details. (Mellon, 1977; Baldwin, 1978; Popham, 1978) These worksheets pointed to the fact that structured prewriting exercises were increasing in popularity and acceptance and that an acceptable prewriting plan must include an adequate account of the rhetorical context for a given writing assignment.

The authors of Strategies for Teaching the Composition Process, published by the National Council of the Teachers of English, also recognized the importance of prewriting strategies that foster an awareness of the rhetorical context by devoting forty of their one-hundred eight pages to stimulation strategies called "prewriting." Instead of defining "prewriting," they described the following three features in the process:

1. First, most of our writing comes as a response to someone or something; that is, our experience compels us to communicate.

2. The second step emanates from this need to respond: we focus on a topic to discuss and very often identify clearly who our audience is.

3. Prewriting ends when we determine what form our writing is to take and what manner or organization is best suited to our topic and audience. (Koch and Brazil, 1978: 25)

Another book of approaches and strategies for writing which devoted the first of its six sections to prewriting is Littleton Long's Writing Exercises from Exercise Exchange. (1976) Long's book describes prewriting, not as a process, but as a composite of all the thinking, feeling, experiencing, dreaming that a student has experienced prior to the moment he begins to write. The author noted two
functions of stimulation exercises. The first function of a stimulation exercise is to spark enthusiasm in students that will overflow onto paper. The second function is to control that overflow so that the student brings conscious order to the chaos of his experiences and emotions. (Long, 1976) It is important to the theoretical assumptions which framed this research to note that the first function emerged as an affective exercise while the second one called for cognitive operations. Thus, the investigator selected material that could arouse student enthusiasm and a model that could control the responses to the stimulation.

Bernard Couvillion, in his review of Righting Writing, a book almost exclusively devoted to motivating students to write, singled out four principles underlying the practices which trigger student writing:

1. A rich classroom environment stimulates creative and sensitive expression. ...
2. Kids still write best about their experiences. ...
3. The dialogue of student exchange develops interest and insures an active and responsive audience.
4. Writing assignments must be varied, engaging, and fun if students are to gain maximum benefit from them. (Couvillion, 1976)

Robert Blake's synonyms for prewriting, "prevision, incubation, gestation," suggested again the need for time in meaningful cognitive activity before actually composing a paper. During this state, he says, writers draw upon all of their experiences and relations with other creatures (people and subject matter) as the raw material for composing. (Blake; 1976) Similarly, Elizabeth Haynes defined prewriting as "any of the structured experiences which take place either before or during the writing process and which influence active participation on the part of the student... ." (Haynes, 1978: 86-88)
Training in such prewriting strategies, which became the focus of an entire curriculum at Illinois Central College, further described components of the experimental unit tested in this investigation. That curriculum stressed sensory observation, memory improvement, visual discrimination, and problem-solving skills. (Finch, 1976)

An implicitly similar meaning of prewriting was inferred from Rae Jeane Popham and Janet Zarem's instructional objectives for the first five steps of the writing process: gathering data, listing details, formulating a thesis statement, selecting details that support the thesis, and ordering the details coherently. (Popham and Zarem, 1978) These curricular concerns with prewriting suggested further acceptance of prewriting stages and procedures; yet these steps and practices were seldom researched, tested, and evaluated by objective means.

Other prewriting strategies proliferated on the sound assumption that composing was akin to problem-solving, and that prewriting was defined as a stage of inquiry which included various operations such as identifying and phrasing the topic, analyzing and defining the problem, listing and limiting criteria to test a solution, suggesting possible solutions, and determining the best solution prior to making an assertion to be addressed in the theme. (Kytle, 1970; Stelzner, 1978; Jones, 1975; Odell, 1974)

For example, Lee Odell asked two critical questions in his research on prewriting with two sections of freshman English at the University of Michigan. "Can they (the students) be taught a set of cognitive operations that will actually have some demonstratable effect on their writing? How would one go about identifying those operations in student essays?" (Odell, 1974: 228-240) His results indicated a significant difference in
favor of student performance following his procedures. Yet he found that his approach did not significantly increase the number of intellectual operations, nor did it produce evidence of fewer conceptual gaps in student papers. He concluded his research with one important question: "Would other prewriting procedures have an even greater influence upon student writing?" (Odell, 1974: 239)

Ironically, Laurence Behrens contradicted the notion that prewriting was a stage of writing that may be broken down into cognitive steps and discovery strategies when he asserted that "The Only Prewriting that Counts—[is] Motivation." (Behrens; 1978) He did suggest, however, that role-playing tactics which help students to identify audience and purpose were beneficial because they were highly motivating. Could it be that Behren's insinuation that prewriting can't be taught, that preparation consists only of motivational activities, was actually a mislabeling of his procedure which contained many cognitive, as well as affective, components?

Following the Rohman concept of prewriting, a means of self-discovery which must precede the transformation of a subject into the author's own perceptions which, in turn, results in the production of substantive writing, Joseph Comprone introduced various art works and popular print media as stimuli for writing in his text, From Experience to Expression: A College Rhetoric. (Comprone, 1974) Similarly, Michael Pauli employed media "happenings," meditations, and journals to facilitate student compositions in his article, "Invention: Understanding the Relation Between Sensation, Perception and Concept Formation." (Pauli, 1974) Pauli's most unique observation in that essay (and one which held possible theoretical implications for testing future prewriting
models) was that students made more complex observations and wrote more genuine reactions to those media which disturbed perceptions. Pauli's extensive use of media and the journal, as well as Comprone's recommendations that both media and the journal be used in writing instruction, served as guides for the inclusion of real objects, art slides, and journals in the humanities-oriented stimulation model of this investigation.

Other models employing art media of various kinds promised not only to "extend man's senses, but also to control the knowledge gained in any exchange." (Gronbeck, 1971: 295) Carlsen used pictures, literature and toys to stimulate fourth, fifth, and sixth grade children to write original stories. Using a "General Impression Scale" and an "Analytical Originality Scale," her three judges found statistically significant differences favoring the experimental group. (Carlson, 1963: 583-589) Lester Golub's model employed various stimuli (including pictures, motion pictures, student narratives, poems, etc.) in his experiment with 112 ninth grade students. He also found that the experimental group produced significantly greater scores than the group who received no stimulation. (Golub, 1969) Both Mary Ellen Foster and Madeline Bennett maintained that works of art stimulated students' "sense of unity between form and content" and that art stimuli, because of their sense appeal, motivated students. (Foster, 1976; Bennett, 1973)

Two features distinguished Bennett's model from previously cited models. First, her students incorporated the art works, the titles, their details, and their significance in the content of their papers by very rigidly controlled behavioral criteria. Second, she cited syntac-
tical fluency as one measure of the success of her model, implying that students wrote more because they were more confident than they would have been without her stimulation source. (Bennett, 1973)

After Bob Samples' long-term exploration of "metaphoric modes," he created a "strong rationale for the curricular preservation and proliferation of art, dance, music (of all types)." Samples believed in the power of art forms to supply symbols, processes, or conditions that may be synthesized and extended in ways that produce greater creativity, greater levels of awareness, or knowing. (Samples, 1978: 39-42; Rockefeller, 1977) David Rockefeller, Jr. compounded the link between communication and art when he said, "Perception and communication--both fundamental learning skills--require much more than verbal training. The arts provide ideal vehicles for training senses, enriching emotional selves, and organizing environments." (Rockefeller, 1977: 25)

It is also interesting to note that one feature of the writing assignment for the 1974 report on the National Assessment of Educational Progress on Writing was that a picture of a kangaroo was used to stimulate nine year olds to write. Thirteen and seventeen year olds were asked to visualize and describe a natural setting or impressive site. (Several scenes were suggested). Writers of the assessment questions obviously recognized the value of sense stimuli and descriptive ability in writing.

George Montag and his co-workers tailored their use of media as a stimulation procedure to meet the needs of remedial students at Jefferson College in Missouri. For an entire semester, Montag divided four experimental classrooms into two parts: a thought stimulation period
promoted by film, slides, prints, cartoons, and recordings and a writing session sometimes preceded by discussion. Pretest and posttest writing samples of the experimental group indicated that the subjects of this experiment wrote as well as the three control groups who were taught by the traditional grammar method. (Montag, 1969)

Charlotte T. Smith analyzed the relationship between the type of question asked, the art stimuli, and oral language production of her subjects. The purpose, model, and implications of her investigation were similar to this study, even though her sample was quite different and the language skill that she measured was oral instead of written. She hypothesized that the type of questions asked and the stimuli about which the questions were asked would have an effect upon children's cognitive processes. She speculated further that this effect could be measured through an analysis of children's oral language production. Her sample consisted of thirty second-grade and thirty fourth-grade students who experienced a multiple picture stimulus, a listening stimulus, and a reading stimulus. She used two types of questions: factual ones eliciting student responses plus memory and interpretive ones where answers involved analysis, reconstruction, or inferences made about the stimuli. Her investigation produced evidence that listening stimuli evoked longer and better responses from the subjects than visual stimuli and that factual questions inhibited high cognitive responses while interpretive questions stimulated high cognitive responses. The implications of her study for future cognitive stimulation models were immense even though future samples may be different and the criteria for measuring responses may be based on more than syntactical fluency or "increasing word-length of the grammatical independent clause and its modifiers." (Smith, 1977: 111-116)
An examination of the numerous and variable descriptions of stimulation models designed to enhance student writing led to the conviction that an appropriate cognitive stimulation model had to meet these criteria:

1. It had to retrieve and liberate the writer's thoughts, feelings, and composite knowledge by some effective means;

2. It had to provide some organizational mechanism to channel those thoughts into a disciplined meaningful form of discourse;

3. It had to guide the writer's composing to that point where he could assume control of his rhetoric and feel comfortable enough to explore and develop the creative limits of his ideas and language.
Measurement Models

"Education is what's left after the facts are gone."  
- Dr. Roger Shuy

Oscar Buros' *Mental Measurements Yearbook* revealed an absolute lack of standardized criteria for scoring essays on either the Subject Examination in English Composition administered for the CEEB or the College English Placement Test. Upon examination of Robert Travers' *Second Handbook of Research on Teaching*, this investigator observed that analytical rating scales had been most widely used and tested in the experimental studies included.

The scale, pilot-tested, simplified and used in this research, drew several features from existing scales in order to make the scale reliable and valid, if not universally acceptable. Follman and Anderson (1967) compared five methods of rating compositions for high school and college students. They asked five groups of five raters to assign grades to ten themes (each about 370 words long). Each rater graded the same ten themes, but used one of the following scales: California Essay Scale, Deiderich Rating Scale, Follman English Mechanics Guide, Everyman's Scale (rater's own criteria). The essays received substantially the same scores from all five rating groups, so the "investigators inferred that rating scales measure many common elements and that the usual unreliability of theme evaluation occurs because of the heterogeneity of the experiential and academic backgrounds of raters." (Travers, 1973: 1978)

Charles Cooper listed three possible "objectives and measures" for scoring papers in his article, "Measuring Growth in Writing": "standard usage, syntactic fluency and writing quality." (Cooper: 1975, 111-120)
He illustrated two scales for judging expository writing: Deiderich's 1965 Scale and Adler's 1972 scale. Both scales listed criteria down the left side of the page and quality points from low to high across the page. Deiderich's well-tested, but rather general scale listed ideas, organization, wording, flavor, usage, punctuation, spelling, and handwriting as its criteria. Adler's rating sheet included five objectives:

1. quality of ideas
2. development of ideas
3. organization, relevance, movement
4. style, flavor, individuality
5. wording (choice of words).

Though general and vague in some areas, both scales apparently functioned well for expository assignments (if their frequent appearance in the literature were testimony to reliability). As guidelines for the applied scale used in this research, both scales helped to distribute point values, to establish a usable form, and to select some fairly universal criteria for the instrument.

Sanders and Littlefield employed the California Essay Scale and their own persuasive scale to test significant differences in students' researched out-of-class papers and their impromptu in-class papers. They preferred their own persuasive scale, but they found that both instruments worked. (Sanders and Littlefield, 1975)

Another significant piece of research which employed a scale was Earl Buxton's study of the comparative "Effects of Writing Frequency and Guided Practice upon Student's Skill in Written Expression." Buxton's scale not only listed the criteria that he examined in the papers with their maximum point values, but it also added a section
for deductions based on errors in spelling, punctuation, usage, grammar, sentence structure, and form. (Buxton, 1958) This deduction section functioned more logically than most mechanics sections. For example, a grader may have found himself at a loss in determining how many points to give a student for spelling on a scale with ratings from 1-5. If a student misspelled fifteen words in three pages or if he wrote three sentence fragments in the paper, the reader may have been undecided about a numerical value to assign that performance. The scale employed in the present study, however, omitted a Buxton-type deduction section for statistical analysis, but included it for pedagogical purposes.

Several vital features were built into the measurement systems of Buxton, Deiderich, Adler, Sanders and Littlefield, Follman and Anderson. All investigators increased reliability by having the papers marked by more than one reader. All of them maintained objectivity by having the students remain anonymous. All of them tailored their instruments to test specific criteria, thereby establishing the validity of the scale for their purposes, which, in turn, enhanced the reliability of their measuring devices by holding the readers to a specified set of standards. The applied scale in the present investigation, along with its subsequent descriptions of the criteria, was constructed in accordance with all these findings. (Please see Appendices "B" and "C" for the scale and descriptions of the criteria.)

Other measures of writing growth revolved around sentence length, complexity, variety and maturity. (Corbett, 1976; Smith, 1977; Wynn, 1977; Mellon, 1969; Stallard, 1974; Bennett, 1973; Mellon, 1976) For example, Stallard's study of "good" writers indicated that good writers
revised their syntax, wording and phrasing more often than did average writers. Thus, one analytical approach to composition measurement examined word choice, sentence elements and sentence organization. However, this investigation favored the more holistic impressions produced by analytical rating scales. Too much attention to minute detail which included semantic analyses, lexical counts, or studies of syntactic forms could have forced raters to become what Susan Wells called "collectors of corpses (who) would steal the instance and abandon the essence." (Wells, 1977: 475; Shuy, 1979)

Lee Odell (1974), in his "Measuring the Effects of Instruction in Prewriting" suggested that supportive evidence be listed as a desired outcome of prewriting stimulation. Both Madeline Bennett and Charlotte Smith in their respective studies interpreted increased sentence length and composition length as evidence of increased confidence for writing. (Bennett, 1973; Smith, 1977) Consequently, the scale used in the present study listed "thorough expansion" and "supportive detail" as two important criteria to measure the syntactic fluency which may have grown out of increased confidence.

The analytical rating scale used in the present investigation drew other criteria based on the guidelines for writing descriptive papers lifted from two basic composition texts used at Louisiana State University: the first, The Student's Book of College English by David Skwire and Frances Chitwood (1978) and the second, Words in Action by Martin Steinmann, Jr. (1979). Skwire and Chitwood gave the following advice:

1. Don't take inventory. You must have a thesis.
2. Use lively, specific details.
3. Choose a principle of organization that will present the descriptive details in a logical sequence. (Skwire and Chitwood, 1978)
Martin Steinmann's discussion of description reinforced the notion that good description should point toward something (focus). Its function may be to evaluate or to enlist like judgment or understanding from readers through its analysis or classification system. In both texts, focus, supportive details and organization became important goals for effective descriptive writing. Thus, the analytical scale used in the current study included "focus," "organization," and "supportive details" as criteria to assess descriptive effectiveness. The applied instrument combined Skwire's and Steinmann's criteria with those gleaned from theoretical and experimental studies mentioned earlier.

One other purpose for having students work on descriptive writing was to examine possible relationships between symbolic stimulation and creativity that students may have demonstrated in their papers (although creativity would be difficult to represent by students who were still struggling with syntactic competence). Because creative thought seemed largely "language independent and analogical as opposed to the logical order and linearity evidenced in cognitive thinking," to establish empirical evidence that originality or creativity existed in a paper became a problematic task. (Samples, 1978) The one criterion used to measure possible creativity in the writing was "originality." Its meaning was based on Bob Samples' "Metaphoric modes" and Ken Kantor's guidelines for evaluation and analysis of creativity, which were based on the "divergent thinking" theories of J. P. Guilford, "fantasy" theories of Freud, "extensionality, relational..." concepts of Carl Rogers and "effective surprise" notions of Jerome Bruner. (Kantor, 1975: 72-74) "Originality", as interpreted and defined in this research (specific definition located in Appendix "C" of this volume) was inferred when
unique relationships among ideas resulted in a surprising or ironic effect, or when surprising images or observations, unusual or engaging approaches to the organization of the subject matter seemed to result in a more intensified effect on the reader than a less original treatment would have produced. (See essay analyses in Chapter 5 of this volume for applications of this term.)

Although much diversity existed in the literature about measurement models, this investigator sought to create an instrument that would be consistent with criteria that recurred most often in the research models, that would be responsive to the theoretical and pedagogical statements about what constitutes effective descriptive writing, and that would be commensurate with the ability levels of underprepared college freshmen. (See Appendix "B" and "C" for the model and descriptions of the criteria.)
CHAPTER III

THEORY AND APPLICATION OF TREATMENTS

The experimental group experienced a nine-week instructional unit which was researched, constructed, and taught by the investigator. The instruction consisted of ten interrelated humanities and cognitive activity units which were designed to stimulate reluctant writers to produce effective descriptions of people, places, and/or things (groups, hobbies, pets, etc.) A summary of the conceptual framework for the unit (parts of which appeared in Chapter II), the primary unit objectives, plus the instructional package divided into its activity units are included in this chapter because they provided the entire basis and structure for the humanities-oriented, cognitive treatment applied to the experimental group.

Conceptual Framework

The instructional package included skills that seemed vital to the concept of writing as an active cognitive process, rather than the seemingly more passive, revisionist approach described by the recommended 1979 course outline of English 0006. (See Appendix "A") The experimental unit operated on the assumption that the abilities to carefully observe various phenomena related to a given stimulus, to record data, and to group and relate that data were vital skills for reluctant writers.
The model offered an approach to prewriting which, according to Martin Steinmann in *Words in Action* (1979), included selecting a limited subject, focusing it, inventing things to say about it, and arranging or ordering those things that the writer wishes to say about the subject. Often, reluctant or "basic" writers feel that they have nothing to say, and if they do have an idea, they do not know how to begin expressing it. The proposed prewriting model (as it appears in Table 2, page 24) was designed to function much as the "matrix" did that Bruner describes in his book *On Knowing*.

(The model) gets all the combinations out of the head on to paper ... (and) makes it possible to look at the group structure as a whole, to go beyond it to the task of seeing whether it has interesting properties and familiar isomorphs. Good representation, then, is a release from intellectual bondage. (Bruner: 1969, p. 26)

The applied model incorporated two chief virtues. The value of the first four phases of the model -- stimulation, observation, brainstorming and recording -- lay in its design to encourage students to think about numerous possibilities within a given assignment. Bruner noted in his essay, "The Process of Concept Attainment," that "the larger the number of attributes exhibited by instances and the larger the number of discriminable values they exhibit, the greater the number of hypotheses to be entertained." (Bruner, 1973: 141) Yet, such a flood of possibilities must be approached with an orderly, systematic strategy. Herein, lay the virtue of the latter phases of the model. The inferencing, interpreting, and limiting phases of the proposed model incorporated the means, the strategy, for coping with the retrieved information. According to Bruner, such an orderly "encounter with instances" minimizes memory strain and allows new modes of attack to appear. (Bruner, 1973: 143) New modes of attack in compo-
osition were, perhaps, translated into more engaging vocabulary, images, and approaches to the organization (arrangement) and treatment of the subjects. (See Chapter V of this volume for an analysis of this outcome in student themes.)

Some activities within the unit encouraged the use of specific, concrete, active word choices in describing the observed stimuli. Inexperienced writers often feel that their more general, egocentric expressions adequately satisfy the interests and needs of their audience. (Shaughnessy, 1977; Hillocks, 1975; Duckworth, 1973; Kantor, 1979) Consequently, semantic concientization was built into the instruction to expand languaging facility with the realization, of course, that thought preceded word, according to Piagetian theorists, but that the expressions of thought were often impeded by limited awareness of semantic and syntactic options. (Hayakawa, 1978) Several theorists, teachers, and critics have noted the use of words to stimulate further thinking during composing. (Lawrence, 1972; Crowley, 1978; Bridges, 1978; Flower and Hayes, 1977)

The attention to observing and recording details in response to the stimuli was intended to produce more elaboration and/or more specificity in the discourse of students whose usual performances were both brief and vague. (Emig, 1971; Shaughnessy, 1977; Hillocks, 1975) Peter Elbow (1973) felt that such invention techniques facilitated both discovery and fluency. This expansion was to result from the stimulation of immediate experiential recall and data accessibility which were produced by the simple acts of brainstorming, followed by guided observation and inferencing, and subsequent recording. Then, the more complex cognitive activity resulted from time spent in reflection and discussion.
Following the stress placed on inferences drawn from the observed objects, slides, people, etc. that were to be the subjects of their papers, students were encouraged to conceptualize logical organizational frameworks more clearly than those who had had no such practice in inferencing. They were to learn how to distinguish between abstract and concrete relationships. Such discrimination between larger abstract, and smaller concrete thought units should have facilitated thesis statement and topic sentence formations, paragraph organization, and should have thereby prompted awareness of the subordinate specific, concrete nature of supportive details. (Shaughnessy, 1977; Bruner, 1966; Van Nostrand, 1979)

Further, the act of perceiving and stating generalized impressions based on observed data (including factual and sensory details drawn from the stimuli) were designed to facilitate students' ability to focus their descriptions. One common problem in weak descriptive writing is that it rambles from point to point and bores its reader because it fails to develop some central idea, to point toward a purpose. Such discourse lacks coherence, unity, focus, and addresses no audience, not even a general one. The inclusion of a clearly defined purpose (focus) was an essential goal of the instruction. Of all elements crucial to the development of a rhetorical context for writing, this one was paramount.

Finally, this sequence should have been especially suitable for students because the skill sequence provided, as a side benefit, an enriching aesthetic environment couched in an organized, cognitive structure. (Bruner, 1966; Rockefeller, 1977; Shaughnessy, 1977) "Attitude" emerged again and again in the literature as a critical determiner of success in writing among students. With underprepared stu-
dents, skepticism often results from lack of faith in the instructional strategies that failed to produce effective writing in the past. Too often, the strategies used with remedial students included grammar drills with little direct carry-over in discourse, which was followed by failing marks and increased anxiety and disillusionment. Bruner stated that "anxiety states" deter students' ability to use information correctly and may actually lead them toward "functional fixedness, remarkable intractability, or even incorrigibility to problem solving." (Bruner, 1966: 52)

Contrary to Richard Lloyd-Jones's claim that one's skill with one sort of discourse might be significantly different from one's skill with other types of discourse, an implicit assumption of this instructional package was that those skills of observation and inferencing that the prewriting analysis model fostered would transfer positively to other writing tasks. The ability to describe, to represent an impression or a judgment of a specific person, place, or thing, based on adequate analysis with an awareness of the need for factual and sensory detail as supportive evidence, seemed to be a facility that students could use in writing tasks that varied from expressive to transactional in purpose. (Steinmann, 1979; Britton, 1978; Kantor, 1979)

Charles Cooper, in his address to LSU composition teachers, incorporated description as one key component of his experimental course sequence which was designed to move students from early emphasis on "Personal Experience Narrative Writing" toward later emphasis on expository and persuasive writing. (1980) The skills (organization, categorization, classification, abstraction, intellectualization) that students were expected to perform called for the kinds of mental tasks
that Piaget recommended toward the end of the concrete operational period and the early formal operational period. (Schwebel and Raph, 1973; Richmond, 1970; Petrosky, 1977) It is true that some Piagetian theorists might contest the possibility of growth if these students were fixed at concrete operational levels; however, Vygotsky and Bruner maintain that functional readiness can be fostered, that conducive environments for growth must be built. (Vygotsky, 1962; Bruner, 1966)

The observation and inferencing exercises were integrated into the body of a unit designed to build word, sentence, paragraph, and theme writing competence. The activities, then, were built into a skill building context which progressed from simple to more complex utterances. The organization of the unit followed a long acknowledged and presumably psychologically sound developmental learning format. Such structure and an awareness of the structure (made available to students via specifically stated objectives) are key constituents of an effective learning sequence, according to Jerome Bruner, and they are compatible with the course progressions that Shaughnesy recommended in her recommended skills charts in Errors and Expectations, a seminal text dealing with problems of reluctant writers. (Shaughnessy, 1976)

The visual, written, and assigned materials were chosen for their potential appeal to college students since each learner "must get the perceptual field organized around (his) own person as center before (he) can impose other, less egocentric axes upon it...." (Bruner, 1966: 28) Anthony Petrosky, among others such as Kantor, Emig, Rohman and Wlecke, Hillocks, and Shaughnessy, suggested that intellectualization about egocentric themes occurred during adolescence, and it
is this intellectual response to the affective and aesthetic stimuli that the proposed method sought to reinforce. The implication is that adolescents need opportunities to sort out, classify, and serialize (concrete operations), as well as opportunities to abstract, reflect, and intellectualize (formal operations). (Petrosky, 1977; Schwebe and Raph, 1973; Lazarus, 1975) Lev Vygotsky also emphasized this need by noting that "the transition from the abstract to the concrete proves just as arduous for the youth as the earlier transition from the concrete to the abstract. (Vygotsky, 1962: 80) The desired outcome was that these young writers become better able to objectify their experiences after this experimental unit than they were able to do so before they completed the unit. Such objectification, coupled with the conviction, audience involvement, and intensity that Kantor (1979), Kroll (1978), and Baden (1975) encouraged, was designed to make their writing more readable, accessible and engaging to their audience(s).

The inclusion of art slides and readings for stimulation was designed, not only to provide a focus for retrieving past memories of experiences and feelings, but also to introduce Piagetian disequilibrium. According to Piaget, growth in intellectual development emerges as an adaptive process. P. G. Richmond summarized this process as follows:

Each step forward in intellectual development requires the application of what is already understood to that which is not understood, followed by an act of adjustment in which the known is modified by the unknown. . . . Each step forward can only occur through a loss of equilibrium, and therefore, intellectual development is a process of restoring a disturbed balance between assimilation and accommodation. (Richmond, 1970: 89)

Thus temporary disequilibrium was a desirable outcome of the artifacts, literature, and art slides used in the classroom. Then brainstorming and refocusing followed to restore balance and prompt new thinking
about the topics in the compositions. (Richmond, 1970; Bruner, 1960; Van Dalen, 1979)

Furthermore, the type of descriptive writing that students were expected to produce drew information from their own feelings, experiences, and their own observations of people, places, and things. While their papers served as vehicles for self-expression, they were urged to seek other functions for their writing, outside the usual outlets that self-expressive writing usually takes: recounting personal experiences in journal fashion, griping, protesting, or producing empty manifestos, and proposing simple utopian plans or religious credos. (D'Angelo, 1976: 131) They were asked to translate their observations into more transactional terms (as Britton describes the term in his essay, "The Composing Processes and the Functions of Writing"). Each writer was to assume the role of writer-participant seeking audience agreement with his judgment or assessment of the subject, offering as evidence the referential truth, validity, and logical effectiveness of his information. (Britton, 1978) In other words, the students were asked to make true, evaluative statements and to support their statements on the basis of their responsibility to and their interaction with their audience. (Steinmann, 1979; Vygotsky, 1962) Before writing, they were expected to consider the full rhetorical context: purpose, subject, voice, and audience. (Sanders and Littlefield, 1975; Petrosky, 1979; Kantor, 1979; D'Angelo, 1976)

The unit included some few traditional grammatical exercises designed to eliminate common sentence faults so that students in this experimental group would not be penalized in higher level courses for producing serious grammatical and syntactical faults, such as sentence
fragments, run-ons, and agreement errors. Students were held responsible for grammatical errors in compositions, but such errors were not the primary focus of this research.

Although creativity, as a primary goal, remained beyond the scope of this investigation, some small degree of originality could have been demonstrated in student compositions because the writers were constantly asked to relate their own experiences to those suggested by the visuals and the readings and because they were always expected to conjecture about the many possibilities implicit in the stimuli. The intended result that they produce new combinations of ideas and/or images constituted what Bruner called "combinatorial activity," which may have, in turn, produced occasional "effective surprise" in a level of writing which is usually characterized by very little surprise. (Bruner, 1962; Samples, 1977)

Essentially, then, each student was asked to "personalize knowledge ... not simply link it to the familiar. Rather, (he was to make) the familiar an instance of a more general case and thereby produce awareness of it." (Bruner, 1966: 161) Such awareness of the particular instance as a vital expression of a larger context became an integral part of the descriptive writing process which proceeds from both inductive and deductive positions. The advantages of this stimulation model lay explicitly in its capacity to foster descriptions that transcended the particular instance, to encourage larger perceptions of personal experience, and to nurture expansion of these perceptions in effective subordinate relationships.

Thus, the primary relationship operative in this model centered around two previously stated chained assumptions. The first assump-
tion was that reluctant writers could learn to write effectively if they learned logical thinking procedures based on careful observations and interpretations of concrete stimuli, abstract and symbolic stimuli, organizing structures and meanings inherent in utterances that depict and analyze people, places, and things. The second assumption was that given the sensitizing that occurred in the observational phases, students could practice transforming their observations of structures and images into meaningful discourse based on substantive generalizations which were thus supported by factual and sensory details.

Based on their recurring emphasis in the literature, then, an effective instructional model for underprepared writers needed to include the following components:

- carefully organized sequences preceded by clearly identified objectives;
- opportunities for fresh, novel, stimulating experiences;
- opportunities for training the senses;
- opportunities for logical deductive and inductive thinking, for inferencing, for examining relationships among abstract and specific ideas;
- procedures for activating, retaining, and controlling ideas;
- practice in prewriting;
- interesting, appropriate, and exemplary reading materials;
- use of a journal;
- sentence combining and modification exercises;
- opportunities to expand sensitivity to the meanings and power of words.

In a sense, there was nothing particularly startling or unique about any single exercise, strategy or theory included in the following instructional unit. Rather, the uniqueness or effectiveness of the model lay in
the combination and sequence of all these elements designed to produce an active humanities-oriented, cognitive stimulation model that could, through the interaction of these components, result in improving descriptive writing ability.

The Experimental Unit

A. Unit objectives (stated in terms of desired student behaviors) were

1. To retrieve data (via a flexible, simple prewriting tool for underprepared writers) that will help to start the writing process
2. To examine inferential relationships in data derived from observed stimuli
3. To focus descriptive passages around one controlling idea or impression
4. To expand descriptive detail
5. To organize descriptive passages
6. To express ideas in concrete, vivid word choices
7. To perceive sentence and paragraph structures as reflections of relationships between ideas
8. To develop an awareness of and responsibility to audience and the rhetorical context

B. Introductory activities (3 days)

1. Purposes were
   a. To understand the purposes of the course
   b. To preview unit one
   c. To examine course requirements
d. To introduce each other

e. To write first descriptive papers

f. To assess individual attitudes about the subject of English

2. Activities

a. Students examined an outline of course objectives and content.

b. Students listed course requirements (among them, the keeping of journals similar to those recommended by Gordon Rohman in his study of prewriting, by Michael Pauli in his article and by Joseph Comprone in his text, *From Experience to Expression A College Rhetoric* (1974: 417–420). Sample journal entries were read. (Journals were collected and read periodically during the course. Evaluations were based on students' ability to focus on one dominant impression of experiences they had, observations they made, or materials they read, and to provide specific and related detail.)

c. Students wrote pretest papers based on the following instructions:

   Describe a person (i.e. relative, friend, teacher, coach), a place (i.e. restaurant, park, room, entertainment spot), or a thing (i.e. pet, object, building, movie, book, organization) that you know well.

   Consider your own attitude toward your subject and your purpose for describing that subject. Are you going to objectively report and/or analyze your information, or are you going to subjectively react to and analyze, evaluate, or recommend your subject? (The teacher clarified the assignment further with oral examples of approaches.)
d. Each student interviewed a classmate; then the interviewer wrote a brief paragraph describing his classmate. The paragraphs were read to other members of the class.

e. Students completed an informal questionnaire about their backgrounds and attitudes toward English.

C. Activity unit number two: Basic words and kernel sentences (2 days)

1. Objectives were

   a. To identify the elements of kernel sentences (basic utterances which consist of a subject and a verb only)
   b. To develop kernel sentences
   c. To recognize vivid, concrete nouns used in sentences
   d. To write vivid nouns (as opposed to general, vague ones) as subjects
   e. To write active verbs
   f. To identify other basic verb forms
   g. To write ten kernel sentences stimulated by observing a single event

2. Activities

   a. Given a set of kernel sentences, students identified these elements: subject, verb, author's intent and word choice, agreement, and tense.
   b. Given a set of partially completed sentences, students supplied missing verbs.
   c. Given sets of sentences, students replaced general nouns and verbs with more vivid, specific ones.
d. Within a three-five minute time period, students wrote more specific or vivid words for general ones suggested by the teacher. (Activities for "C" and "D" were adapted from exercises found in Composition Workshop by Rothstein, Beyer, and Napolitano, 1974)

e. Students wrote ten vivid, active kernel sentences based on their observations of one of these events: a social event, a roommate dressing for a date, students between classes.

D. Activity unit number three: Sentence Expansions (5 days)

1. Purposes were:
   a. To reinforce the use of specific and concrete words
   b. To analyze the functions of other sentence elements
   c. To expand kernel sentences
   d. To recognize author's intent in using connotative and denotative meanings
   e. To identify key elements of effective description
   f. To practice a prewriting strategy

2. Activities
   a. Students analyzed a series of sentences noting sentence parts and asking themselves what each part tells about the subject and the action.
   b. Students examined sentence patterns described in the text, How to Read and Write in College (Dodge, 1973: 34-37). They composed original sentences following these patterns.
c. Students expanded kernel sentences that were given to them earlier and expanded those which they composed about a particular event. Then, they wrote their best sentences on the chalkboard for discussion.

d. Students examined a diagram of the general topic "Man" which was modified and made specific by use of sensory and statistical detail in Lloyd Flanigan's *Approaches to Exposition: What, How and Why. (1974)*

e. Students practiced deliberate adjective choices with an awareness of their connotative and denotative meanings by completing the following tasks:

1. replacing general adjectives, such as "good" or "awful" with more exact ones within sentences;
2. examining positive and negative attitudes associated with a given list of words and supplying words that suggested opposite feelings to the words given;
3. listing and comparing personal reactions to words such as storm, English, car, movie star, love, etc.

f. Given samples of two descriptive paragraphs, each student selected the better of the two paragraphs and drew up his own set of criteria to judge the effectiveness of descriptive papers. Class discussion followed.

g. Students compared their criteria with those used by the teacher. (See Analytical Rating Scale, Appendix "B")

h. Students wrote two paragraphs observing and describing one person or place: The first paragraph was presented from a positive viewpoint to encourage the reader to like
it or him, and the second one from a negative view to make a reader dislike it or him. At this point, students examined the procedure for prewriting that recurs in this unit. (See model, Table 2: page 24)

E. Activity unit number four: Complete sentences (1 day)

1. Purposes were:
   a. To write complete sentences
   b. To avoid sentence fragments

2. Activities
   a. Students defined and identified "sentence fragments," page 55 in *How to Read and Write in College*.
   b. Students checked the formerly assigned sentence expansions and paragraphs for the presence of sentence fragments.
   c. Students corrected fragments by writing complete sentences.

F. Activity unit number five: Observations and relations (8 days)

1. Purposes were
   a. To make careful, critical observations
   b. To draw inferences from observations
   c. To see relationships among words
   d. To identify relationships among words
   e. To identify steps in data gathering and inferencing
   f. To analyze the intent and organization of three descriptive paragraphs
   g. To write a paragraph following the recommended observing-recording-inferencing procedure.
2. Activities
   
a. Students examined the contents of a fictitious student's purse. Working in small groups, they recorded the contents and drew as many conclusions about the girl as possible. Then, they were told that the student killed herself, and they were asked to re-examine their data and tentative conclusions to determine any possible reasons for her suicide.

b. Following the exercise, students discussed the steps that they used to reach their conclusions. They discussed inductive and deductive approaches to thinking and writing.

c. Students identified and discussed various conceptual and analytical patterns used to describe people, places, or things from a set of words listed on a transparency. They observed the relationships expressed in each word group. (adapted from Patterns of Meaning, Farber and Levy, 1977).

d. Students examined five short, general sentences describing a behavior (i.e. A man's walking into a bar; A student slouched on his desk). They listed three things that a reader might see or hear for each one and formed specific sensory, detailed sentences for each one (modified version from Composition Workshop; Rothstein, Beyer, Napolitano, 1974).

e. Students played an original version of George Hillocks' "Shell Game #2", which was described in Observing and
Writing (1975). The object of the game was that each student was to observe and describe his shell (or in this case, his rock) so precisely that others could identify the rock by his written description. The emphasis here was placed on accurate, objective representation.

f. Students composed a set of sensory data about LSU based on a five to ten minute observation session out of the classroom in various locations; they were urged to record as many sensory impressions as they could -- all sights, sounds, smells, textures, and tastes. Then, they examined the data to draw as many inferences about life at LSU as they could.

g. Students read three student descriptions of places and analyzed their intent and effectiveness.

h. Students selected a very small area on campus or at home to describe. They wrote papers based on their observations and inferences. They wrote the papers after having decided to approach the subject with an objective or subjective intent and after determining whether to develop the paper inductively or deductively.

i. Students read, discussed, revised, and evaluated their themes within groups. Then they were submitted to the instructor for more formal evaluation.

G. Activity unit number six: Sentence Effectiveness; Sentence Efficiency

1. Purposes were

a. To expand kernel sentences (reinforcement)
b. To discriminate between effective and ineffective sentences

c. To combine sentences, ridding them of useless, inefficient words

d. To identify linking and embedding words that enhance writing effectiveness

e. To identify run-on sentences

f. To correct run-on sentences

2. Activities

a. Students examined one kernel sentence, "The girl ran." Then they examined a sentence containing the same subject and verb plus thirty additional words. They identified the information provided by expanding sentence elements. They noted that by asking questions, such as Why, How, When, Under What Circumstances, etc., they were actually engaging in a prewriting or discovery technique at the sentence level.

b. Students observed and analyzed more sentences by identifying kernel elements and their building parts which provided more answers to basic questions (which one, to what extent, how many, etc.) about the subject and the verb of a sentence. Such discovery of these building parts was designed to improve sentence structure and expand content.

c. Students expanded five kernel sentences and wrote them on the chalk board. Discussion of their effectiveness followed.
d. Students examined overly-expanded sentences on transparencies. They were revised to be more efficient and economical.

e. Students practiced compounding subjects, verbs, phrases, and independent clauses. Following that compounding, they combined sets of sentences.

f. Given a list of linking words, students combined sets of sentences, observing the resulting relationships which grew out of their chosen linkages. (based on such activities as those found in *Writing as a Thinking Process*, (Lawrence, 1972: 26-29)

g. Students identified and corrected a set of run-on sentences. They were cautioned to be aware of writing run-ons while combining sentences.

h. Students combined descriptive passages from *William Strong's Sentence Combining*. (1973) They examined these features after each combined passage:

1. the ways sentences were linked;
2. compactness in their revisions;
3. quality of the concrete detail used in the passages;
4. the order that students used in their combinations to produce their impacts in the descriptions.

H. Activity unit number seven: More observations; more inferences; more writing (2 days)

1. Purposes were

   a. To observe verbal and visual stimuli closely
b. To state possible logical inferences drawn from observations

c. To relate sets of data

2. Activities

a. Students examined verbal statements from which they drew inferences. For example, they read the following sentence set: "Mr. Baxter has ten children. He has a very small car." Following their reading, they wrote possible inferences which could have been made about the information provided. Such inferences might have included these:

-- Mr. Baxter is poor.
-- Mr. Baxter's car will be very crowded.
-- Mr. Baxter has another bigger car.
-- The Baxter family does not need to use a car very often.

b. Students examined factual statements and subsequent inferences drawn from those facts about famous leaders such as Lincoln, Churchill, and Queen Elizabeth I of England. They decided which inferences were logical and which seemed unwarranted (adapted from Lawrence's Writing as a Thinking Process).

c. Students examined a set of six slides which depicted the plight of the poor. They recorded data during observations of each slide. They wrote complete inferential sentences based on the data. Finally, they viewed all
slides again, examined all data, and formulated generalizations about artists' conceptions and depictions of poor people. The following art works were used:

- **The Old Guitarist** by Pablo Picasso
- **Death Seizing a Woman** by Kathe Kollwitz
- **It is Hard to Live** by Georges Roualt
- **The Crouching Woman** by Auguste Rodin
- **The Potato Eaters** by Vincent Van Gogh
- **The Frugal Repast** by Pablo Picasso

d. Specifically, students followed the following procedure, which was very similar to the prewriting model used at the outset of the course. They performed the following tasks:

1. Brainstormed about what they saw;
2. Recorded factual and sensory detail;
3. Examined data for relationships and dominant impressions;
4. Stated the artists' intent, purpose, and/or their effectiveness in communicating their purpose(s);
5. Re-examined the paintings with guided questions about the work's focus, eye travel, dominant colors, forms, positions, interesting or disturbing details;
6. Were asked if these parts supported their earlier assertions.

I. Activity unit number eight: Describing people (eight days)

1. Purposes were
a. To examine artistic depictions of people to determine each artist's attitude toward his subject
b. To support inferences by listing at least three details
c. To write effective descriptive sentences
d. To inductively establish criteria for good discourse about people
e. To analyze paragraph structure and development
f. To identify vivid, concrete word choices and "linking," words in passages
g. To write two descriptive passages about people

2. Activities

a. Students observed and analyzed their favorite five of the following paintings:
   Albert's Son by Andrew Wyeth
   Christina's World by Andrew Wyeth
   Self-Portrait by Vincent Van Gogh
   The Crouching Woman by Auguste Rodin
   The Thinker by Auguste Rodin
   Parents of the Artist by Otto Dix
   Glass of Absinthe by Edgar Degas
   The Cry by Eduoard Munch
   And God Created Man in His Own Image by Ivan Albright

   Because writing about people often proceeds deductively from dominant impression to detail (according to Robert Slack and Beekman W. Cottrell in Writing: A Preparation for College Composition, 1978), students viewed each slide for a limited time only; after each
viewing, they recorded their dominant impressions along with all details that they recalled. Four descriptive statements were written for each painting. The first included the title of the painting, the artist's name, and the dominant impression he created. (adapted from a procedure Madeline Bennett used in her experimental study using art stimuli to motivate student composition, 1973). The other three sentences presented details that elaborated the first statement. Points were awarded on the basis of the specific, concrete, vivid quality of the descriptions and the logical expression of the relationships.

b. Students read three paragraphs about people. One was about Marian Halcombe from "The Woman in White" by Wilkie Collins (as it appeared in Skwire, 1978). The other two were taken from student writing such as those found in Writing: A Preparation ... (1978), and those located in Writing: Unit Lessons in Composition (1971).

c. Students analyzed these selections according to Shaughnessy's "steps in analyzing a piece of writing," page 251, Errors and Expectations.

d. Students reviewed the structure of paragraphs by
   (1) Defining the term "paragraph";
   (2) Supplying topic sentences for sets of sentences;
   (3) Identifying unnecessary detail which appeared in given sentence sets;
   (4) Adding more details to incomplete paragraphs;
   (5) Arranging groups of sentences into logical order.
e. Each student wrote a theme describing someone he knew well and about whom he experienced very positive or negative feelings. Again, he was encouraged to use the discovery procedures outlined earlier in the course and to be aware of the connotations implicit in semantic choices.

f. Peer group and teacher readings of papers, along with discussions of evaluations, followed.

J. Activity unit number nine: Describing places (six days)

1. Purposes were
   a. To examine artistic depictions of places to determine each artist's attitude toward his subject
   b. To support inferences by listing at least three details
   c. To write effective descriptive passages
   d. To analyze the structure and development of descriptive paragraphs
   e. To state inductively derived criteria for interesting paragraphs about places
   f. To write one descriptive paper about a place

2. Activities
   a. Students adapted the same observation format used in activity "a" of skill set number eight to examine their favorite five of the following outdoor and indoor scenes.
      
      Early Sunday Morning by Edward Hopper
      The Melancholy and Mystery of a Street by Giorgio de Chirico
Students read and analyzed three sample paragraphs, written by students and professional writers, which described indoor and outdoor scenes. Student paragraphs were drawn from one former student theme that the teacher had collected and from Slack and Cottrell's *Writing: A Preparation* ...; the professional passage came from Harper Lee's description of Maycomb in *To Kill a Mockingbird*. The pattern for analysis was the same as it was in Activity Unit number eight, activity "C."

Students wrote one paragraph on an outdoor or indoor setting based on one of the following topics:

1. a special room at home
2. a street, building, or place in the community or at the University
3. a fast food or fine restaurant
(4) a disco, bar, or popular place in the city, community, or at the University.

Again, students were urged to follow the prewriting process recommended in this unit.

d. Peer group and teacher evaluations and discussions followed.

K. Activity unit number ten: Describing special things (four days)

1. Objectives: Except for the fact that this section emphasized the description of special things or moments, the objectives were the same as they were in skill sets eight and nine.

2. Activities: Again, the paintings and the readings were tailored specifically for the slightly different emphasis here, but the order and types of activities for this skill set were similar to those in skill sets eight and nine. Two paintings, Marc Chagall's Birthday and Franz Marc's Blue Horses, were used here, while readings included student passages from Fabian Gudas's Intention and Form (1964), Thomas Wolfe's description of October from Of Time and the River, and Jervis Anderson's "Birthday Party." Following all of the analyses, students wrote one paragraph describing one aspect of any club or organization, a pet, a special monument, or a special photographic angle of a special moment like a birthday, an initiation, a football game, a political fund raiser, or a season. (Special reference was made to Martin Steinmann's chapter on description, in Words in Action, 1979.)
L. Conclusion of unit: Posttest assignment was the same as the pretest assignment, page 58 of this chapter. However, students were asked to select a subject that they had not previously used during the unit.

In actual application, the most difficult obstacle to covering the material in the experimental unit was time. On numerous occasions, the researcher felt the need to linger over the material, but felt compelled by the schedule of the research project to move to other lessons before some students were ready. Although more time could have been spent on sentence manipulations, practice writing, and reading analysis, the instruction progressed according to the nine-week plan with little interruption.

Evaluations during the treatment period were based on composition scores obtained from the analytical rating scale. During that time, journals of the type recommended by Rohman and Wlecke (1964), Comprone (1974) and Burt (1980) were collected and evaluated twice for focus and expansion.

The control group experienced the instruction recommended by staff members of the Freshman English Department at LSU. (See Appendix "A") This instruction consisted primarily of basic grammatical exercises drawn from Richard Dodge's How to Read and Write in College and frequent writing practice. (1973) A sense of responsibility to the students in the control class prompted the teacher to include class discussions following each writing assignment in the schedule. (In retrospect, it was perhaps these sessions, coupled with actual practice, that accounted for some of the significant growth in writing development that these students demonstrated by the close of the treatment period.)
The manner of evaluation also departed from usual departmental policy. The analytical rating scale that was used in measuring the writing of the experimental group was also used to evaluate the writing of the control group in order to hold as many variables constant as possible. Thus, the measurement mode and the actual instruction, particularly the time devoted to group discussions of themes and their problems, deviated somewhat from the current traditional, grammar-centered syllabus. (Presented in Appendix "A")

Summary of Procedure

The application of both treatments followed these basic procedures. The sample groups were pretested before the nine-week treatments were applied. In their pretest, the students addressed the following task:

Describe a person (i.e. relative, friend, teacher, coach), a place (i.e. restaurant, park, room, entertainment spot), or a thing (i.e. pet, object, building, movie, book, organization) that you know well.

Consider your own attitude toward your subject and your purpose for describing that subject. Are you going to objectively analyze and report your information or are you going to subjectively react to and analyze, evaluate, or recommend your subject? (The teacher clarified the assignment further with examples of possible approaches.)

This necessarily broad topic was used to assess student abilities to retrieve, to focus and to expand the information that they used in the composition. More specifically, the compositions were scored and evaluated on the basis of the pilot-tested and refined analytical rating scale (which appears in the Appendix of this investigation). Because this assignment was supposed to represent student performance in a controlled in-class test (pressured) situation, students were allowed fifty minutes to write, and they were told that the scores would be counted as part of their grade determination in the course.
Following the pretest administration, both groups received nine weeks of instruction (detailed in Chapter III of this volume). During that nine-week period, students in the experimental class wrote sentences, paragraphs, and short compositions and completed some few grammar exercises in response to various humanities and cognitive-oriented stimuli, all of which were scored and counted as part of the final grades in the course. The control group students completed grammatical exercises and themes according to the 0006 Syllabus. (see Appendix A) (It should be noted here that at this level, students earned grades of "P" for passed performance or "NC" for "no credit" given in the course, not "A, B, C, D, and F" grades which are usually used in higher level composition courses.) After the nine-week instructional period ended, students were tested again, using the same assignment and measurement instruments as those used for the pretest.
The purpose of this investigation was to test the efficacy of a specially designed cognitive stimulation unit, incorporating visual and verbal stimuli, observation practice, and inferencing skills on under-prepared college students' ability to write descriptive compositions. Three basic questions guided the design, implementation and analysis of the current investigation:

1. Would students who experienced the nine week experimental treatment significantly improve their descriptive writing skills?

2. Would students in the control group improve their descriptive writing skills following nine weeks of instruction recommended in the 0006 course syllabus at Louisiana State University?

3. Would the experimental treatment produce results which were superior to those produced in the control group?

However, a fourth question (which may have led to the most interesting discovery of all) emerged after analysis had actually begun. When the large standard deviation resulted in the experimental group, the investigator hypothesized that the more capable remedial students in the experimental group seemed to have benefited most from the treatment, but the impact of their scores was confounded by weak responses among less capable students. The outcome of this speculation led to the following question: Did students whose scores were above the class median of 12 on the verbal aptitude section of the ACT (American
College Testing Program, used at LSU for student placement purposes) improve their writing skills significantly more than those students whose scores were below the ACT median of twelve? Stated more formally, was there an interaction of ACT scores and the experimental treatment?

Development of the Analytical Rating Scale

In order to assess student growth in rhetorical development, an instrument was constructed which depicted eight criteria that would measure writing skills. (See Appendix "B") The analytical rating scale that the investigator used to measure student performance was identical to the scale that the five readers used to score those students' papers at a later date except for a grammatical, mechanical, and spelling deduction section that the instructor used to increase student awareness of their problems in those areas. (Buxton, 1958) This deduction section was deleted from the score sheets that the readers used because grammar, mechanics, and spelling were not primary concerns of this research. The outcomes tested were rhetorical ones.

This instrument was refined and simplified in accordance with the data gained from the pilot-testing. (See Appendix "D" for the pilot-tested instrument) The analytical rating scale was tested with a class set of fourteen descriptive papers from a beginning freshman composition course. Five English teachers rated the papers, employing the instrument and using a controlled-reading procedure which held both students and readers anonymous by letting numbers "1-14" represent the student papers and numbers "1-5" represent the readers. Three questions guided the testing process. Did the model actually measure students' ability to write descriptive papers? (Was it valid?) Did the scale elicit consistent responses from the five raters (or was it reliable)?
And finally, was the scale practical and flexible enough for English teachers to use in an instructional and research setting?

Although each criterion, along with its assigned point value, was researched prior to its inclusion on the instrument (based on the review of related literature, Chapter II), tests of validity and reliability included a modified item analysis to determine the discrimination power and the difficulty levels of the scale for the entire set of fourteen papers. To further the reliability of the scale, two additional tests were employed: (1) A rank analysis using the Kendall Coefficient of Concordance tested with a variance ratio, and (2) correlation coefficients derived from each rater's scores.

The item analysis of the three highest and the three lowest papers in the set suggested that the raters were fairly consistent in scoring extreme papers. Of the fourteen compositions, numbers 3, 13, and 7 accumulated the highest point totals, 243, 238, and 181 respectively. The low scores for papers 10, 5, and 8 ranged from 105 points down to 48 points. Logically, then, each rater should have been able to differentiate between effective and ineffective writing if the criteria on the scale discriminated properly. An examination of each reader's scores on all ten items in the original scale yielded the following results:
Table 3: Discrimination Power of Items on High and Low Themes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Positive Discrimination</th>
<th>No Discrimination</th>
<th>Negative Discrimination</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>#1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#8</td>
<td>5</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#9</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#10</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(See Appendix "E" for a complete breakdown of the information)

From this data, the inference that the criteria are valid in that they measure in most cases writing characteristics which separate effective writers from ineffective ones seemed justified. The only three times that no discrimination or negative discrimination occurred in the ratings of each criterion resulted from the marks of one grader (number five) whose overall consistency deviated from that of the other four raters, whose items all discriminated positively. This analysis suggested internal consistency (reliability), as well as validity, in the raters' ability to differentiate between most effective and least effective writing.

The instrument indicated a difficulty level commensurate with the ability level of the students. The median score of 153.6 points (total points awarded to a student by all five graders) paralleled the mean score of 148.93. The proximity of the mean to median suggested a normal spread of scores, even for this small group; the difficulty level of this instrument did, in fact, spread half the scores above the median and the mean, and half, below. (Note Appendix "F" for the spread of all the total scores and the means of the scores.)
Reliability was further indicated by data yielded in the Kendall Coefficient of Concordance, which tested the raters' consistency in ranking the compositions. The "N" value derived from the ranks of the scores was computed at .6132 and converted into an "F" ratio of 4.475 which was significant beyond the .01 level of confidence. Essentially then, the analytical rating scale used to score the fourteen descriptive compositions was capable of producing consistent rankings if it were applied appropriately. Even if raters did not agree on the number of points to award each paper, they often agreed on the rank of the paper in the set. In other words, even though reader #2 gave a total of 526 points to her fourteen compositions and reader #5 gave only 334 points to her set of papers, both raters frequently agreed in their placement of the papers on an ordinal scale from low to high. (Kendall's Coefficient of Concordance was computed from the ranked data and the steps detailed in Appendix "G".)

The high degree of agreement inferred from the significant "F" in the Kendall Coefficient drew further reinforcement when each rater's ranked scores were correlated with both the total ranked scores on each paper and a ranking based on the mean scores of each paper. The following table summarizes the correlation coefficient for each reader.

Table 4: Correlation Coefficients for Ranked Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Readers</th>
<th>#1</th>
<th>#2</th>
<th>#3</th>
<th>#4</th>
<th>#5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>r, rank of erj</td>
<td>.7585**</td>
<td>.7365**</td>
<td>.6593*</td>
<td>.6020*</td>
<td>.7122**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>r, rank of mx</td>
<td>.9209**</td>
<td>.6000*</td>
<td>.7231**</td>
<td>.5648*</td>
<td>.5121</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

** = significant at .01 level  
*  = significant at .05 level
All scores but one reflected a significant "r" at either the .01 or the .05 level.

Finally, the most promising figure that emerged in the correlations was an overall correlation coefficient of .8931, significant at the .01 level, derived from the relationship between the ranks of the sums of each rank and ranks based on mean scores. This coefficient, combined with the previous coefficients for each reader, along with the significant Kendall coefficient, the positive discrimination, and the appropriate difficulty level of the analytical rating scale produced enough evidence about its validity and reliability to justify its use in this investigation.

Having found the scoresheet theoretically and statistically suitable for research purposes, this investigator sought evidence that the tool was practical and flexible (usable). The five readers, whose teaching experience ranged from 3½ years to 22 years at various levels from junior high school to college levels, answered an informal questionnaire which elicited their responses to questions about the scale's usefulness and validity. Also, they were asked to suggest improvements that they deemed necessary. Each question was worded so that a "yes" answer merited three points, a "perhaps" answer merited two points, and a "no" answer earned one point. The five readers were almost unanimous in the following observations about the scale: unanimity was assumed if the total score of the item ranged between 13 and 15 points.

1. The scale would facilitate more objective measurement than assigning letter grades (A, B, C, D, F).

2. Students would benefit from such a scale.

3. The scale would help to pinpoint problem areas in writing.
4. Students could clearly discern the goals of the composition assignment if they were given copies of the scale.

5. Students could possibly determine their performance growth, or lack of it, by examining their marks on the scale.

6. The scoresheet is a practical one.

7. It requires less time than a running marginal commentary.

8. The items are stated clearly.

9. The scale could be adapted or modified to fit their specific needs as teachers of composition.

Reader comments were most helpful in revising the instrument for use in the classroom and for use in this research. While all of the readers agreed that the criteria were clear, they suggested that the criterion "employs effective imagery" lay beyond the capacities of beginning college freshmen. So the applied scale used with 0006 students excluded that specific criterion and adopted the more inclusive concept of "originality." Two readers felt that three criteria, "makes logical connections," "divides concept into logical sub-topics," and "moves fluidly from idea to idea" were not only overlapping, but also difficult transition and logic concepts that should be contained in stylistic criteria at higher composition levels than the one being tested. Thus, the new scale deleted those in favor of more fundamental skills, such as "focus," "organization," and "supportive details," which, by their functions demanded some logical structure within the composition. Because "explores possibilities" seemed a bit vague to one rater, it was changed to the more commonly used term "thorough development." The final change in criteria embodied a shift from emphasis on sentence variety to emphasis on sentence clarity, a more basic concern of 0006 students. (See Appendix "B" for the refined and applied scale.)
The five readers also responded subjectively to the scale. The most experienced reader (with 22 years of teaching experience at high school and college levels and a Ph.D. in English) said that she found the scale "surprisingly easy to use." The least experienced reader (with 3½ years of high school and college teaching experience with a Master's degree in English) said that the tool's chief virtue lay with the fact that it prevented a student's message from being "obliterated by an inordinate number" of errors. The reader with the highest reliability coefficients (and whose teaching experience ranged from junior high to college levels and whose educational background included doctoral study in English from LSU) commented, "I can attest to the fact that performance is improved when the student sees exactly how he has lost—or gained--'X' number of points."

Measurement

After having completed the theoretical basis for the type of instrument used, the pilot-testing of the scale with five readers, the statistical and subjective analysis of the instrument, and the refinement of the scale, the investigator assumed that the applied analytical rating scale would provide a valid and reliable measure of students' skill in writing descriptive composition.

Five experienced college instructors were selected to apply the refined and simplified scale to the pre and posttests of the control and experimental groups tested in this research. Homogeneity in experiential backgrounds was sought. (Travers, 1973) Thus, all five readers had Master's Degrees in English; four of the five were working toward their Ph.D.'s; all had taught or were currently teaching freshman English at LSU; four of the five had taught developmental levels of
English; all of them had taught between seven and eleven years. Correlation coefficients, based on the scores that they produced for each set, were all above .50 -- significant at the .05 level of confidence, and all but one were significant at the .01 level.

Table 5: Correlation Coefficients for Pretest and Posttest Ratings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Readers</th>
<th>#1</th>
<th>#2</th>
<th>#3</th>
<th>#4</th>
<th>#5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pretest Control Group</td>
<td>.529*</td>
<td>.840**</td>
<td>.813**</td>
<td>.580**</td>
<td>.693**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Posttest Control Group</td>
<td>.791**</td>
<td>.803**</td>
<td>.769**</td>
<td>.716**</td>
<td>.727**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pretest Experimental Group</td>
<td>.730**</td>
<td>.876**</td>
<td>.717**</td>
<td>.715**</td>
<td>.828**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Posttest Experimental Group</td>
<td>.758**</td>
<td>.820**</td>
<td>.694**</td>
<td>.665**</td>
<td>.792**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

** = significant at .01 level  
*  = significant at .05 level

This data suggested that scores generated by rater's marks on the analytical rating scale were consistent and reliable indicators of students' descriptive writing performance on pretest and posttest assignments.

The procedure for scoring the papers was identical to that used during the instrument pilot-testing. The controlled reading method was used to maintain anonymity of the groups, students, readers, and scores generated by other raters. The groups were kept anonymous by designating letters "A, B, C, and D" to represent sets of papers.

Control group pretest = Set A  
Experimental pretest = Set B  
Control group posttest = Set C  
Experimental posttest = Set D

Students were assigned numbers, 1-22 in the control group and 1-27 in the experimental group. The five readers were also assigned numbers 1-5. During three afternoons from 2 p.m. until 5 p.m., each scorer was given only one set of compositions with one set of scoresheets at a
time; when he finished marking that set, he returned it to the investigator and picked up another set, which he marked. This procedure attempted to control a time factor which could have rendered inconsistent scores, and it prevented marks made by any one of the readers from influencing the scores of another reader.

Analysis

With a theoretically and statistically sound instrument, a homogeneous group of readers, and a controlled reading method, the investigator assumed that the effectiveness of the experimental instruction and the control group instruction on two developmental writing classes could be assessed.

The first two questions of whether students in the experimental and control groups significantly improved their descriptive writing skills following nine weeks of instruction was answered with a resounding "yes." Both groups did improve significantly, according to "t" tests of the pre and posttest scores. The following table summarizes outcomes of these scores.

Table 6: Summary of Data Yielded in "t" Tests

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Control (n=21)</th>
<th>Experimental (n=24)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pretest</td>
<td>Posttest</td>
<td>Pretest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( \bar{x} = 106.81)</td>
<td>( \bar{x} = 139.19)</td>
<td>( \bar{x} = 105.63)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23.65</td>
<td>23.07</td>
<td>25.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;t&quot; = 5.40**</td>
<td>&quot;t&quot; = 5.66**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

** "t," significant at the .01 level

Perusal of the mean scores, 106.81 for the control group and 105.63 for the experimental group, derived for pretests of both groups,
suggested their equivalence before treatment (although analysis of covariance was computed with pretests as covariable to account for potential differences of the groups). Posttest means of both groups (139.19 of the control group and 144.38 of the experimental group) reflected a slightly greater mean gain among subjects of the experimental treatment. Control group students gained an average of 32.38 points from pretest to posttest, and the experimental group gained an average of 38.75 points from the pretest to the posttest period.

Standard deviations for the control group changed very little. The pretest standard deviation of 23.65 approximated that of 23.07 on the posttest. However, the deviations from experimental group pretests and posttests did change. The beginning deviation of 25.16 shifted to 36.86 by the close of the treatment period. Whereas scores frequently seemed to cluster in the control group posttests with trimodal clusterings at 129, 155, and 156, with a range of 85 points from lowest to highest scores, the scores of experimental posttests spread over a range of 158 points with the mode occurring at 126.

As was the case in the pilot-tested group, a comparison of median scores to means indicated an appropriate difficulty level of the instrument for the 0006 group to which it was applied. The control group pretest median of 105 corresponded to the control group pretest mean of 106.81. The posttest median was 145 compared to the group's mean of 139.19. The experimental group pretest median of 100.5 compared favorably with the group mean of 105.63. And finally, the experimental group posttest median of 141.5 approximated the posttest mean of 144.38. Although the groups were small, scores were not skewed to the right or left. Approximately half of the students scored above the mean, and half, below the mean in both groups.
Although descriptive data suggested slightly greater improvement in the scores of the experimental group, an analysis of covariance comparing posttest scores and using pretest scores as the covariable, revealed no significant difference in the effects of the two treatments. The following table summarizes the results of this analysis.

Table 7: Analysis of Covariance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>SSyx</th>
<th>MSyx</th>
<th>F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between groups</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>385.55</td>
<td>385.55</td>
<td>.486</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within groups</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>33,314.70</td>
<td>793.21</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>33,700.25</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

("F", not significant)

Although the analysis of covariance suggested no significant difference in the group scores (perhaps because of the small number of subjects in the group), previous descriptive data yielded in "t" tests of pre and posttest scores disclosed a considerable difference in standard deviations on the posttests (control group = 23.07; experimental group = 36.86). Then, close examination of scores hinted that the high scores of the experimental group were much higher than those of the control group. For example, the three highest posttest scores in the experimental group were 219, 198, and 197; the three highest posttest scores in the control group were 185, 165, and 163. Furthermore, the experimental group scores ranged from a low score of 62 to a high score of 219 with a total range of 158 points, while the control group's scores ranged from a low of 101 to a high of 185 with a total range of 85. These facts, coupled with the investigator's previously unstated hypothesis that marginally-underprepared students would
respond more readily to the experimental treatment than severely underprepared students, led to the last and by far most interesting exploratory research to emerge from this investigation.

The pressing questions were these: "Did experimental group students who scored above the class median of twelve (12) on the verbal aptitude section of the ACT improve their writing skills significantly more than did those students who scored below the ACT median of twelve (12)? What was the interaction effect of ACT levels on the experimental treatment? Did the experimental high group gain more than the control high group? Did the experimental low group gain less than the low control group?

To determine interaction, a treatment by level analysis of gain scores was conducted. The following table of posttest mean scores summarizes group level responses to the control and experimental treatments.

Table 8: Treatment by Level Analysis of Gain Scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Control</th>
<th>Experimental</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High ACT</td>
<td>$\bar{x} = 33.8$</td>
<td>$\bar{x} = 51.58$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(13-17)</td>
<td>$n = 10$</td>
<td>$n = 12$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low ACT</td>
<td>$\bar{x} = 35.9$</td>
<td>$\bar{x} = 23.56$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(10-12)</td>
<td>$n = 10$</td>
<td>$n = 9$</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The means of the high and low levels in the control group approximated each other, suggesting uniform responses to their instruction. However, the wide disparity between the means of the high and low levels in the experimental group indicated possible differential reactions to their treatment. The high ACT group in the experimental section did pro-
duce higher scores than the high ACT group in the controlled setting. On the other hand, the low ACT group who received experimental instruction responded less positively to their treatment than did the low ACT group who received the traditional, grammar-centered instruction.

An analysis of variance was conducted to detect specific interaction between the English ACT scores and the experimental treatment.

Table 9: Analysis of Variance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>SS</th>
<th>MS</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>P</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Treatments</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>228.36</td>
<td>228.36</td>
<td>.285</td>
<td>.596</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Levels</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1,843.60</td>
<td>1,843.60</td>
<td>2.305</td>
<td>.137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TxL</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2,218.45</td>
<td>2,218.45</td>
<td>2.773</td>
<td>.104**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>22,596.64</td>
<td>799.91</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>40</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* "P", significant at the .10 level

Note: The degrees of freedom were determined on the basis of a smaller number because ACT scores were not known for some students.

The "P" of .104 approached significance for the very small groups being tested and suggested that some interaction did occur between the treatment and the English ACT levels of the students in the experimental group.

Summary

Ultimately, four explicit questions guided the design, implementation, and analysis of this investigation. But data relevant to these key questions could not be generated until a valid, reliable, and usable instrument was constructed which would measure descriptive writing skills of reluctant writers. After pilot-testing and refinement, such an instrument (the analytical rating scale) was produced. After an experi-
ment, the scale was used to generate data which indicated
the following answers to the four key questions.

1. Underprepared college students who experienced the
nine week experimental treatment (a humanities-oriented
cognitive stimulation unit incorporating visual and
verbal stimuli, observation practice, inferencing skills,
and prewriting strategy) did significantly improve their
descriptive writing skills.

2. Underprepared college students in the control group
also significantly improved their descriptive writing
skills after nine weeks of instruction which followed the
grammar-centered, composition practice methods recom-
mended in the 0006 course outline at LSU.

3. Although mean scores pointed to slightly greater improve-
ment in descriptive writing skills among students in the
experimental group, these gains were not statistically
significant at the .05 level.

4. A treatment by level analysis of the gain scores sug-
gested a differential effect of the experimental treatment
on reluctant writers whose ACT verbal aptitude scores
were above and below the group median of twelve.

a. Minimum gains were made by the lower ACT group
(scores of 12 and below) in the experimental
section. These students appeared to respond less
positively to their treatment than the comparable
group in the controlled setting.
b. However, maximum gains were made by the higher ACT group (scores of 13 or more) in the experimental class. These students' scores indicated more writing growth under the experimental treatment than that of their counterparts in the control group.
CHAPTER V

SUBJECTIVE EXAMINATION OF SELECTED COMPOSITIONS

Having received the setback of not going into 1001, I figured I would go along for the ride, but what I didn't figure on was learning how to write a much better paper.

-- Evaluation of experimental class by the writer who wrote the highest-scoring composition.

Taking a single sentence with a subject and a verb and expanding it to be more vivid, descriptive and focused double(d) my confidence of passing 1001 next time around.

-- Evaluation of experimental class by the writer who wrote the third-ranking composition.

The following comparisons of the first, second, and third-ranking posttest themes were explorations designed to discover specific writing differences in the top students from both the control and the experimental groups. Thus far, the group statistics suggested that both the experimental and control groups improved their writing skills significantly during the treatment period, but there was no statistical evidence that the experimental group posttests were significantly better than the control group posttests. Then, a more specific treatment by level analysis of gain scores indicated that the top half of the experimental group produced higher scores than the comparable students in the control group. That result prompted this more in-depth inquiry
to ascertain key differences in the compositions of these two sub-sets of the sample. To determine specific differences, the investigator first examined posttest scores on each criterion for each of the six themes and then conducted a subjective analysis of each composition based on and consistent with the criteria and their definitions which guided the analysis at the group level. (See Appendices "B" and "C" for these criteria and their definitions.)

Examination of the three top scoring posttests from both the control and experimental groups indicated that the top students in the experimental section consistently achieved better results in every area tested by the analytical rating scale: general effectiveness of the composition, focus, thorough development/expansion of ideas, inclusion of supportive details, organization, sentence structure, specific and vivid word choice, and originality.

The following table presents the individual scores for the top three experimental and control group themes in each criterion.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Composition</th>
<th>Experimental Group</th>
<th>Control Group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1st place</td>
<td>2nd place</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effectiveness</td>
<td></td>
<td>66</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus</td>
<td></td>
<td>22</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expansion</td>
<td></td>
<td>23</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supportive details</td>
<td></td>
<td>23</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization</td>
<td></td>
<td>22</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sentence structure</td>
<td></td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Word choice</td>
<td></td>
<td>21</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Originality</td>
<td></td>
<td>22</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This summary further reinforced the implication produced by the level analysis in Chapter IV that the marginally-underprepared writers in the experimental 0006 class responded very positively to the experimental treatment, while their counterparts in the control group failed to respond as positively to their treatment.

Yet, two major questions remained unanswered: What key differences existed in the two sets of themes? And were those different writing characteristics attributable to differences in the two treatments? A careful comparison of each first, second, and third-place descriptive theme from both groups revealed a few key differences in student abilities to write descriptive compositions. First, the students from the experimental group seemed to compress more information into their papers while holding that information to the limits of a controlling purpose, thesis, or dominant impression. The control group themes, however, lacked this inclusiveness and unity. Their compositions failed to include as many specific details, and when details were given, they often failed to point toward a dominant impression or purpose.

Another prominent difference between the two sets of papers centered around that nebulous and subjective concept of "writing style." "Style" was interpreted here to represent written elements which reflected unique, interesting, or engaging approaches to the content of a piece of discourse. Tangible evidence of this "approach" was sought in students' uses of unusual or interesting images and details, in their uses of specific, vivid, and appropriate vocabulary, and in the voice and order of content presentation, with specific emphasis on the students' attempts to enhance reader interest in and thus the effectiveness of their subject.
What follows, then, is an analysis of the larger rhetorical differences that arose in the three best compositions from the control group and the three best ones from the experimental group. Student themes are reprinted exactly as they were written. Then the comparisons of those themes follow. This pattern of presentation is repeated for the first, second, and the third-ranking papers.

Don and John: First-Place Themes

Don's and John's posttest themes follow. Their explicit writing assignment was to describe a person, place, or "thing" that they knew well. Implicit in this task was the test of their abilities to establish a rhetorical context, that is, a purpose, thesis, or focus (be it analytical or judgmental) for the writing assignment with an awareness of the writer's responsibility to his audience to support his judgments and observations about the subject, thereby making the content credible, and a cognizance of his obligation to present his subject in an interesting, engaging fashion in order to sustain audience involvement with his subject. The specific criteria used to assess the effectiveness of each composition were included on the analytical rating scale, and they were used by the five readers to score the compositions: they were used again to support the key judgments that the experimental papers were more inclusive and more clearly focused, that the experimental students presented their subjects with vivid, unique (and thus more interesting) images and details and vocabulary, and that the experimental students organized their presentations in ways that were not only clearer, but they were also more effective.
Don's Theme: Control Group

The chute gate jerked open, and the horse exploded from the chute. A couple of cowboys gazed in amazement, as the bucking horse seemed to dismantle his rider. The rider knew that he must ride this so called "rank" horse to win the money. After eight seconds, and many jerks, turns, and twists later, the cowboy had ridden this bronc that had never been rode. As he was helped from the angry animal, and helped safely to the ground, the crowd yelled with joy. The announcer came on the loudspeaker and said, "With that ride ladies and gentlemen, this cowboy has won the bareback riding with a score of eighty-four points." The crowd gave the cowboy a standing ovation-which made him feel very good.

Many people saw this outstanding performance and wish that they could rodeo and be like that young cowboy. They saw the recognition the cowboy was getting but do not see the other hard times, such as the many broken bones and letdowns this cowboy has gone through to get where he is now. Well, as you might know, this way of living is no bed of roses. It has its ups and downs just like other occupations. There is the constant fear of getting seriously hurt or maybe even killed. The fear of not knowing where or when your next paycheck will come in is another thing. Other things people may not know is the many thousands of miles a rodeo cowboy will travel in a single year, going days or even weeks without having a decent meal. As most people work on the average of five days a week, the rodeo cowboy works around seven days a week depending on the number of rodeos he attends.

Like other sports, rodeo is also a very, very physical sport, but it is, in my opinion, the most physical and dangerous sport today. As a young athlete competes in this sport, as well as others, his body is torn, wrecked, bruised, and battered. Many cowboys who are in good condition and stay in good physical condition may last on the average of about ten years in the competition of rodeo.

If a young athlete learns the skills of rodeo well, he may seek out and acquire the fame and glory which he has struggled to achieve. But, if a person is an average or below average athlete, he may sometimes see the glory, but most of the time see the pain of defeat and give up the challenge of being able to ride that one bull or horse, or rope or bulldog the steer that will fulfill his dreams. These dreams of cowboys will always be there, but the cowboy may not have the chance to fulfill one or all of these dreams.

John's Theme: Experimental Group

The big, burly catcher rose from his seat in the dugout; his head barely missing the top as he walked up the steps to the playing field. As he adjusted his shin guards and chest protector, the wear and tear of all those sharp foul tips were evident on his scarred up hands. He walked slowly and intentionally towards home plate. As he bent down into his squat position, the tired and creacked bones made their pres-
ence known as he slowly went down. The years of wear and tear and up and down motions made his aged knees rock a little as he waited for the pitcher to throw. The fact that Johnny Bench was still able to go out and catch after twelve seasons and thousands of games was remarkable. Only one man in baseball had ever gone twelve seasons catching, and here was Johnny in his thirteenth. He is truly the greatest catcher in baseball.

The inning began, and Johnny slowly walked to the pitcher's mound to get their signal's straight. The first pitch was a hard fastball in the dirt. Johnny gracefully slid over and blocked the ball. His body again taking another beating behind the plate. The first batter walked and was on at first. This brought Johnny to the ball of his toes as he waited in anticipation of the steal of second base. The first pitch was a hard slider for a strike. On the next pitch, the runner broke for second, and Bench came up out of his stance as quick as a young rookie and delivered a quick, sharp throw to second that beat the guy sliding by a step. The batter sent the next pitch to right-center for a double. A runner was now in scoring position. The next batter lined a hot shot to right field. The runner rounded third and broke for home as the throw came to the plate. Johnny took the throw and applied his patented swinging tag on the runner to make the out and not be in a collision.

The inning was over, and Bench trotted back to the dugout as if he had just come up from the farm system. As he sat down, he removed his chest protector and waited to see if he would get a turn at bat. The first man got out, but the next two singled and walked, respectfully. The clean-up hitter was next, and Johnny moved into the on-deck-circle. The clean-up hitter was hit by a pitch, and Johnny came strolling to the plate. As his large frame stood straight up and the bat held high, the pitcher delivered a fast ball, and Johnny uncorked a mean swing that was just a little bit slow and missed. The little bit of quickness he lost in his years as a catcher turned a potential homerun ball into nothing more than a strike. The pitcher came with an off-speed, breaking pitch which hung up over the plate and Johnny sent the ball sailing over the left field fence.

The game ended and Johnny slowly began to pick up his gear as he headed back to the dugout. As he bent over, the soreness in his back returned, so it was into the whirlpool bath he went. As he stepped into the whirlpool, the scar from his operation on his lung cancer appeared covering most of his chest. The scar from his operation on his elbow revealed yet another problem that Johnny had incurred in his career. After being Rookie of the Year and Most Valuable Player in '70 and '72, Johnny suffered with lung cancer that removed one of his lungs. Playing with just one lung was hard enough, but then Johnny was involved in a collision at home plate that caused him to have surgery on this throwing arm. Bench was said to have been finished, but he never quit. So, in the 1976 World Series, in the battle of the catchers, (Johnny Bench vs. Thurman Hinson), Johnny hit three homeruns and batted an amazing 533 as he went on to be the Most Valuable Player.
After the whirlpool, Johnny dressed and sat solemn by his locker. The world's greatest catcher was taking a well-deserved rest. Bench is a remarkable athlete and has captured the hearts of thousands of fans. As he grows older, he may not hit as many homeruns, or throw as many people out, but in the long run his experience will pay off. The records that he has set are remarkable, and the innovations that he has brought to catchers may give them an expanded life span in the major leagues. When Johnny is gone, they will remember his patented one hand catch, his graceful throws to second, his powerful homeruns, but, most of all, they will remember him as the greatest catcher in baseball. They will remember him as a person who had the ability to overcome all the hardships of being a catcher and a person who could endure playing with pain.

Analysis of Both First-Place Themes

As both posttest scores indicated (185 for Don and 219 for John) both students wrote fairly effective descriptive compositions. Each writer seemed to have some purpose, and to a large extent, each achieved his purpose. Don wanted to inform the reader and to enlist reader agreement that being a rodeo cowboy is not as glamorous as it appears to be. John's purpose was to convince his audience that Johnny Bench was the "greatest" catcher in baseball history. Both papers were clearly focused; every detail contributed to the controlling idea. Yet, John's posttest scores surpassed Don's in every category on the analytical rating scale. One possible reason for John's higher marks was that he compressed so much more detail into his depiction of Johnny Bench. He presented twenty-five (25) specific observations and facts about his subject within the context of 552.5 words. John invented ways to add more information. For example, he called attention to Johnny's long-term career in baseball by noting the catcher's limp, his rocking knees as he stooped to catcher's position, his slower swing at bat, the twelve seasons and thousands of games he played, and finally, the records and innovations that Bench had set in baseball. John supported his assertions with very specific details; he recognized
his responsibility to his audience to reinforce his generalizations with concrete information. He wrote that Bench would be remembered for his records and his innovations. He mentioned some of them in the context of his paper: Most Valuable Player and Rookie of the Year in 1970 and 1972; Most Valuable Player in 1976 following three homeruns, a 533 batting record in spite of surgery for lung cancer and for elbow injury. John did not simply mention that Bench brought innovations to baseball; he named them — a patented one-hand catch, graceful throws to second, and powerful homeruns.

Don's composition exhibited seventeen (17) rather general observations within a short 284 word composition about the hard life of rodeo cowboys. Don's primary assertion that "this way of living is no bed of roses" (disregarding the trite comparison at this point) was supported by these rather general reasons: fear of being hurt or killed, fear of living without pay, inconvenience of travelling so much, infrequent meals, and the limited number of years as an active participant. Unfortunately, he failed to provide specific examples of cowboys who encountered these obstacles; he failed to supply figures to make his observations more credible. Thus, Don's 284 words failed to include the quality and quantity of information that John managed to include in his 552.5 word composition.

Both writers approached their subjects with a narrative account designed to enlist reader interest. As a matter of fact, Don's best writing occurred during his introduction. Don's vivid account of one horseback ride is presented in the following fragments of rodeo images and idiom, all rather intense for this 0006 level of writing: Chute gate jerked open, horse exploded from the chute, cowboys gazed, to
dismantle his rider, this so-called rank horse, after eight seconds and many jerks, turns, and twists later, and his body is torn, wrecked, bruised, and battered.

Don's most ineffective images and vocabulary appeared at the close of his introductory paragraph and throughout the body of the paper:

- outstanding performance
- no bed of roses
- has its ups and downs
- another thing
- other things people may not know
- a very, very physical sport
- these dreams will always be there (wherever "there" is)

These cliches and trite expressions almost counteracted the more effective ones presented in the first paragraph. And they, with the predictable organization of thesis followed by four reasons, plus the anti-climactic conclusion and the few, too few, specific, supportive details, kept this composition from being as inclusive, as complex, and as intense as John's first-place essay.

John's superior language facility and thorough knowledge of the baseball idiom became obvious in such expressions as these:

- delivered a quick sharp throw to second that beat the guy sliding by a step
- lined a hot shot
- runner rounded third and broke for home
- took the throw and applied his patented swing tag ...
- trotted back ... as if he had just come up from the farm system
- uncorked a mean swing
- with an off-speed, breaking pitch that hung up over the plate ...
- a hard slider
- aged knees rock a little

The frequency throughout the theme and the strength of these images and phrases far outweighed John's own two trite references to "wear and tear" that occurred in his first paragraph, and certainly surpassed the descriptive effectiveness of Don's images and language use.
John's ability to compress a great deal of information and vivid language into his most unusual organization further illustrated his developing writing skill. First, John introduced Bench in the context of a game: then at the close of the paragraph, the writer stated his thesis -- that "he (Bench) is truly the greatest catcher in baseball." The next paragraph presented another glimpse of Bench in action as catcher. The third paragraph allowed a view of Bench as batter to illustrate his versatility. The fourth paragraph described Bench as he went to the dugout and then to the whirlpool, the author's medium for depicting Bench's suffering, endurance and longevity as a catcher. The final paragraph presented Bench's taking a "deserved rest." This "deserved rest," the author's observation, was explained by a summation of Bench's accomplishments, records, and innovations in baseball history.

Both John and Don improved their writing scores by over ninety (90) points during the nine week treatment period. Both posttest compositions exhibited focus and unity, but the experimental paper transcended the control group paper by its inclusiveness, its intensity, and its originality.

Elaine and Carol: Second-Place Themes

Carol's posttest score of 200 indicated superior writing performance to Elaine's posttest which accumulated 165 points. Both papers were ranked second in their respective classes, but Carol's higher score suggested a fifty (50) point gain over Elaine's twenty-two (22) point gain. Why was Carol's composition judged to be so much better than Elaine's? Answers to this question produced the most interesting implications to emerge from this subjective examination.
Elaine's Theme:  Control Group

A snoring man lying on his six foot long bed with his size-eleven feet dangling over the edge will soon begin his long hours day. His tanned face has a few wrinkles around his brown eyes. But his forty-eight years does not show in his appearance. When he awakes, his usual morning instant coffee and newspaper are presented to him. As he prepares for work, he shaves his thick bearded chin and he brushes his wavy black hair that has many gray strands. He pulls up his suit trousers and he dresses in his dark blue suit. As he puts his suit coat on, he stands tall, approximately six feet and one inch. He is not a stout man, for he weights about 180 pounds.

His job, as the editorial writer and editor of the editorial page of the State Times newspaper, requires him to be well-informed on world news, local news, and national news. He completes his work everyday about three o'clock in the afternoon.

When he arrives home, he changes his clothes, putting his usual tan kacki pants on and an old white T-shirt. By the end of the day the T-shirt becomes dusty, dirty, or wet from perspiration. He gardens with a shovel and hand picks the weeds. One might notice that when he gardens, he uses his hands and doesn't use machines such as a tiller. Maybe by using his hands, he is satisfied of being efficient with his work. He putters around the house, works outside in the yard, or just keeps himself preoccupied with a magazine such as "World News."

This man is not a very outgoing type of person. For he keeps to himself and speaks when he feels something should be said. He loves his family very much. For he would do anything for his children. As years pass, his children respect him and come to him for help whether the problem is personal or with school difficulties. This man is quite special to a family who loves him very much. For he is my father.

Carol's Theme:  Experimental Group

As I sat down to my typical Southern dinner of fried chicken, turnip greens, and potato salad, my mother asked, "What are you going to do tonight hon?" After swallowing my mouthful of crisp and juicy chicken, I told my mother that I was taking Mary Ed to see the movie Grease. My mother gave me one of her disapproving looks and said, "Why do you spend so much time with that woman? She's old enough to be your grandmother." I then gave mother a much more disgusted look than she deserved for her thoughtless statement. In my mind, her words had triggered the memory of dozens of other people asking me, "What do you see in Mary Ed, she's just an old crazy lady." When Mother saw my expression, she was very upset. She did not see how anything she had said would upset me. I knew at that point that I had to get out of the room, or else what had started as a casual supper conversation would turn into one of those bitter mother-daughter screaming sessions. I didn't see any way of making my mother understand that Mary Ed and I were friends even though our difference in age was vast.
As I was driving over to Mary Ed's house, I tried to analyze the reasons for our friendship. I knew that ours was a strange friendship just from looking at the outside appearance of it. Mary Ed is sixty years old and has a face with all the lines of a leaf held up to the light. Her facial features: nose, ears and mouth, have lost their distinctness with age, but her blue eyes still sparkle with curiosity, anticipation and friendliness. Besides her overly wrinkled face, the only other thing that gives her age away are her hands. They are practically solid blue from the veins that have become more pronounced over the years. The blue veins wind around arthritis inflamed knuckles that my friend is constantly rubbing in an effort to make the stiffness in them go away. It always makes me sad to see her massaging her hands because it makes me think of the young and vibrant mind that is trapped in a malfunctioning, withering body.

It is because of her young and vibrant mind that Mary Ed and I are friends. It is because of her young and vibrant mind that I am taking her to see a movie that most of her peers would look at as another sinful display by the young generation. Mary Ed, unlike many people her age, lets her attitude change with the times. She does not let herself get boxed into a set of ideas and values that were proper twenty-five years ago. She accomplishes this partly by being friends with me. Mary Ed keeps abreast of current issues by asking me what my opinions are. Never had I been more embarrassed than when my friend, the sixty-year-old crazy lady, asked me if I had ever had an orgasm and proceeded to discuss the topic intelligently. Mary Ed and I can discuss politics, religion, family, and men with the same bluntness and truthfulness as we discuss sex. I was just wishing my mother could be as open minded as Mary Ed, when I pulled into her driveway and saw my friend talking happily with what looked to me like a Hare Krishna.

Analysis of Both Second-Place Themes

The differences in Elaine's and Carol's second-place themes were even more apparent than those in Don's and John's compositions. Again, responding to the same assignment, Carol managed to produce a description which pointed toward an analytical purpose: she wanted to explain her reasons for befriending a woman who was old enough to be her grandmother. Elaine, on the other hand, described her father's appearance, his occupation, his hobbies, his temperament, but her information pointed toward no perceivable reason for writing this information unless that purpose were to simply express admiration for her father. And, although this expression may have been her intent, she
did not hold to this purpose; she does not relate all the parts of her essay to a single controlling idea or impression.

A closer examination of the organization of each girl's theme reflected the lack of unity and less apparent focus of the control group paper. Elaine presented her father's waking and dressing for work in her first paragraph. She included such seemingly irrelevant details as the size of his bed, the fact that he drank instant coffee, the act of brushing his wavy black hair, the fact that he is six feet and one inch tall, that he has a tanned face, a few wrinkles, brown eyes, a thick bearded face, and he weighs about 180 pounds. Such details pointed toward no apparent impression. If her purpose were to express admiration for her father's handsome appearance, she failed to convey this motive effectively. Her second paragraph of five lines told what her father's occupation was, mentioned that his work demanded that he be well-informed, and that he finished work at three o'clock. Then, in paragraph three, she summarized the activities that her father engaged in when he returned home. At this point, she included such varied details as what he wore, how his clothing became soiled, and that he enjoyed handpicking weeds. Her last paragraph also meandered from point to point: he "keeps to himself;" "he loves his family;" "he does anything for his children," and "he is quite special." Elaine concluded her total of thirty unsupported and miscellaneous observations with a feeble attempt at a dramatic end: "For he is my father." That final statement reinforced this reader's impression of this brief work of 208 words as a loosely focused (if focused at all) chronology of a typical day in the life of the author's father. Since the paper lacked a clear
purpose, and since the organization of the parts failed to point toward a purpose, the composition was boring and meaningless.

Carol's organization contrasted markedly with Elaine's in that the experimental group writer presented her analysis in stages moving toward her purpose. For example, paragraph one enlisted audience attention by making readers aware that a conflict existed between the author and her mother (and thus her friends and perhaps her readers) who did not understand why she befriended an old, eccentric lady named Mary Ed. Carol revealed the conflict by narrating a presumably typical supper-table conversation. Although her depiction of the menu was a bit overdone and amateurish, she wrote an attention-gaining introduction that culminated in a statement of the problem: "I didn't see any way of making my mother understand that Mary Ed and I were friends even though our difference in age was vast."

Carol's second paragraph acknowledged the fact that "outside appearances" did suggest that they had a "strange friendship." Then, she proceeded to describe Mary Ed's features. But instead of cataloguing every detail about Mary Ed's appearance, as Elaine had done, Carol emphasized two prominent features, Mary Ed's lined face and her blue arthritic hands that suggested an apparent disparity in age, and thus, in the two friends' capacity to relate to each other. And in a masterful piece of writing, she noted the physical characteristics that pointed toward her real reason for befriending Mary Ed. Carol's two most intense and ironic images occurred in this second paragraph.

1. Mary Ed is sixty years old and has a face with all the lines of a leaf held up to the light. Her facial features: nose, ears and mouth have lost their distinctness with age, but her blue eyes still sparkle with curiosity, anticipation and friendliness.
2. The blue veins wind around arthritis inflamed knuckles that my friend is constantly rubbing in an effort to make the stiffness in them go away. It always makes me sad to see her massaging her hands because it makes me think of the young and vibrant mind that is trapped in a malfunctioning, writhing body.

This author's ability to perceive and then portray the irony that lay beneath the surface appearances of Mary Ed gave meaning to her deliberate and representative details. Elaine's details lacked this purpose, intensity, and meaning.

Carol's third paragraph assumed a more traditional organization. She started with an assertion that flowed naturally from the previous paragraph. "It is because of her young and vibrant mind that Mary Ed and I are friends." The rest of the paragraph presented evidence of this "young and vibrant mind" that Carol esteemed. She mentioned the fact that the two of them were going to see "Grease," that Mary Ed kept "abreast of current issues," that she was blunt and truthful about several subjects from sex to religion. The writer even described one incident to verify this observation. Unfortunately, Carol ran out of time on this in-class theme. And although she seemed disgruntled about this limitation in the classroom, she managed to close the paper with a significant detail which pointed toward Mary Ed's openness. "... I pulled into her driveway and saw my friend talking happily with what looked to me like a Hare Krishna." This ending functions more dramatically than Elaine's "For he is my father."

While Elaine's vehicle for revealing her father was the bland diary of a day, Carol chose a small part of an evening where she recounted a conflict at dinner; then during her drive to her friend's house, she presented the apparent reason for the conflict. Finally, she analyzed the reasons for the relationship. Thus, the organization of the seg-
ments and the inclusion of all details in Carol's descriptive paper made her composition clearly superior to Elaine's sprawling revelations about her father.

Three other factors made Carol's paper more engaging, more complex, and thus more effective than Elaine's theme: her (Carol's) inclusion of irony, her use of vivid images, and her use of repetition for emphasis. The irony existed on two levels. First, the apparent irony that Carol and Mary Ed were friends despite their age differences formed the tension or conflict in the theme. No tension or conflict enhanced audience involvement with Elaine's subject. Second, Carol emphasized the irony in her details. In the first paragraph, Carol stated that she was taking Mary Ed to see Grease, to which Carol's mother replied, "Why do you spend so much time with that woman? She's old enough to be your grandmother." Then, Carol presented her two most vivid and ironic accounts of Mary Ed's "blue eyes still spark(1ing) with curiosity, anticipation, and friendliness" on her lined and otherwise indistinct facial features and Mary Ed's "young and vibrant mind ... trapped in a malfunctioning, writhing body." The author's ironic tone further emphasized her admiration for Mary Ed's openness in the following line: "Never had I been more embarrassed than when my friend, the sixty year old crazy lady, asked me if I had ever had an orgasm ..." Carol emphasized Mary Ed's admirable traits, her candor, openness, and alertness, and thus her reasons for befriending Mary Ed. Two more effective repetitions of the phrase, "young and vibrant mind," were the techniques she used to call attention to her reasons for selecting Mary Ed to be her friend.
1. It is because of her young and vibrant mind that Mary Ed and I are friends.

2. It is because of her young and vibrant mind that I am taking her to see a movie that most of her peers would look at as another sinful display by the young generation.

Throughout the composition, Carol (no longer a "reluctant" writer) created images that were able to convey specific, vivid impressions of her subject. After her first weak image of the "crisp and juicy chicken," she went on to write the following:

- one of her (mother's) disapproving looks
- a much more disgusted look than she (her mother) deserved
- her words had triggered the memory of dozens of other people asking me, "What do you see in Mary Ed, she's just an old crazy lady."
- a face (Mary Ed's) with all the lines of a leaf held up to the light
- the blue veins wind around arthritis inflamed knuckles ...
- the young and vibrant mind that is trapped in a malfunctioning, writhing body

These images contrasted markedly with those Elaine used in her theme. Actually, Elaine produced only three images that were to capture the essence of her father's personality: her father's T-shirt and Khaki pants, his dark suit, and his working the garden by hand. Not one of Elaine's references seemed unique, or intense, or memorable.

As a matter of fact, it was Carol's original approach to her organization, her ability to include numerous details in the context of tension, images, and repetitions, and her ironic tone that prompted her superior posttest performance. Where Elaine approached an ordinary topic, description of a parent, in an ordinary, altogether unengaging manner, Carol approached her more interesting subject, an unusual friend, in a far more engaging style. And in so doing, she was better able to communicate her multi-dimensional purpose, which was essentially to describe an apparent conflict over her befriending Mary Ed and then to
describe her reasons for befriending this older lady, thereby enlisting agreement from her audience that the relationship did actually seem to be unusual if surface appearances determine the basis for judging it, but it seemed mutually beneficial for both Carol and Mary Ed if internal, intellectual, and psychological factors were the basis for judging the value of the friendship.

The five readers agreed with this assessment in every category but one — organization. This conflict in their objective measure and in this closer but subjective assessment may have actually occurred, not out of error on either part, but out of the circumstances surrounding the measurements. To assess Carol's very logical organization, the reader must have had time to examine each paragraph and its obviously logical relationship to its previous paragraph and to the paper's principal point. But the readers did not have the time to digest Carol's more subtle approach to her subject. Another possible reason for the discrepancy in judgment about organization was that Carol acknowledged the fact that she ran out of time at the end of the paper. Although she still managed to close her theme with a clinching detail (as opposed to Elaine's anticlimactic and amateurish one), perhaps the readers faulted her timing and thus her organization. Nevertheless, both scores for organization were the same. In every other category, Carol's scores reinforced the more detailed analysis that has been presented.
Cristy and Camille: Third-Place Themes

Both Cristy and Camille's compositions ranked third in their classes. But some evidence existed to indicate that Cristy's theme was vastly overrated.

Cristy's Theme: Control Group

Looking down Zellmer street in Romulus, Michigan, you will notice a series of quaint and modest homes. But there is one house which is a definite eye-catcher. This is my house.

The brown and yellow trimmed tri-level has served its purpose for the past fourteen years. The front lawn, which is a deep green during the spring and summer, has had its share of abuse. This was shown by the many animals in the neighborhood who have enjoyed it. Also, my brother and his friends have spent time rolling around on it during their friendly wrestling matches. Despite all of this, my father has put hard work into it to make it healthy and lively.

As you walk into the living room, you will find yourself immediately stepping upon a plush brown, short shag carpet. This blends in well with the oak wood antique love seat. Over in the corner sits a coffee table with many different plants upon it, varying from a Swedish ivy to a wild African violet. On the beigy colored walls hang pictures of our family and an old painting of a sailing ship on a rough, stormy night. Nearing the doorway of the kitchen you will smell the scent of mom's homemade cooking. It is always a different aroma, but, the odor is always enough to make your mouth water. The ranch style kitchen is big enough to suit our family of eight. With the long, rectangular table and benches for sitting, mom always finds room for more if it is needed. By the time you reach the table you will hear the sound of a television or stereo violently playing. Following the sound, it will lead
you to the basement which my father has made into a family room. The chocolate brown paneling and the toss pillows wildly scattered on both couches, puts me in a certain relaxed mood. Many people take one look into the next room and immediately walk out. This is the laundry room. Dirty clothes, clean clothes, wrinkled clothes, and out-of-seasons clothes are usually piled high in this room, and this makes it difficult to move about. Walking back up the stairs, making a quick turn right up the next set of stairs, you'll find four bedrooms. Each has its own trait which will give away the owner of the room. My baby sister has barbie dolls and coloring books thrown from one end of the room to the next. My teen aged sister has a picture of Andy Gibb hanging from her closet door. And the next room, which was shared with three other sisters at one time, have nylons, cosmetics, and school books strolled from the dresser to an end table near the bed. My parents bedroom, has always been kept neat with a king sized bed and a door connecting to the perfumed scented bathroom.

This house, by all means, has its potential. But with our large family, constantly running about it, there is difficulty keeping it spotless. Nevertheless, this house is beautiful to me, and it will always be my home.

Camille's Theme: Experimental Group

The Christmas season is a time of celebration, joy, and happiness, but working at a supermarket the ideas of the holiday season are changed to work, work, and more work. The friendly old ladies who shop at the store year round become demons, monsters, and killers in their desperate search for sale items, baskets, and Christmas trees when Christmas time comes around.

At Christmas the stockroom is filled with baking needs, extra Christmas trees, and unworked stock. The intercom bellows every second for a bagboy, cashier, or the manager to return to the front and help a customer. The bagboys catch the most hell from the customers. He has to listen to all of the customers requests for double-bagging, carting groceries out, and putting trees into a Toyota. He has to stand in the rain while the ladies back their cars up to load groceries, unload bottles, and help Grandma out of the car.

The holiday season causes a distinct change in work patterns, peoples attitudes, and store profits. We receive more inventory the first two week of Christmas than the whole month before. This increases the work load and gives me less time to watch the consumers who are always "looking for something for nothing." Shoplifting is very high this time of year when people steal hams, ribeyes, and turkeys, some to just do it and some because they have to. Still people have the holiday spirit and tip generously for the services of a bagboy, cashier, and sometimes stockers. The cash registers run at full speed endlessly from eight until nine as the people stock up for Christmas and run up bills for over one hundred dollars.
The work continues during the day by restocking the sale items on the shelf, getting a car unlocked without a key in the rain, and saving little kids from hurting themselves by climbing on displays. The day is an endless array of odd jobs as nice old ladies fight over the last box of Swans Down cake flour, playing referee to two kids, and catching shoplifters running out the door.

After closing the doors to the public, the work continues by night, cleaning up the stockroom, hauling and locking up Christmas trees, and mopping the floor stained with snowballs, coke spills, and compressed gum. The whole store is quiet at this time: no intercom, no cash registers working, and no people. The silence after closing helps a person regain his sanity after a full day of work.

The workload is still heavy Christmas Eve, but the people forget their troubles and peacefully shop and remember the true meaning of Christmas. No one complains about the price of food, liquor, or the total bill. They just want their families to have the best at this joyous time of year. This time lets me forgive and forget all the people who ran me over with baskets, kids who bit me, and cussing consumers the weeks before; after I sit down with my family to enjoy Christmas dinner at this happy time of year.

Analysis of Both Third-Place Themes

Several differences existed in these two third-ranking compositions, but these differences were even more striking in lieu of the fact that Cristy's posttest theme seemed to have been overrated by some of the five readers. The assumption that her posttest score was inflated or that the paper was misjudged by a couple of the readers was based on two observations: first, this investigator felt that Cristy's paper illustrated too many flaws to have generated the scores that it did, and second, there were several inconsistencies in the posttest scores (and the judgments) of the readers. This second observation, however, did not invalidate the scores because the readers in question did produce correlation coefficients that were high enough to be considered reliable, and they did produce scores that reflected a clear preference for Camille's composition in each criterion. Yet, the following table does demonstrate the apparent discrepancies in readers' scores for Cristy's
theme when compared to the more consistent ratings of Camille's description.

Table 12: Reader Ratings for Cristy's and Camille's Themes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Readers</th>
<th>Camille (exp. group)</th>
<th>Totals</th>
<th>Cristy (cont. group)</th>
<th>Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Criteria</td>
<td>#1  #2  #3  #4  #5</td>
<td></td>
<td>#1  #2  #3  #4  #5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Effectiveness</td>
<td>15  15  12  9  12  63</td>
<td>6  15  12  6  12  51</td>
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<tr>
<td>Focus</td>
<td>5  5  4  2  4  20</td>
<td>1  5  3  2  4  15</td>
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<tr>
<td>Development</td>
<td>5  5  4  2  5  21</td>
<td>2  5  4  2  4  17</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Supportive details</td>
<td>5  5  4  3  5  22</td>
<td>3  5  4  2  4  18</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Organization</td>
<td>5  4  4  1  3  17</td>
<td>2  5  3  2  4  16</td>
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<td>Sentence Structure</td>
<td>3  5  4  2  3  17</td>
<td>2  4  3  2  4  15</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Word choice</td>
<td>5  5  4  2  4  20</td>
<td>1  5  5  1  4  16</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Originality</td>
<td>5  4  4  1  4  18</td>
<td>1  4  4  1  4  14</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Perusal of these scores indicated readers' preference for Camille's composition. Then, closer examination of the scores indicated that readers #1 and #4 found Cristy's theme to be weak or far below average, in every criterion. Reader #3 assigned three average ratings to Cristy's focus, organization, and sentence structure, while readers #2 and #5 gave above average and superior ratings in every category. The reason for noting these discrepancies was not to discredit the readings, but to account for the rather harsh assessment of Cristy's paper that follows.

The following reading concurred with the low scores assigned by reader #1 and reader #4. It also pinpointed two of the primary flaws: lack of focus and organization, noted as well by reader #3. The primary problem in Cristy's paper centered around the purpose for the paper. Why did she describe her home? If her reason for describing her home were to express appreciation for its beauty, its function, or its atmosphere, she failed to focus her details on any single dominant
impression; she failed to follow through with any observation. Since her purpose was not discernable, she failed to enlist audience agreement with her judgment or expression. What she did, rather, was to drop four isolated judgments of her home (the house is a "definite eye-catcher; it has served its purpose for fourteen years; it has potential but there is difficulty keeping it spotless, and this house is beautiful to me. ...). Then, she proceeded to guide the reader through a boring, aimless tour from her lawn through each room of her home, noting altogether fifty-five, often insignificant details. She presented details such as "a coffee table with many different plants upon it, varying from a Swedish ivy to a wild African violet, beigy (?) colored walls, plush brown, short shag carpet, chocolate brown paneling, toss pillows, wildly scattered on both couches," etc. Thus, she included numerous details which served no function that can be determined. If this paper were a report, what was its purpose? What audience did she envision when she wrote this random and incomplete portrait of her home?

The only element that could have given an illusion of organization to this theme was Cristy's development by space-sequence, moving in tour fashion from room to room. Even so, she failed to paragraph according to controlling ideas or to control the order of the details presented within the paragraphs. For example, the third paragraph about the living room depicted no dominant impression to guide her discussion. Her inability to paragraph was further illustrated with the introduction of new rooms, the kitchen, the den, the laundry room, and the upstairs bedrooms within the same third paragraph that described the living room. Obviously, Cristy had not learned how to categorize and draw inferences from her experiences and observations, nor had
she learned how to subordinate her details in order to make her judgments and abstractions believable. (The only exception to this failure to control her presentation occurred in her brief fourteen-lined discussion of the four bedrooms. Thus, Cristy's posttest composition, in spite of its composite score of 162 and an apparent gain of 91 points over the pretest, demonstrated marked inferiority to its counterpart, Camille's third place theme from the experimental section.

Although Camille's composition possessed some organizational flaws, particularly toward the end of the paper, he still managed to produce details which supported and enhanced his very obvious purpose: to describe the changes that occur at a supermarket during the Christmas season. Underlying this apparent thesis and judging from his often exaggerated and ironic tone, his deeper aim seemed to be to enlist reader agreement (and sympathy) with him that Christmas did, in fact, place more strain on the supermarket employees than they normally experienced during other times of the year. All details in this theme (except the one in the last sentence) were held together by Camille's explicit and implicit purpose; thus the paper possessed unity and focus, qualities altogether lacking in Cristy's description of her home.

While Cristy includes numerous details in her composition, she did not select ones that captured the essence of the room, the house, or the observation she described. Camille, on the other hand, employed a cataloging technique that enhanced the inclusiveness and thus the representative potential of his details. The following line demonstrates both his exaggerated tone for the sake of humor and his technique of detail tripling to make his point: "The friendly old ladies who shop at the store year round become demons, monsters, and killers in their
desperate search for sale items, baskets, and Christmas trees...." The writer's doubling and tripling of details and images resembled, (on an often awkward and amateurish level, of course) the type of cataloguing that Walt Whitman employed to make his poems as representative and inclusive as they were. The following details reflected some of Camille's better attempts to present rhythmic and inclusive details:

- ... the stockroom filled with baking needs, extra Christmas trees, and unworked stock;
- The intercom bellowing every second for a bagboy, cashier, or the manager ...;
- He (the bagboy) has to listen to all the customers' requests for double-bagging, carting groceries out, and putting trees into a Toyota;
- to load groceries, unload bottles, and help Grandma out of the car;
- After closing the doors to the public, the work continues by cleaning up the stockroom, hauling and locking up Christmas trees, and mopping the floor stained with snow-balls, coke spills, and compressed gum;
- The whole store is quiet at this time: no intercom, no cash registers working, and no people.

Admittedly, Camille had some structural problems in his presentation, but he knew that the effect he wanted to create could be created by a multitude of details presented in rhythmic tripling. His forty-eight (48) details about the supermarket within his 348 word theme functioned well within his purpose, and these observations were far more engaging and more unified than Cristy's fifty-five (55) isolated recollections about every room in her house. That Camille knew what he was doing, in spite of some structural and organizational flaws which undercut the total effect at times, became evident when he wrote this statement at the close of the semester:

"Taking a single sentence with a subject and a verb and expanding it to be more vivid, descriptive and focused double(d) my confidence of passing 1001 next time around."

As a matter of fact, Camille did pass his next level English course (1001); he made a most respectable "B".
Conclusions

Analysis of the three best themes from the experimental group and the three best themes from the control group produced observable evidence that these experimental compositions were indeed more effective than the control group papers. An examination of the posttest scores for each of the six compositions indicated that the experimental papers were superior to the control group papers in every one of the eight criteria outlined on the analytical rating scale, which the five readers used to evaluate writing performance. The subjective analysis suggested that the key differences in the experimental and control group papers centered around the writers' abilities to focus their descriptions around one controlling purpose, thesis, or impression, to include enough representative details to enhance and/or support the controlling idea, and to approach their subjects in such unique or novel ways that they enlisted and maintained audience involvement with their subjects.

Of the three control group papers, only the first place composition possessed any kind of unity. Don's depiction of the rodeo cowboy was designed to convince the reader that the cowboy's lifestyle was not as glamorous as it appeared to be. Don also approached his topic with an engaging account of a rodeo ride. Yet his 284 word paper was too brief to include as much supportive information as he might have included. The second and third-place themes lacked purpose and unity. They seemed to be aimless depictions of a father and a home that created no interesting or memorable effects on the reader. If "inclusiveness" were interpreted to mean number of details included in a theme, then Cristy and Elaine might have partially succeeded in this area. But if "inclusiveness" were interpreted as not only the number
of details, but also the power of those details to represent or capture the essence of the thing being described, then Elaine and Cristy, writers of the control group second and third-place compositions, failed.

John, Carol and Camille succeeded in their first, second, and third place compositions because they were conscious of their obligations to create a rhetorical context, a communication framework for their descriptions. They possessed purpose for their themes: John wanted his reader to agree that Johnny Bench was a great baseball catcher. Carol wanted her reader to understand why she befriended a woman, "a sixty year old crazy lady," old enough to be her grandmother. Camille wanted his reader to sympathize with supermarket employees because of the compounded work load and complications that occur in supermarkets during Christmas rush. By clearly establishing their purposes for their writing, the experimental group writers seemed to be aware of a need to assume an audience who would not necessarily believe what they said unless they supplied ample, specific evidence, via examples, observations, sensory and factual details to convince the reader that their impressions were credible.

Thus, the experimental papers were more inclusive than the control group themes; they were longer, and the details and images that the writers did include were more representative of the essence of the person or place that they were describing. For example, the reader can readily recall the significance of such details as Johnny Bench's one-handed tags, Mary Ed's massaging, arthritic hands, the intercom bellowing for the manager, cashiers, and bagboys. John's baseball hero, Carol's friend, and Camille's supermarket job at Christmas were more memorably and thus more effectively presented than Elaine's Daddy or Cristy's home.
The experimental papers incorporated more interesting approaches to enlist and maintain reader interest. John's narrative of moments during a baseball game, complete with the whirlpool and rest after the game, provided an effective vehicle for dramatizing Bench's skills at bat and behind the plate, as well as his endurance in spite of his surgery for cancer and injury. His descriptive narrative employed effective baseball idiom and flashbacks to keep the drama intense and to provide convincing background about Bench's accomplishments.

Carol's approach was also engaging. She traced the origin of the conflict over her befriending Mary Ed by including a suppertime argument followed by reflections about her unique relationship as she drove to Mary Ed's house. Carol's unique organization, her imagery, and her ironic tone made her description of her conflict and her friend most memorable for writing produced at this 0006 level.

Camille's most unique approach emerged through his rhythmic tripling of details to capture the essence of his subject. His exaggerations produced the subtly humorous and ironic tone that made his supermarket depictions effective.

This subjective analysis of the three top themes from each of the two groups tested produced some significant evidence that these experimental themes were, in fact, different from and superior to the control group themes.

Yet, some important and perhaps unanswerable questions remained. Were these differences attributable to the content of the students' instruction? The assumption of the experimental design was that different instructional approaches to teaching composition would produce different results. Thus, it was assumed, at least in part, that the
variations in outcomes in these top posttests were actual results of the instruction that the two groups experienced. Camille and John, among several other experimental students, felt that their writing proficiency increased because of what they had learned in the course. They said that they particularly benefited from the work on focus and sentence expansions with vivid details. Carol noted in her course evaluation that she gained most from seeing the artistic depictions of poor people. Although she didn't expound on this, the emphasis in that series of lessons was on the artist's ability to produce viewer responses by compacting certain details about the poor which would capture the essence of their need, their poverty, their suffering. Carol's use of images to portray Mary Ed might have resulted from this exposure.

Did the clearer focus and greater expansion of the experimental papers result, in part, from the prewriting model designed to help students retrieve and purpose their thoughts about the subject? Did the more interesting approaches to their compositions result from their reading other student and professional descriptions of people and places? Did their inclusion of representative images result from viewing artistic portrayals of people, places, and things? Did the use of abundant supportive detail result from students' conscientization and practice in observing various stimuli and drawing inferences about the data? Were they more aware of the need to support abstractions and generalizations with concrete, referential data? Will their improved skills transfer to other tasks in writing? Final answers to these questions were not possible within the scope of this investigation. Perhaps, other investigators could isolate and effectively test specific components of this instructional unit to determine their effects on student ability to write.
Such research would be beneficial for both teachers and students.

In her own research, Piagetian psychologist Eleanor Duckworth maintained that the key criterion for evaluating an effective instructional program lay in its capacity to develop intelligence in a student. She described the development of intelligence as a "matter of having wonderful ideas and feeling confident enough to try them out." (Duckworth, 1973:271). Indeed, John, Carol, and Camille, writers of the first, second, and third-place compositions from the experimental group, expressed more confidence in their abilities to write, and they did seem to be on their way toward expressions of more interesting ideas and statements of more novel, more elaborated approaches to those ideas. Though necessarily brief, the brief criticisms of the six student themes were intended to discover what each one communicated, how it did so, and what worth it contained. Ideally, such analysis results in the "improvement of communication ... (in) the attainment of finer, more precise, more discriminating communication." (Richards, 1962: 1648)

"Indeed an idea, or a notion, like the physicist's ultimate particles and rays, is only known by what it does. Apart from its dress, as other signs, it is not identifiable." (I. A. Richards as cited in Johannesens's *Contemporary Theories of Rhetoric*, 1971: 118-119)
CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

"... One final conclusion ... is crucial. Insofar as man's powers are expressed and amplified through the imple­ments of culture, the limits to which he can attain excellence of intellect must surely be as wide as are the culture's combined capabilities. We do not know in any deep sense as yet how we shall, in the future, better empower men. Insofar as the sciences of knowing can throw light on the growth of mind, the efficacy of the culture in fulfilling its responsibility to the individual can likely be increased to levels higher than ever before imagined." (Bruner, Oliver, Greenfield, et al, 1967: 326)

Conclusions

The broadest purpose of this investigation was to seek a theoretically sound "implement" which would ultimately help underprepared students to attain "excellence of intellect" and to "express and amplify" their thoughts in writing. The more specific purpose of this research was to test the efficacy of a specially designed cognitive stimulation unit, incorporating visual and verbal stimuli, observation practice, and inferencing skills on underprepared college students' ability to write descriptive compositions. Consideration of the statistical data compiled during this study appeared to warrant the following conclusions.

1. Underprepared college students who experienced the nine-week experimental treatment (a humanities-oriented, cognitive stimulation unit incorporating visual and verbal stimuli, observation practice, inferencing skills, and prewriting strategy) did significantly improve their descriptive writing skills.

2. Underprepared college students in the control group did significantly improve their descriptive writing skills after nine
weeks of instruction, based on the grammar-centered, composition practice methods recommended in the English 0006 course outline at LSU.

3. Although mean scores pointed toward slightly greater improvement in descriptive writing ability among students in the experimental group, these gains were not statistically significant at the .05 level.

4. Treatment by level analysis of the gain scores suggested a differential effect of the experimental treatment on reluctant writers whose ACT verbal aptitude scores were above and below the group median of twelve. Maximum gains were made by the higher ACT group (with scores of 13-17). Minimum gains were made by the lower ACT group (with scores of 12 or below).

The subjective analysis of six selected compositions, the three best ones from the control group compared to the three best ones in the experimental group, indicated superior ability among the experimental group writers to do the following tasks when writing:

1. to focus, to purpose, their descriptions around some controlling idea or dominant impression;

2. to expand their compositions by including more relevant, supportive, and representative facts, details, and observations, thereby producing inclusive, unified compositions;

3. to approach their subjects with more intense imagery, more engaging voice, and more effective organizational frameworks.
Implications for Teaching

The most interesting result of this investigation centered around the very positive response to the experimental treatment by the apparently more capable students (although all of them were classified as "remedial" or "underprepared" by their placement in English 0006). Perhaps this humanities-cognitive skills approach could be used most effectively to teach those students who are only "marginally handicapped" writers. The high group in the experimental section of this investigation was most responsive to the fact that the course content was varied, yet structured. They seemed to grasp ideas quickly. The instructor felt that those students were quite capable of thinking and writing when they entered the course, but lacked the awareness of the thinking and writing processes that the experimental instruction fostered.

On the other hand, the low group (those whose verbal ACT scores were twelve or below and those whose posttest scores were also low) seemed to gain less from the experimental treatment. Perhaps, more severely "remedial" writers should be given other types of instruction. Since the "low" students in the control group achieved better results by the close of their nine weeks of instruction than did the low group in the experimental section, some evidence exists to support the use of grammar drills, coupled with a great deal of writing practice with more underprepared writers.

However, the "high" students in the control group did not improve their writing skills as much as the high group in the experimental section. This result supports the speculation that the more capable students (among the underprepared students) need varied opportunities
to examine visual and verbal stimuli, to think about and analyze them, and to practice prewriting and writing strategies. It appears that the traditional grammar-centered, writing-practice approach failed to produce the writing effectiveness among these marginally handicapped writers that was achieved with the humanities-cognitive skills program. The implication here is that the traditional, grammar-centered approach to composition is not the optimal learning medium for "marginally handicapped" writers.

One major curricular implication in the recognition of various responses to the treatments within both sections lies in the fact that a seemingly homogeneous group of underprepared writers may not be homogeneous at all. There may be two (and possibly more) levels of students who need different learning methods. Should students be divided again into smaller sub-groups, each with its own learning strategy? Can teachers accommodate the varied needs of each group? Are "marginally handicapped" students being placed in courses that provide optimal learning opportunities? Answers to these questions pose more problems for curriculum planners and teachers of basic level composition courses.

Based on the evidence that both treatments did produce significant growth in writing skills, on the observations that both courses were highly structured, and on the fact that students in both courses were aware of the criteria and the objectives of their writing, future composition courses may be effectively planned and organized to accommodate students' needs for clear structure and a conscious awareness of course objectives.
Three other pedagogical questions grew out of this investigation. Would more time devoted to each skill set in the experimental composition unit have allowed greater growth among weaker students? Could this stimulation model succeed with students who are identified as "average" or "above average" writers? Can the instructional unit and the instrument used in this investigation be adapted practically and effectively in other classrooms for "underprepared" college freshmen? Answers to these questions may be found by classroom testing and future research.

Implications for Research

Numerous questions grew out of this investigation which should be answered in future research. Although the mean scores reflected slightly more writing growth in the experimental group, the scores were not "significantly" higher than the control group scores. Thus, two questions revolve around the number of students sampled. Would the application of treatments to larger groups have produced statistically significant differences between the experimental treatment and the control group instruction? Would the differential effect of ACT scores on the experimental treatment approach even higher levels of significance if tested with larger groups?

Three questions involve the use of research tools. Would the outcomes of the treatments have varied more if the use of the analytical rating scale had been applied only to the experimental group, while the traditional letter grading plus teacher comment procedure had been used to grade papers in the control group? Since the rating scale was used throughout both treatment periods, control group students may have responded more to the "test" than to their "instruction." Would other
measures, such as word, sentence, and page counts, as possible reflectors of syntactic or linguistic fluency, have produced data indicating significant differences in the effect of the two treatments on the two groups tested? Does the necessity for the subjective analysis of selected essays to supplement the statistical analysis suggest the need for research tools, designs, and procedures that produce more inclusive and revealing data than that yielded in this investigation?

Because the more capable students in one group responded well to the experimental treatment while the more capable students in the control group failed to respond as well to their treatment, other researchers might be interested in replicating this study with two other population groups. Would the experimental unit improve writing skills of college students who are placed in composition classes that function at a level above the remedial level? And could this humanities-oriented, cognitive skills approach to composition be used effectively in high school composition classes?

Since the treatments in both groups consisted of several types of activities, several research questions may be drawn from the internal content of those units. Specifically, which learning activities in these rather eclectic treatments actually fostered the growth in writing skills that occurred during the experimental period? Can these various activities be isolated and tested in an experimental situation? And if they are isolated for testing, are they effective enough alone to effect a change in student writing? Further, what specific factors accounted for possible differential effects of the experimental treatment with the higher and lower ACT levels? Can these factors be isolated and tested? Why did the control group instruction produce scores which reflected
little standard deviation in the group? Why did this traditional, grammar-centered, writing practice approach to composition have a homogeneous effect on student performances? Why did the experimental treatment create such great variation in student growth? All these questions generate possibilities, not only for experimental problems and designs, but also for theoretical investigations.

Two last questions grew out of this research. Is there, in fact, a transfer of writing skill from the abilities to observe stimuli, retrieve necessary data, analyze that data, and then describe it to the ability to write compositions with other rhetorical aims? One essential assumption that led to the experimental model tested in this investigation was that the model would be a valuable tool in helping underprepared college students progress from one level of writing to another. The scope of this study was limited to testing students' abilities to describe someone or something effectively following two different treatments. Other studies must test the transfer, the generalization, of these skills to skill in other types and aims of writing.

Since this investigation concentrated on cognitive processes and outcomes, it was not possible within the scope of this research to formally assess the affective influence of the two treatments on their subjects. Thus, future researchers might ask, "What are the relative effects of these two instructional procedures on student attitudes? What is the relationship of the affective response to each treatment to the cognitive results elicited in each treatment?"

This investigation represented a sincere attempt to employ a theoretically sound framework for teaching writing, to create a learning sequence that followed this sound conceptual framework, and to test the
efficacy of two approaches to teaching underprepared freshmen how to write competently and effectively. Thus, for the purposes of this investigation, enough empirical evidence existed to prompt belief in this humanities-oriented, cognitive skills approach as one potential implement for improving the marginally handicapped writer's ability to write effective descriptive composition.


Baldwin, Dean A. "Introducing Rhetoric in Remedial Writing Courses: Staffroom Interchange." College Composition and Communication, XXIX, 4 (December, 1978) 392-94


Cooper, Charles. Address delivered to Composition Instructors at Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, La. October 6, 1980.


Denman, Mary Edel. "The Measure of Success in Writing," *College Composition and Communication,* XXIX (February, 1978).


Lavazzi, Thomas. "Don't Just Stand There - Do Something.: The Relevance of Narrative Writing to English Composition." Louisiana English Journal, XVIII, 2 (Spring, 1979) 11-17.


Lunsford, Andrea. What We Know - and Don't Know - About Remedial Writing. U. S. Educational Resources Information Center, ERIC Document ED 146593, April, 1977.


APPENDIX
The figure after each item below refers to the number of class meetings devoted to that segment. The number is changed to meet the needs of the class, but this number is a fairly accurate average. Please note that the fragment is the only major error counting on Theme 2; fragment plus comma splice on Theme 3; these two plus subject-verb on Theme 4; all of these plus pronoun-antecedent agreement on Theme 5.

* Discussion of Theme #1, Pretest paper (1)

1. Basic sentence structure. What is a sentence? What are subjects and verbs? How do we know if a complete thought is expressed? The fragment and how to avoid it. Limited lecture, much use of board to illustrate and amplify; sentence drills from main text, reinforced by drill from HCH. (3)

2. Writing the topic sentence. Staying on the subject. Achieving unity and coherence. Using examples and details. (2)

3. Theme 2. (Diagnostic counts as Theme 1; Theme 2 is actually just one paragraph). (1)

* Discussion of Theme 2 (1)

4. The comma splice. Build on knowledge of dependent and independent clauses which was learned during fragment discussion. Explain coordinating conjunctions, subordinating conjunctions, conjunctive adverbs. Handle on board and with oral drills from both texts. (2)

5. Practice paragraph in class. Individual attention to all areas previously covered. (1)

* Discussion of Practice paragraph (1)

6. Theme 3 (one paragraph) (1)

* Discussion of Theme 3 (1)

7. Subject-verb agreement. Finding one verb, finding the subject. What shows whether they agree? Verb endings. Handled as fragment and comma splices were. (3)
(Course Outline continued)

8. Practice paragraph. (1)
   * Discussion of Practice Paragraph (1)

9. Theme 4 (one paragraph). (1)
   * Discussion of Theme 4 (1)

10. Writing a three-paragraph theme. Thesis statement, points to
develop, transition, organization, unity, coherence. (2)

11. Pronoun-antecedent agreement. Handled in the same way as other
major errors were. (2)

12. Theme 5 (three paragraphs). All major errors counting. (1)
   * Discussion of Theme 5 (1)

13. General review of organization, clarity, development, transition,
and the four major errors. (2)

14. Theme 6 (three paragraphs). (1)
   * Discussion of Theme 6 (1)

From approximately this point on, the format will vary even more
than the first part. At this stage, the most basic of the basics have
been presented, although to be sure there will be much repitition of
these items during the remainder of the semester. In the time remain­
ing, most or all of the following should be accomplished, but with
flexibility in the order of presentation.

1. Discussions on the apostrophe, modifiers, parallel structure,
pronoun case and clear reference, and commas other than those
pertaining to the comma splice.

2. Readings from the back of the text. Three to six selections,
depending on the class and the needs and abilities of the majority.

3. About five more papers before the two-hour paper. Three or four
of these will be more developed (four to six paragraphs) after
much work on writing the longer paper.

4. Two to four more practice papers.

5. Two to four more review sessions.
(Course Outline continued)

NB: (1) This outline is obviously not all-inclusive. Spelling, for example, is not mentioned because it is taught frequently.

(2) Instructors who have assistants for the Tuesday-Thursday meetings should coordinate their plans and their assistants' plans. Special care should be taken that the course not become fragmented; the five days should be approached as a unit.

(3) If at all possible, both instructor and assistant should attend the first class meetings.

* These discussion periods were not originally included in the course outline. This instructor included them because of their benefit to the class.
ANALYTICAL RATING SCALE
(Applied Scale)
Appendix "B"

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SET #</th>
<th>READER #</th>
<th>STUDENT #</th>
<th>INEFFECTIVELY</th>
<th>EFFECTIVELY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

I. DEVELOPMENT OF IDEAS:
Communicates message, intent (General effectiveness)  
Focuses on thesis, purpose (Focus)  
Expands development (Thorough expansion)  
Provides supportive detail  
Organizes content (Organization)

II. MANNER OF DEVELOPMENT:
Writes clear, coherent sentences (Sentence structure)  
Uses vivid, exact words (Word choice)  
Employs unique or engaging example(s), image(s), approach(es) (Originality)

III. MECHANICS OF WRITING
Sentence fragments  
Run-ons/comma splices  
Agreement errors  
Reference problems  
Tense shifts  
Punctuation/capitalization problems  
Spelling errors  
Others

POINT DEDUCTIONS FOR ERRORS (Maximum deduction, 25 points)

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sentence fragments</th>
<th>Run-ons/comma splices</th>
<th>Agreement errors</th>
<th>Reference problems</th>
<th>Tense shifts</th>
<th>Punctuation/capitalization problems</th>
<th>Spelling errors</th>
<th>Others</th>
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Please note: This deduction section was used during instruction, but it was not used as part of the research outcomes. Mechanical concerns were not considered part of the basic research design.

TOTAL POINTS GAINED _______
TOTAL DEDUCTIONS _______
FINAL TOTAL _______

IV. COMMENTS ON THE COMPOSITION
CRITERIA

Appendix "C"

General Effectiveness: Does the author communicate his purpose? Is he successful in his attempt? Is the work effective? Engaging? Mature for this level? Does the writer demonstrate an awareness of his rhetorical context (his purpose, his attitude, his audience)? This term stems from a holistic school of thought which recognizes the fact that the entire discourse may not always represent the sum of its parts (focus, expansion organization, etc.). Therefore, the score for "effectiveness" may not always reflect the scores in other areas, although it may reflect them.

Focus: Does the paper have a single controlling idea, a thesis? Does this purpose guide the development of the composition? Does the writer limit his topic sufficiently? In effect, is the work unified?

Thorough Expansion: Does the author explore the most logical possibilities of his subject within the framework of his thesis? In other words, does he give enough examples, details, facts, etc. to satisfy the reader that his assertions, observations, and analysis are believable and reasonably complete? Is the paper inclusive enough?

Supportive Detail: Does the author support and clarify assertions and observations with evidence which includes examples, descriptive details, facts, reasons, analogies, etc.? Are the details included relevant to the author's purpose and representative of the subject?

Organization: Does the paper have an introduction? A conclusion? Do the parts follow some clear, logical pattern of development? Is there a kind of organic unity, in that the parts fit the controlling principle?

Clear, coherent sentence structure: Can you understand what the student is trying to say? How often do you encounter vague, incoherent, or awkward sentences that lose their communicative power because of faulty or unconventional syntactic structures?

Word Choice: Does the student use exact, appropriate language to communicate his message? Are his nouns concrete? Are his verbs active and vivid? Did he attempt to vary or repeat key words for effect?

Originality: Does the author approach his subject from a unique angle? Does he make any unusual comparisons, astute observations, or use any surprising images that increase the effectiveness (complexity, maturity, or intensity) of the composition?
ANALYTICAL RATING SCALE
(Pilot-Test)
Appendix "D"

TOPIC # ________  READER # ________
STUDENT # ________

INEFFECTIVELY  EFFECTIVELY

I. DEVELOPMENT OF IDEAS: The writer
   Focuses on thesis  2  4  6  8  10
   Divides concept into logical sub-topics  2  4  6  8  10
   Provides supportive detail  2  4  6  8  10
   Explores (expands) possibilities  2  4  6  8  10
   Makes logical connections  2  4  6  8  10

II. STYLE OF DEVELOPMENT: The writer
   Creates unique examples  1  2  3  4  5
   Uses "lively, specific" words  1  2  3  4  5
   Employs effective images (symbols, metaphors, wordplay)  1  2  3  4  5
   Varies sentences (types and lengths) appropriately  1  2  3  4  5
   Moves fluidly from idea to idea (logical transitions)  1  2  3  4  5

III. MECHANICS OF WRITING
   Usage (inappropriate)
   Agreement
   Sentence structure (fragments, run-ons, dangling elements)
   Punctuation
   Spelling
   Other

POINT DEDUCTIONS FOR ERRORS
(Maximum deduction, 25 points)

TOTAL POINTS GAINED ________
TOTAL DEDUCTIONS ________
FINAL TOTAL ________

IV. COMMENTS ON THE COMPOSITION
ITEM ANALYSIS: DISCRIMINATION POWER (High/Low Groups)

Appendix "E"

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Total Points

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## DIFFICULTY LEVEL
(Pilot-Test)
Appendix "F"

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\[X = 2,085\]
\[M = 148.93\]

\[M = 417\]
\[M = 29.79\]
**KENDALL COEFFICIENT OF CONCORDANCE: \( W \)**

Appendix "C"  

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\( N=14 \)

\( K=5 \)

\( \text{ER}_j = 525 \)

\( M - R_j = 37.5 \)

**Steps:**

1. \( S = (R_j - \frac{\text{ER}_j}{N})^2 \)

2. \( W_1 = \frac{12(S-1)}{K^2(n^3-n) + 24} \)

3. \( F = \frac{(K-1)W_1}{1 - W_1} \)

4. \( N_1 = (n-1) - \frac{2}{K} \)

5. \( N_2 = (k-1) \left( (n-1) - \frac{2}{K} \right) \)
VITA

Charlotte Smith Phillips was born in Baton Rouge, Louisiana on October 17, 1946. She grew up and received her elementary and high school education in West Monroe, Louisiana. Her Bachelor of Science degree in English and Speech Education and her Master's Degree in Secondary Education, with a minor in English, were received from Louisiana State University in August, 1968 and May, 1976.

Her professional experiences include eight years as an English and humanities teacher for the East Baton Rouge Parish school system, four summer positions as a pre-technical communications instructor at Baton Rouge Vocational-Technical Institute, three semesters as a part-time tutor at the Baker Reading Center, two years as a graduate assistant teaching Education 2000 in the Education Department at Louisiana State University and three years as a full-time Instructor of English at LSU.

She married Chester Franklin Phillips, Jr. and bore two children, Chester Franklin, III and Victoria Grace Marie. Her fondest wish revolves around the notion of growth; she hopes that she may continue to grow intellectually, spiritually, and professionally and that she may foster such growth in her students and her children.
EXAMINATION AND THESIS REPORT

Candidate: Charlotte Smith Phillips

Major Field: Education

Title of Thesis: AN EVALUATION OF A HUMANITIES-ORIENTED, COGNITIVE STIMULATION MODEL TO IMPROVE DESCRIPTIVE WRITING DEVELOPMENT OF UNDERPREPARED COLLEGE FRESHMEN

Approved:

Fred M. Smith
Major Professor and Chairman

James D. fragman
Dean of the Graduate School

EXAMINING COMMITTEE:

Barbara M. Strawitz

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L.C. Van Horn

Faham Sulai

Date of Examination:

April 24, 1981