

THE PRE-WRITING EXPERIENCE IN COMPOSITION TEACHING
FOR GRADE TEN PUPILS

by

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study was to determine what significant differences, if any, existed among three groups of Grade X students with respect to the fluency (number of words and number of T-units) and syntactic maturity shown in a composition test written after exposure to differing pre-writing strategies and experiences. One treatment group (Group A) was required to work independently, with no opportunity for verbal exchange with others; a second group (Group B) participated in a teacher-directed lesson which involved some student-teacher interaction; the third group (Group C) engaged in "free discussion" of the topic to permit maximum pupil talk (student-student interaction).

Theoretically, this research investigation operated in the belief that written composition is essentially a communication process and that it must be viewed in that light. Further, it was held that the composing process itself must be the basis for research on writing, since classroom instruction cannot be substantially bettered without further explanation as to how and why students write in the first place. The present study was conceived, more specifically, on the premises that pre-writing is an important and integral part of the composing process; that,

to be meaningful, cognitive processing in terms of language must be internalized for the student writer (that is, that others cannot do this for him/her); that such processing occurs more readily in an environment where pupil talk (verbal interaction among students without teacher intervention) predominates.

The subjects involved in this study were taken from six classes of Grade X (English 10) students from three junior secondary schools in School District No. 61 (Greater Victoria), Victoria, British Columbia. All students wrote a pre-measure composition on the same topic and followed the same procedure (the method used by Group A for the composition test: independent work). The composition test itself was written the following week, with the classes assigned to one of the three treatment groups. (In practice, the students in each school followed a different method.) From the total population of 156, subsamples from each of the three treatment groups of thirty students (15 boys and 15 girls) were randomly selected for statistical analysis. As a result, the pre-measure and composition test papers for ninety students were utilized. Subsequently, one (male) student from Group A had to be deleted because of incomplete data provided for the composition test. The final study population, therefore, was eighty-nine students (44 males and 45 females).

For the purposes of this study, the subjects wrote only in one mode of discourse (the expressive mode). Both the

pre-measure and composition test papers were written in this mode, and all of the students wrote on the same topics.

Four hypotheses were tested in this study:

1. The hypothesis that there would be no significant differences among the six classes involved in this study on the pre-measure composition with respect to fluency (as measured by the number of words and the number of T-units written) and syntactic maturity (the number of words per T-unit) was not accepted when analysis of variance procedures were applied in the statistical treatment of the data. It was found that significant differences (beyond the .001 level) existed among the classes for all three variables.

(Because significant differences were found for the pre-measure composition, analysis of covariance procedures were applied to the three variables examined in the composition test situation to control for these differences.)

2. The hypothesis that there would be no significant differences among the three treatment groups in terms of fluency (as measured by the mean number of words in the compositions) was accepted. No significant differences were found.

3. The hypothesis that there would be no significant differences among the three treatment groups in terms of fluency (as measured by the mean number of T-units in the compositions)

was also accepted, although the results did approach significance (beyond the .07 level).

4. The hypothesis that no significant differences would exist among the three treatment groups with respect to the variable of syntactic maturity was not accepted. Differences significant beyond the .01 level were found.

A review of the literature would suggest that the findings of this study with respect to the variable of syntactic maturity are new. It would be desirable, therefore, that a replication of this study be attempted to confirm the results and, further, that additional research investigations be initiated with different populations, with different modes of discourse, and with a view to analyzing the effects, if any, on writing quality.

The results of this study would seem to indicate that composition instructional strategies ought to include provision for pre-writing and particularly for activities which permit maximum pupil talk, at least as far as the expressive mode of discourse is concerned. In addition, there appears to be a need for further research into the areas touched upon in the present study.

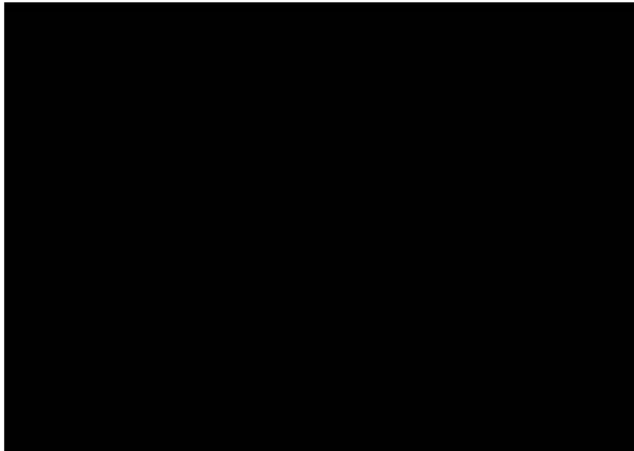


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is achieved only in the context of a healthy
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CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM

Much of the current talk about the basics of writing is not only confused but, even more ironic, frivolous. Capitalization, spelling, punctuation -- these are touted as the basics in writing when they represent, of course, merely the conventions, the amenities for recording the outcome of the process. The *process* is what is basic in writing, the process and the organic structures that interact to produce it.

This statement (Emig, 1978, p. 59) presents a compelling argument for studying the writing process. Much of the research work which has been undertaken in the field of written composition has focussed on either side-issues (as Emig has suggested) or products (the compositions themselves). Insufficient attention has been given to the underlying process or processes by and through which writing comes about. And yet, if we are to truly understand the products of written discourse, it would seem imperative that we attempt to gain some insight into this process.

Braddock, Lloyd-Jones and Schoer (1963), in their comprehensive survey of composition research, conclude their chapter on the state of knowledge about composition by posing some twenty-four research questions which they identified as "unexplored territory" -- "some questions which seem fundamental in the teaching and learning of written composition" (p. 52). Two questions appear rather late on the list:

21. What is involved in the art of writing?

.

24. Of what does skill in writing really consist?
(p. 53)

Admittedly, it was not the writers' intent to suggest any order of priority as they generated their list of questions. However, it seems ironic that such basic and critical questions should appear so far down the list. Perhaps, it may be tentatively suggested, the research cart has been placed, for some considerable period of time, before the horse. Cooper and Odell (1978) summarize the current state of affairs directly and succinctly by stating that "what we have needed for decades and what we must have soon is a period of vigorous research on written discourse and the composing process" (p. xi). Indeed, such research seems overdue.

To avoid any misunderstanding, it must be clearly pointed out that knowledge concerning the composing process does exist. To begin with, reference must be made to studies -- those of Piaget (1955) and Vygotsky (1962), for example -- which, although they

were concerned with more comprehensive issues, have given much insight into language behaviour in general and written language in particular. Studies of written composition (those dealing primarily with the *products* of writing) have often provided insights into or implications for our understanding of the process of writing as well. In addition, *theories* of discourse abound -- and have at least since Aristotle generated his *Rhetoric* in the fourth century, B. C. The field, then, has not been totally neglected.

Nonetheless, it is refreshing and exciting to note that the composing or writing process is receiving a fresh new look. Studies by Emig (1971), Weaver (1973), and Graves (1975) provide what Emig (1978, p. 59) describes as "quite simple and direct" experimental inquiries into the process. She continues by observing that "at the same time, new vantages are needed, especially if our ambition is to attempt sketching and then constructing a model or models of the writing process" (Emig, 1978, pp. 59-60).

Subsequently, Emig (1979) has suggested that further studies into the writing process need to receive the attention of interdisciplinary teams. Philosophers, psychologists, linguists, communication theorists -- indeed, a whole range of specialists -- need to bring their knowledge, skills, and experience to bear upon this problem. Educational researchers nevertheless need not wait until such "outside" studies are completed, for there are a number

of questions which can be posed and examined within the existing framework of educational research, even while our knowledge of the functioning of the human mind (for that is where the process has its inception, after all) is steadily expanded.

For the sake of argument, we may assume (largely because our current theories of the composing process seem to agree) that the writing process consists of three more or less identifiable stages: pre-writing, writing, and revision (or re-writing). (The terms may change, according to the context, but the kinds of activities envisioned in them remain relatively constant.) Of these three components or elements of the writing process, perhaps the one least understood is that of pre-writing. It is accepted as important (see Monk, 1971; Rohman, 1965; Britton, 1975) and thus it would seem logical that pre-writing would be of considerable concern to educational researchers. Perhaps one reason for our lack of knowledge of this aspect of the writing process occurs because much of this "stage" occurs in the mind itself; its activities are not fully (if at all) externalized.

The point is this: we need to know more about the pre-writing component of the writing process. In part, we need to acquire this knowledge because our insight into the composing process will not be complete without it. Perhaps more important, however, is the notion that pre-writing is the initial stage of the process. It might even be tentatively offered that the

activities begun in pre-writing continue through the other two stages of the process. That is, it may be that the process of writing does not consist of distinct phases but a series of activities overlapping from one stage into the next.

As previously mentioned, we will not fully understand the pre-writing component of the writing process until those in other disciplines proceed further in their studies of the mind and its function in thinking and writing. However, educational researchers can add to this growing body of knowledge by contributing insights into the communication process, particularly with respect to the use of language in its written form. One need not think long before a whole range of questions is generated. Among those which come to mind are the following:

1. What part do the related communication processes of thinking, speaking, listening, and reading play in the pre-writing component of written discourse?
2. What kinds of pre-writing activities seem to enhance (and inhibit) student writing?
3. Do different types of discourse require different types of pre-writing?

The list might well be continued but the point has probably already been made. Basic research into the pre-writing aspect of written discourse is possible. Relatively simple projects can be designed to find answers to such questions and the results of this research, when forthcoming, will help teachers and curriculum planners to

better understand and develop writing programs which are mindful of the process itself. With such information and such programs, student writing abilities can be fostered developmentally in terms of actual student needs and relevantly with respect to student goals and aspirations.

At the outset of this paper, exception was taken to the so-called "back-to-basics" movement. It was seen as a force which, unfortunately, directed attention away from the critical concern of writing *process*. Can this movement be viewed entirely in a negative light, however? Probably not. Public concern has concentrated attention on the need to focus on basic writing skills. Needs have thus been identified and the "system" is beginning to respond. Educators -- and educational researchers -- have thus an opportunity to synthesize existing knowledge with new discoveries. As more is learned of the process of writing, applications can be made to classroom instruction. It is hoped that the study undertaken and presented in this paper will have done something to further this tremendous but challenging work. To the extent that it has, it will have been worthwhile.

The Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this study was to determine what significant differences, if any, in English 10 students' fluency

and syntactic maturity would result from exposure to different types of pre-writing experiences.

Design of the Study

Six classes of English 10 students were selected from schools in School District No. 61 (Greater Victoria), Victoria, B. C. The six were assigned to one of three instructional groups, so that there were two classes for each of the three methods employed.

When all of the data from a pre-measure of student writing ability and a composition test were available, the number of useable cases was determined. From the available useable cases, thirty students (15 boys and 15 girls) were randomly selected from each group. As a result, the study consisted of a total sample of ninety students (45 boys and 45 girls).

Hypotheses

The study was designed to test the following hypotheses for significance at the .05 level:

1. There will be no significant differences among the classes involved in this study with respect to quantity of writing or syntactic maturity, as determined by a composition

pre-measure written by all students involved in the study under similar conditions.

2. There will be no significant differences among the instructional groups involved in this study with respect to the total number of words written in the test composition.

3. There will be no significant differences among the instructional groups involved in this study with respect to the number of T-units written in the test composition.

4. There will be no significant differences among the instructional groups involved in this study with respect to the syntactic maturity of the students as indicated by the test composition.

Definition of Terms

Composition. A *composition* is the product of a student's attempt to articulate his/her ideas, observations, opinions, feelings, and experiences (real and imaginary) by means of written expression.

Composition Test. A *composition test* is a composition written under specified conditions (time and instructional method) for the purpose of obtaining some measure of student writing ability.

English 10. *English 10* refers to the prescribed English course at the Grade X level offered in the secondary schools of

British Columbia. For the purposes of this study, it is assumed that the classes will consist of students of "average" or "above-average" ability in English; that is, the classes will not consist of students who have been grouped because of their perceived weakness in this subject area.

Instructional Groups. *Instructional groups* refer to the assignment of the subjects (by class) to one of three methods of pre-writing instruction.

Pre-Measure. The *pre-measure* refers to the composition test given to all of the subjects under similar conditions for the purpose of determining the variability of the groups before the experiment is conducted.

Pre-Writing. *Pre-writing* activities refer to the step or steps in the writing process which precede(s) the actual production or writing of a composition.

Quantity of Writing. *Quantity of writing* refers to the amount written by students during a composition test or pre-measure situation; quantity of writing is determined by (1) the number of words in a student composition, and (2) the number of T-units in that composition.

Syntactic Maturity. *Syntactic maturity* refers to the complexity of the syntactic or sentence structures written by the subjects and is indicated by the mean number of words written per T-unit.

T-unit. A *T-unit* refers to the measure introduced by Hunt (1965) and consists of one main clause plus any subordinate or non-clausal structure that is attached to or part of it.

Writing Process. The *writing process* is the sequence of activities which takes place in the student writing experience from the time that an idea is conceived until its final appearance in written form. The writing process may be seen to consist of three essential stages: conception, incubation, and production.

Limitations

1. This study was conducted within a reasonably small geographical area (the Gordon Head area of the Greater Victoria School District) and thus may be restricted in terms of the socio-economic status of the subjects. Any generalizations resulting from this study will thus be limited to students of similar populations.
2. The study was conducted with students at a single grade level. The findings may not be applicable therefore to students at other grade levels.
3. The study was conducted with "regular" or "average" stream English 10 students. The results may not be applicable to students in modified programs.

4. The subjects involved in this study wrote only in one mode of discourse (the expressive mode). The findings may not be applicable therefore to other modes of discourse (the transactional and poetic modes).

5. No test of intellectual ability was administered to the students.

6. Aside from the restriction as to grade level, there was no attempt to select the students for specific features. Thus, there was no attempt to determine the subjects' age, personal background or previous experiences.

Assumptions

In conducting this study, the researcher made the following assumptions:

1. Composition writing will continue to be an integral part of the English 10 program.

2. The instructional strategies designed for this study are sufficiently different to indicate whether different approaches do, in fact, produce different results.

The Significance of the Study

This study should provide some insight into

the process of writing as it applies to students at the Grade X level and should provide specific information concerning:

- (1) the value of some kind of instructional activity as a prelude to actual student writing;
- (2) the impact or effect of teacher guidance or direction of this pre-writing experience;
- (3) the influence of student talk or unstructured "free" discussion on the pre-writing experience.

To the extent that this study has provided information about the writing process, it will be useful to teachers of composition. The real significance of the study will be seen, however, in the differences observed among the pre-writing methods of instruction employed with the subjects.

CHAPTER II

A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Millar and Nystrand (1977), in a recent study of written communication, charge that teachers of English have failed to come to grips with language and learning. In part, they suggest, this failure results from a tendency to treat the study of language as an object rather than as a communication process. It is not the purpose of the present paper to take sides on the issue identified by Millar and Nystrand. Yet, it will be useful to keep in mind the fact that composition -- or written language -- is essentially a communication process and that it must be considered in that light.

The purpose of this chapter is to provide, as clearly as possible, a theoretical framework for the research study upon which this paper is based. As such, to be considered are the following topics: the communication process; the concept of language; the relationship(s) between oral and written language; the composing process itself. It is hoped that the discussion

presented here will provide a focus for the review of literature presented in Chapter III and the research study described in subsequent chapters.

The Process of Communication

It is likely that we have had a concept of communication and the process it represents ever since the need arose for its use. However, with the advent of information theory, the process of communication took on a new light. It was described in different terms and was constructed into a model consisting of a few fundamental elements. The system of communication advanced by Weaver (1949), and based on a more technical presentation (Shannon and Weaver, 1949), provides a model which is applicable to technological media as well as simple human speech. According to Weaver, a message begins at an information source and ends at a destination; in between it travels in more or less linear fashion through a transmitter (where it is encoded) by means of a signal into a channel (which is also the noise source) and on to a receiver (for decoding). Presumably, a malfunction in any element of the process -- as well as any interference in the channel -- would result in a communication breakdown.

Moffett (1968) offers his view of the communication process in the context of his theory of discourse. In his view,

there are essentially three elements to discourse (and therefore to communication):

The elements of discourse are a first person, a second person, and a third person; a speaker, listener, and subject; informer, informed, and information; narrator, auditor, and story; transmitter, receiver, and message. The structure of discourse, and therefore the super-structure of English, is this set of relations among the three persons. (p. 10)

In their handbook for teachers, Moffett and Wagner (1976) expand this view somewhat as the basic elements are considered in the context of two levels of verbal coding: the oral (speaking and listening) and the written (writing and reading). Subsequently, the model is further developed as the relationships among the elements are considered; the model now becomes an inverted equilateral triangle: the sender is at one point of the base, the receiver at the other; the third point of the triangular model represents the subject. The distance along the base (between the sender and the receiver) indicates the distance or rhetorical relation (expressed in terms of time and space) between the sender and receiver; it includes the purpose or intent of the message. The height or altitude of the triangle reflects the referential relation, with distance in this case depicting the levels of raw experience and the verbalization of it. Within the triangle, we have the content of the message. This model, then, accounts for the three basic elements of communication: sender, receiver and subject; it also considers the levels and

types of abstraction necessary to communicate and in that sense it adds something to our concept of the process.

A third model of communication, again presented with problems of language learning in mind, is offered by Britton (1970). This model is simple, identifying only two elements: those of speaker and participant. There are some limitations to this model as Lloyd-Jones (1977) points out:

It is an excellent model for directing observations of the gradual socialization of children, but it tends to take for granted the demands of the subject, of information processing which is important to responsible adults and thus to the schools. The two-part division may be said to include some information processing as part of a Kantian discovery of *a priori* forms within the self (temporal and spatial issues, for example), and on the other hand, to include some other information processing in the learning of standard public procedures for getting along in a society (report writing or business letter writing). Still, by limiting the observations about the writing to the participants in communication, the encoder and the decoder, the two-part division diminishes our sense of how the external reality influences our reasons for writing and how the code itself works. (p. 38)

A later view of the process (Britton *et al.*, 1975) seems to satisfy most of the concerns expressed by Lloyd-Jones and modifies the model at the same time. Within a school setting, and particularly in relation to the written work expected of students, the receiver of the message (the audience) may not be clear. As a result, there is an evident need to develop in the writer a sense of audience. Further, the purpose or function of the message is identified as an issue for concern. Communication through

written discourse is thus made both effective and efficient as the writer (sender) considers the receiver (audience) and the subject (by means of the function or purpose of the piece).

Kinneavy (1971) presents yet another view of the communication process. Like Moffett, he perceives the model as an inverted triangle. At either ends of the baseline are the encoder and decoder; the third point is the component of reality and the area of the triangle represents the signal.

...the structure speaks for itself. Basic to all uses of language are a person who encodes a message, the signal (language) which carries the message, the reality to which the message refers, and the decoder (receiver of the message). (p. 19)

So far, the Kinneavy model has added little that is new. However following on from the conceptualization offered by Shannon and Weaver (1949), he observes that the communication triangle can be given various interpretations according to purpose. First, the model can be considered from the general level of the three areas of language study: syntactics, semantics, and pragmatics (Level A). Subsequently, the main subdivisions of each of these areas are considered (Level B). Finally, the structure is further broken down and the aspect of pragmatics (which includes discourse) is developed in considerable detail (Level C). Kinneavy's model thus allows us to look at the English language in general and written discourse in particular in terms of all of the components of the communication process. It provides a comprehensive and useful view.

One additional view of the communication process needs consideration. Wilkinson (1971) depicts four principal elements in a communication situation: an addressor (sender); an addressee (receiver); a subject; and a context or environment. What appears to be new is the notion of context. In a physical sense, we are talking of the same thing represented by the channel of the Weaver model. But since context also includes emotional considerations, it is at the same time something more. We would be hard-pressed to argue that context (including both its physical and emotional aspects) does not affect the communication situation.

At this point, a synthesis seems desirable. From the information theorists (Weaver, 1949), we perceive the basic structure of the communication process: there is a sender (information source and transmitter) who encodes a message (content or subject) which travels through a channel (the physical context) to a receiver. Within this model, we recognize the potential for noise (interference or distortion) in the channel. Moffett (1968) and Moffett and Wagner (1976) focus our attention on another view of the communication process. The model is no longer linear; the subject of the communication is no longer implied (since it is not really identified as a component in the Weaver model); and the cognitive functions (specifically the notion of abstraction) are given consideration.

In short, the rhetorical and referential relationships among sender, receiver, and subject are explored more fully. Britton (1970) and Britton *et al.*, (1975), recognizing that certain communication situations (specifically those involving written composition in schools) do not have a clearly identified audience and/or a clearly stated function or purpose, remind us of the responsibility to ensure that all components of the communication model are kept in mind. Kinneavy's (1971) comprehensive view of the communication situation is also useful since we are reminded that technical problems, semantic problems, and effectiveness problems can serve to destroy or distort communication. Finally, Wilkinson (1971) acknowledges for us the full context (emotional as well as physical) of the communication situation. We recognize, as a consequence, that communication, to be effective, depends upon a great many features in addition to the basic elements or components. Our concept of this process must continually make provision for such complexity.

A Concept of Language

Language Defined

Although man has at his disposal a great many means of communication, none is as unique and as pervasive in its use as language. As a starting point to our understanding of language, a definition seems in order. Sapir's (1921) view

is worthy of consideration:

Language is a purely human and non-instinctive method of communicating ideas, emotions, and desires by means of a system of voluntarily produced symbols. These symbols are, in the first instance, auditory and they are produced by the so-called "organs of speech". (p. 7)

Analysis of this definition reveals to us that: (1) language is uniquely human; (2) language is learned; (3) language is *one* method of communication; (4) language is systematic; (5) language depends upon symbols, it is a symbol-system; (6) language can be -- and is -- heard; (7) language is generated in the organs of speech. Consequently, in terms of this definition, writing is *language-based* and is not, strictly speaking, language. This distinction is important, for it reminds us that we cannot consider written forms as "speech written down"; our writing is a separately generated method of communicating. Although it may be that the interaction of speech and writing in the human mind may cause one to influence the other in certain ways, the processes themselves are distinct.

Language Theories

Within the last twenty-five to thirty years, our view of language has changed considerably, as King (1978) points out. Up to 1950, the structural view of language advocated by Bloomfield (1933) and Fries (1952) prevailed. Subsequently, the transformational-generative theories of Chomsky (1965) gained prominence. More recently, we have what King describes as

"a view of language wherein semantic constraints prevail in describing the formation of utterances" (1978, p. 195). The point to be made is this: our perception of language is subject to change. We would do well not to become too attached to any particular theory or concept.

Thought and Language

A further necessary consideration is the relationship which exists between thought and language. Since language, and consequently language-based forms of communication, are essentially cognitive activities, we are compelled to thoughtfully examine the studies and theories of Piaget (1968) and Vygotsky (1962). In doing so, we accept, at least tacitly, a cognitive-developmental approach to the study of language and composing. Barritt and Kroll (1978) elaborate on this view:

The cognitive-developmental position is a theoretical paradigm in which to approach research: the position influences the kinds of questions one asks and guides the sort of projects one finds interesting. The cognitive-developmentalists believe that one of the most fruitful ways to understand any mature mental activity is to study the ontogenesis of that process in the child. (p. 50)

This approach seems sensible and is, perhaps, the only productive way to study the language and thinking processes as they manifest themselves in humans.

The Contributions of Jean Piaget

Two aspects of Piaget's work, in particular, deserve attention with respect to the composing process. First, we have the concepts of "disequilibrium" and "assimilation" which Odell (1973) describes in some detail:

According to Jean Piaget, all human development begins with our awareness of some "disequilibrium," a state in which our ways of thinking and acting become inadequate to deal with a change that has taken place within or outside ourselves. To restore equilibrium, we tend first to "assimilate" the world around us. We try to alter our surroundings (people as well as objects) to suit our own needs and purposes; we select and shape experiences in accordance with the "structures" -- *i.e.*, the hopes, fears, memories, conceptual categories -- that comprise our "internal world". Obviously, we can only do a certain amount of assimilating. At some point we have to modify these structures, make them "accommodate" the uniqueness and complexity of experience. (p. 36)

Translating Piaget's view into his own terms, Odell sees the process we use to achieve equilibrium as problem-solving. In this context, there are applications to teaching in general and to instruction in composition in particular.

Piaget's theory suggests a rationale and a direction for a course in composition.... If we agree that our knowledge is subject to continual revision, it would seem that one of our main obligations is to help students understand how to live satisfactorily with the uncertainty implicit in continual change. (Odell, 1973, p. 37)

Odell has his students use heuristic procedures as they prepare to write. One might theorize that other types of pre-writing activities would serve the same purpose.

A second application of Piaget's work concerns the concept of egocentrism.

One of the most compelling applications of Piagetian psychology to communication has been the link between egocentrism -- a cognitive state in which a person fails to perceive others' perspectives -- and lack of audience awareness. (Barritt and Kroll, 1978, p. 54)

If students, in writing, are to adequately develop their senses of audience, they must be prepared to assume different roles. In short, they must contend with their own egocentrism.

The Work of L. S. Vygotsky

Vygotsky (1962) has also made a significant contribution to our understanding of the relationship(s) between thought and language. Recognizing that the two spheres (language and thought) do overlap, he refers to the union as verbal thought.

While admitting there is nonlinguistic thought and nonconceptual language, Vygotsky theorizes that much of language and thought is interdependent and inseparable. The two processes interweave until there is only one integrated phenomenon. (Hanf, 1973, p. 14)

Verbal thought that precedes expression is "inner speech"; according to Vygotsky, this aspect consists mainly of predicates. Translating inner speech to external speech is a reasonably simple cognitive operation, while translation to written language, because it involves abstraction, is considerably more complex.

Bruner (1966) extends Vygotsky's view somewhat:

In spoken speech there is more likely to be not only a referent present, but a great amount of steering provided by the social demands of the dialogue.

Written speech may bear the same relation to spoken speech that algebra bears to arithmetic. A written word stands for a spoken word used in any context whatever. A spoken word "stands for" a thing or state or thought -- not another word in a different medium. In written language, moreover, no interlocutor is presupposed and none is there. Spoken utterances are normally determined in large part by the demands of a dialogue, with the interlocutor helping frame our decisions about what requires saying. Whoever uses written speech must detach himself from immediate social interaction altogether and conjure up in his own mind a situation appropriate to the written words with which he is dealing. (p. 111)

Thus, in considering aspects of the composing process, accommodation must be made for the differences -- as well as the similarities -- between human speech and written language.

Relationships Between Oral and Written Language

At this point, and before proceeding to deal with the composing process itself, it seems appropriate to consider the relationships which occur between oral and written language. As Vygotsky (1962) has suggested, we must keep in mind that written forms are second-order abstractions from human speech. Barritt and Kroll (1978) observe that while speaking and writing are both governed by the rules of semantics and syntax and are both dependent upon thought, spoken language develops earlier and faster and is a much more fluent and automatic form of expression; the writer, therefore, often faces the

problem of having his/her ideas run ahead of expression. Emig (1977) also points out that "a number of trans-disciplinary sources suggest that talking and writing may emanate from different organic sources and represent quite different, possibly distinct, language functions" (p. 123).

In spite of the obvious differences between the processes of oral and written language, it is still widely argued that classroom talk enhances writing.

It is through...talk that children can best find out in exchange with one another what are their responses to an experience, real or symbolic, and help one another to come to terms with it. Such talk does not occur in the classroom, however, without deliberate design; it is most likely when small groups of pupils talk about matters which engage their deepest attention. Nor will children talk in this way unless they feel that their responses and opinions are valued, and this has implications for the teacher's relationship with his pupils. Works of literature enter this talk as voices contributing to the conversation, and the talk in its turn provides a context for literature, which helps the children to take in what the voices have to say. (Douglas Barnes, quoted in Dixon, 1967, p. 36)

Referring to such talk as "interaction," Moffett (1968) advocates its use. Possien (1969) asserts that "...the skills of oral communication are prerequisite to the development of all language skills" (p. 8). This belief appears also to be shared by Lundsteen (1976). Despite a caution by Groff (1978, p. 189) that "...the empirical evidence we now have on this issue tells us not to overstate the effects of children's oral language on

their written composition," the view persists that perhaps oral language can somehow exert a positive influence on what is written.

The Writing Process

It is now appropriate to consider a model or view of the composing process. It is not the function of the present chapter to review the state of discourse or composing theory and to discuss fully the contributions to it. (Such will occur, to some extent at least, in Chapter 3.) What will appear here is the view of the writing process as it is perceived by the researcher and thus as it influences the study described in this paper.

A Word of Caution

Interestingly enough, we discover at the outset that there are many views -- and many ways of studying -- the composing process. Watson (1976) points out that one response is to fall in line with the "back-to-basics" movement and to teach the conventions of writing and usage in a manner which would appear to echo the objectivity and the rigour of scientific knowledge. Watson rejects this approach, suggesting that the "objectivist" concept is misleading. Citing the work of the philosopher-scientist Polanyi (1958, 1966, 1969), Watson observes that we can know tacitly as well as explicitly and we would do well to

apply such knowledge to our studies. If our knowledge were confined to what we can prove, we would be in a sorry state indeed. As well, we can use our powers of tacit knowing to guide us to problems offering new discoveries. Applied to our search for a greater understanding of the composing process, tacit knowledge is a phenomenon which is critical and one which we ought not to ignore.

Defining the Composing Process

A further problem confronting us is one of definition. What kinds of activities, knowledge, and skills comprise the composing process or processes? What are its/their components? Cooper and Odell (1977) offer this view:

Composing involves exploring and mulling over a subject; planning the particular piece (with or without notes or outline); getting started; making discoveries about feelings, values, or ideas, even while in the process of writing a draft; making continuous decisions about diction, syntax, and rhetoric in relation to the intended meaning and to the meaning taking shape; reviewing what has accumulated, and anticipating and rehearsing what comes next; tinkering and reformulating; stopping; contemplating the finished piece and perhaps, finally, revising. This complex, unpredictable, demanding activity is what we call the *writing process*. Engaging in it, we learn and grow. Measurement plans for instruction or research should not subvert it. (p. xi)

A closer look at this statement causes us to realize that what we have is a series of steps or stages which, not too surprisingly, correspond rather closely to the progression identified earlier

as the process of communication. Viewed overall as a process, it may be conceived in linear fashion but, as Sommers (1978) observes, we must be careful not to let our operational definition become a fixed model without at least pausing to consider its theoretical soundness. She continues:

It is probably true that any observable behavior, including composing, must unfold linearly over time, but inasmuch as we are able to see significant recurring patterns in a linear sequence of events, we can hypothesize that the composing process is both linear and recursive. Thus, it is possible to view the composing process as not just a linear series of stages, but rather as a hierarchical set of sub-processes. (pp. 6-7)

Finally, and again following Sommers' argument, we must be certain that our model and/or definition describes the *process* as we intend and not the *product*. This view appears to be shared by de Beaugrande (1978) who suggests that writing is produced by means of the interaction of three factors: the real world, the writer, and the reader. He suggests that by diagramming composition as a control structure we are able to see the interaction between the process and the product and to discover that composition is not a linear process. In this way, the situations of the real world (with all its influence) are perceived by the writer who then processes and stores them; subsequently, he/she develops the intention to communicate: a plan is made (consciously or unconsciously) and the topic and material are combined into a meaningful representation that is recorded (in sentence-and-paragraph form) and then evaluated.

Developing a Model of the Composing Process

D'Angelo (1976) offers a view of the composing process which balances the "principles of discourse" (mechanical, linguistic, and rhetorical considerations) against the "forms" or modes of discourse. In the light of this two-fold structure, the writer examines his/her purpose and takes into account the specific demands of the audience.

Consideration should also be given to the model developed by Petrosky and Brozick (1979) which emerges from the cognitive-developmental tradition of psychology (most notably the studies of Piaget) and current research and theory in the field of psycholinguistics. In addition, there appears to be an attempt to synthesize the views of discourse offered by Moffett (1968) and Britton *et al.* (1975). Writing is seen as a "highly sophisticated cognitive process, a process that involves the brain's ability to acquire, organize, and produce information" (Petrosky and Brozick, 1979, p. 98). They continue by defining the composing process:

Composing, then, is a complex of processes that is altered by present and past experiences that in turn alter our impressions of the world. In acting out our daily responses to the environment, we are composing. The process of composition consists of three separate, although not mutually exclusive, stages: conceptualization, incubation-formulation, and editing-revising. One stage does not automatically end when another begins; instead, they interact dynamically in the composing process. During this process many combinations of variables, or *features*, come into play. Encompassing such

things as memory, cognitive style, personality, audience, purpose, language resources, and expectations, features are those over-riding influences that alter conceptual development and ultimately the written product. (p. 99)

Thus, Petrosky and Brozick generate a model which assimilates the theoretical and research framework which they have identified. This model would appear to be sound, for the most part, although they seem to have been rather arbitrary in their identification of the stages in the composing process.

The process of writing, in the view of Britton *et al.* (1975), has essentially three main stages: conception, incubation, and production. It is interesting to note, if we accept this model of the writing process, that two of the three stages (conception and incubation) occur before actual writing begins. Further, they argue that it is important to study the preparatory stages of writing because it is at these stages that teachers can attempt to influence the writing of their students; intervention is not appropriate during the production stage. Two factors influence the kinds of planning and incubating that go on in the writer's mind:

There is the need to get it right in terms of the facts of the case and what is generally known and accepted.... There is also the need to get it right with the self, the need to arrive at the point where one has the satisfaction of presenting what is to be presented in the way one thinks it should be done. (Britton *et al.*, 1975, p. 26)

Citing the work of Barnes (1969) and implicitly the earlier studies and writing of Britton (1970), the study team points out that the relationship of talk to writing "is central to the writing process" (p. 29). They continue:

.One of the great values of talk in the writing process is that it permits the expression of tentative conclusions and opinions. To the extent that incubation consists of arriving at an understanding, working towards a synthesis, coming to terms with a general principle, it's a great advantage to be able to try it out. The process won't be complete until the writing is done, but the free flow of talk allows ideas to be bandied about, and opens up new relationships, so that explaining the whole thing to oneself may be much easier." (p. 30)

If the task of explanation to self is easier, then perhaps the student's writing will flow more easily. He or she will, as a result, be able to put pencil to paper more readily and the expression of ideas will occur spontaneously.

The Pre-Writing Component of the Writing Process

It is generally held, on the basis of both observation and research, that effective composition programs recognize, among others, the following general principles:

1. The act of writing an assigned composition should be seen as a process involving more than one step, and at least one of these steps occurs before the actual writing takes place; that is, there is a pre-writing stage in the process of writing.

2. The pre-writing experience ought to be designed to achieve two main purposes: to supply students with information that is required to complete the assignment and to stimulate students to write.
3. The pre-writing experience should include the opportunity for student talk (an oral language base).

Lundsteen (1976) makes the following suggestion:

Written composition needs to be tied to oral language. Conversation and "free talk" are the basis for consciously structured reporting, story telling and retelling, both original and from other sources. The confidence and fluency that stem from composing with spoken words and body language is (*sic*) essentially related to composing with written words. (pp. 1-2)

If we accept these principles, then we also accept a number of implications for classroom instruction in written composition.

It may be argued first that the pre-writing experience or stage may be of critical importance to the writing process. The research evidence being accumulated (and discussed more fully in Chapter 3) would seem to indicate so. Further, it might be proposed that composition teachers would do well to examine the form which the pre-writing activity takes. Knowing, as a result of the work of Flanders (1967) and Barnes (1969), that teacher talk tends to dominate much of the verbal interaction in the classroom, that pupil talk which does occur is often influenced or directed by the teacher, but that "free discussion"

(or undirected pupil talk) is generally held (see Britton, 1970; Britton *et al.*, 1975; Moffett and Wagner, 1976) to be most useful in the pre-writing lesson activity, composition teachers should examine the form that such lessons take and, where necessary, should make greater use of the "free talk" technique to stimulate student writing. Perhaps as important as the skill(s) taught in the composition lesson, then, is the necessity to provide first a stimulus to initiate student writing and, second, an opportunity for student talk to increase fluency of written expression.

It should be recognized that fluency (or quantity) of writing will not, in itself, mean that the quality of student writing will necessarily improve. Perhaps, however, with the free flow of thought which comes through oral pre-writing activity, students will not have to pause as often during the productive stage of their writing and that, as a result, the sentences and paragraphs they compose will reflect greater syntactic maturity and be technically more correct. In short, it may be that fluency of writing has the added effect of improving the quality of student writing.

In his classic study of language and its relationship to human thought, Vygotsky (1962) has occasion to note the distinguishing features among inner, oral, and written speech. As he explores the relationships of each to the other, he says:

In written speech, lacking situational and expressive supports, communication must be achieved only through words and their combinations; this requires the speech activity to take complicated forms -- hence the use of first drafts. The evolution from draft to the final copy reflects our mental process. Planning has an important part in written speech, even when we do not actually write out a draft. Usually we say to ourselves that we are going to write; this is also a draft, though in thought only. ...this mental draft is inner speech. (p. 144)

With these observations as a foundation, it seems possible to propose the following hypotheses:

1. Writing for an audience may be seen as an extension of written speech into dialogue form.
2. Oral speech may be used as a means of preparing inner speech for the written form; that oral speech may serve as a step in the process of moving from monologue (inner speech) to written dialogue (the composition).
3. Fluency in writing may be enhanced by oral speech, since oral speech would serve as a further means of revising the mental draft (inner speech), thus making it easier for the writer to commit his/her thoughts to paper.

In essence, these hypotheses are the theoretical framework for the research undertaken in the study described in this paper.

A Synthesis and Summary

The composing process (or processes) is/are complex indeed. Student writing depends upon a great many factors.

Amongst these, as Emig (1970) points out, are the sophistication of the student's writing skills, his/her temperament and "ego-strength", and the mode of discourse selected for writing. It is the fundamental thesis of the present study that the way(s) in which the resources of language are manipulated *before* the writing is even begun is/are also of critical importance to the product which emerges.

CHAPTER III

REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

Meckel (1963) began his review of the teaching of composition and literature by observing that "a review...should recognize that any conceptual framework for interpreting and evaluating studies must take account of recent educational controversies" (p. 966). The comment remains appropriate today. In order to provide some sort of parameters for the review of literature that follows in this chapter, it has been necessary to remain cognizant of societal demands for more effective teaching of basic literacy skills on the one hand, and the pressures within the field for more specific knowledge with respect to the process or processes of composing on the other. Reflected in the summary that is presented herewith is the assumption that better and more effective instruction in the field of composition teaching will not come unless and until we

have a deeper knowledge of the principles which motivate and guide the writing process.

The State of Composition Research

Braddock *et al.* (1963) attempted the first comprehensive survey of the literature concerning the teaching of composition since Lyman's (1929) summary. At that time, the authors suggested, "...research in composition, taken as a whole, may be compared to chemical research as it emerged from the period of alchemy..." (p. 5). The studies undertaken and described in the survey related primarily to environmental and instructional factors affecting composition, rhetorical considerations, measurement procedures, class size, and the influences of mechanical practices on writing effectiveness. In short, the studies described, in large measure, were concerned with the products of the writing experience. There was virtually no concern with the underlying processes which shape the product, nor (as indicated previously) was any need seen for such concern.

Squire and Applebee (1968), in their investigation into instructional practices in the teaching of English at the high school level, noted that writing programs tended to be haphazardly organized and lacking in effectiveness and, further, that they paid little attention to the research evidence that

was available. More recently, Lundsteen (1976) and other members of a committee of the National Conference on Research in English attempted to review some of the key research on the teaching of composition. The purpose of this survey was to provide practical advice to teachers. In part, no doubt, this task was undertaken with a view to the problem identified by Squire and Applebee.

The first investigation into the research available on the *process* of writing was published by Odell and Cooper (1968). Complaining that "for too long a time, many researchers assumed that the most important kind of inquiry was pedagogical research," they attempted to direct attention toward the writing process and away from "the sort of pedagogical, comparison-group studies" described in the report of Braddock *et al.* (1963). Offering a challenge to researchers to become involved in the direction they were proposing, they issued the following comment:

Just given the sheer number of assumptions, theories, methods, and questions relevant to composing, achieving a better understanding of our field will be difficult. We will have to raise questions that heretofore have seemed unaskable; we will have to devise new procedures for obtaining answers; and we will have to be patient and allow these new techniques time to yield the answers we seek. Most difficult of all, we must be prepared to accept a provisional understanding of our field with new questions and procedures far outnumbering undisputed facts and proven methods. (Cooper and Odell, 1978, pp. xvi-xvii)

Time will tell whether or not this challenge can and will be answered.

Discourse Theory

Whatever opinion one may hold of the ideas generated by Moffett (1968) on the nature of written discourse, acknowledgement must be given that the theory of discourse presented represents an important step into our investigation of the composing process. It would be inappropriate, even if it were possible, to adequately present all aspects of his theory in this paper. Nonetheless, one must observe that he has outlined the theoretical field quite well. Key amongst the notions presented by him are the following:

1. Utilizing Langer's (1953) concept of structure as the way something is put together, an argument is presented for a structural view of the English curriculum.
2. Recognizing that language is a cognitive activity and that written discourse represents a second-degree abstraction from speech, it is proposed that the English (and specifically the composition) curriculum account for the necessity to teach abstraction processes.
3. The key elements in discourse are the relations between the sender, the receiver, and the subject of a communication.
4. The activity of discourse is determined essentially by the distance in time and space between the speaker and listener.
5. The modes of discourse need to be viewed in terms of

the hierarchical levels of abstraction.

In summary, Moffett's view of discourse is represented as a continuum: it begins with interior monologue (Piaget's egocentric speech) in which speaker and audience are identical, then moves to dialogue (in which speaker and audience are separate but close in space and time), and proceeds progressively to forms or modes in which the speaker and audience are more widely separated in temporal and spatial terms.

Kinneavy (1971) offered a view of the composing process which related the elements of that process to those identified in his model of a system of communication: encoder, decoder, reality (or subject) and signal (language) represented in a triangular model. To Kinneavy, the most important aspect of discourse was purpose (p. 48). Four categories or forms of discourse result from the application of aims or purpose to the elements of the communication process. *Expressive* discourse is personal discourse which emphasizes the encoder; *persuasive* discourse is personal discourse which emphasizes the decoder; discourse which emphasizes reality or the subject is said to be *referential*; and discourse which focusses on the signal (language) is classified as *literary*.

A third major theory of composing was offered by Britton *et al.* (1975). Unlike the theories of Moffett and

Kinneavy, which appear to have been derived more from personal experience rather than from specific research investigations, the theory developed by Britton *et al.* emerged from a rather mammoth Schools Council project undertaken in Great Britain between 1966 and 1971. The results of this investigation, which focussed on writing processes, indicated that:

1. Writing could be viewed as a three stage process, with the stages being identified as *conception*, *incubation*, and *production*.
2. One critical concern in the writing process is the writer's "sense of audience". Four categories were established: self, teacher, wider audience (known); unknown audience.
3. Purpose or function of discourse was also seen as important and provided the basis for describing the mode of discourse. Three categories were identified: transactional, expressive, and poetic.

Thus, a direction for research was indicated. By studying the *processes* as well as the *products* of writing, important new insights were added, insights which could provide the basis for new instructional strategies.

The Composing Process

To begin with, it must be recognized that reading and

writing -- Vygotsky's (1962) "second-order abstractions" -- are essentially forms of language processing. The temptation is to treat the two as totally unrelated functions, but to do so may be misleading, as Page (1974) warned:

The processes of writing and reading are usually studied and analyzed separately, perhaps because each ordinarily is thought of as occurring in a different organism. Insights into writing and reading can be gained by examining the relationships between them, with communication assumed as the intent of both the writer and the reader. (p. 170)

We do not always have much evidence to go on if we restrict our observations too narrowly. Implicitly, Page argued that we ought to make the whole of the communication process our scope, pointing out that "...most of the communication process is not observable and can only be understood if one constructs a theoretical framework for piecing together the observable fragments" (p. 170).

If we are truly interested in the writing process, we must also be aware that the instructional strategies employed -- indeed the entire classroom environment -- will influence the products which are forthcoming. As one example, a study conducted in three schools in central Saskatchewan (Whale and Robinson, 1978) noted that the mode of discourse selected by the students varied according to the "instructor"; students writing under the direction of the classroom teacher wrote mainly in the transactional mode, while researcher-directed motivation produced

a more even distribution of discourse modes. Thus, the factors affecting the writing process are often subtle and elusive; composition research must be sensitive to such influences.

Perhaps the first significant and fruitful study of the composing processes of students was reported by Emig (1971). Using what might be described as a "case study" approach, she involved eight twelfth grade subjects for her research, requiring each student to compose four times. Writing was classified as two types: *reflexive*, to refer to writing which focussed on the writer's thoughts and which was directed chiefly to the writer himself/herself; *extensive*, to indicate writing which conveyed a message or communication and which was directed usually to an external audience. Students were asked to compose aloud, to externalize their process of composing. In writing that was "self-sponsored", Emig found that the "significant other" to whom the piece was directed was normally a peer; "school-sponsored" writing was directed towards the teacher. Interesting also, for the purpose of the present study, was her discovery that pre-writing is a longer process in self-sponsored than in school-sponsored writing.

A second major study of composing processes was reported by Graves (1975). Using seven year old children, this investigation

was conducted in four phases. First, the writing folders of ninety-four children were examined to determine their thematic choices, writing frequency, and the type of writing completed (assigned or unassigned). At the second stage, fifty-three writing episodes were observed (involving fourteen students). Third, interviews were conducted with seventeen students to ascertain the children's view of their own writing and their concept of good writing. Finally, a case study of a single youngster was undertaken. During the course of this investigation, the researcher studied three phases of the writing process: pre-writing, composing, and postwriting. Graves found that children could be classified as one of two basic types of writers: reactive and reflective. *Reactive* writers used overt language in pre-writing and composing, proofread by word units, and had a poor sense of audience. For *reflective* writers, there was little rehearsal; they proofread in longer units; and they reflected a growing sense of audience.

Following upon these two major studies have been a number of other investigations into the writing process. Stallard (1974) studied the behaviour of fifteen senior writers in a Virginia public high school. A similar group of fifteen students was used as a control group. He found that only one student (out of the total group of thirty) -- a student in the experimental group -- prepared anything like an outline. Good

writers generally spent more time (4.18 minutes to 1.26 minutes) in pre-writing activities and they wrote slightly more.

Mischel (1974) conducted a case study with a twelfth grade male student from a Buffalo, New York high school. He found that: (1) little time was spent in pre-writing; (2) most of the planning that was done was accomplished mentally; (3) the student experienced little trouble starting; (4) composing aloud (using the process utilized by Emig) was difficult and unrewarding at first; (5) composing aloud provided little insight into the structuring of sentences, although the student did admit to "flowering up" his writing; (6) little attention was paid to correcting; (7) some revision was attempted; (8) some difficulty was experienced in concluding the writing, but most pieces were conceived "whole" in the student's mind and therefore ended easily. In summary, Mischel confirmed Emig's finding that planning and pre-writing differed greatly for self-sponsored and teacher-sponsored writing.

Crabbe (1976) examined the composing processes of mature adults. Following Emig's (1971) design, she focussed on the extensive and reflexive modes. The students appeared to engage in little formal planning, but they showed great willingness to rework pieces that had been written. Crabbe also discovered that the students applied assumed or explicit standards to their own writing in selecting a topic or contemplating the product.

In addition, the writers' use of language and their selection of problem-solving strategies identified them as one of two types which Crabbe classified as narrative or lyric. She concluded by suggesting that any individual engaged in composing is working under the influence of forces that vary with time, place, and the phase of the process, as well as the individual personality.

Metzger (1976) studied the writing processes of three students, one each in Grade VII, Grade X, and college. She found that students do no planning; they find starting easy, especially with personal narratives; they show a preoccupation with technical matters at the expense of content; they are syntactically immature writers; they omit words and phrases; and they do not revise. She concluded that since students see teachers as editors and proofreaders and view writing as a joyless chore, teachers need to become coaches and empathetic listeners who provide students with opportunities for pleasurable writing experiences.

Two other studies relative to the composing process reported results which confirm those already reviewed. Crowley (1976) conducted a study at the college level and based her findings on a study of the composing process as it was reflected in student writing journals. She indicated that the students spent little time in preparation and that the students used only

a simple drafting technique. Pianko (1979) studied the composing processes of college freshman writers and again confirmed that students spent very little time engaged in pre-writing activities.

Cooper and Odell (1976) attempted to determine if spoken language helped writers to formulate or clarify the message they wished to communicate. Interviews were conducted with eight published writers (university teachers and scholars, news writers, columnists, and technical writers). They determined that sound is used to influence the oral qualities of the writing (volume, speed, inflection) and to decide whether these qualities were appropriate for the speaker-audience relation. They cautioned that the researcher must be careful in considering the writer's own interpretation of the writing act; apparently, the activities described by the writer were not always consistent with what appeared to occur. Cooper and Odell concluded by suggesting that there was a need for further study to identify the stages in the composing process for which a sense of sound could be helpful to the writer.

Relationships Between Oral and Written Language

Another area of research concern which impinges upon the factors under investigation in the present study pertains to the relationships which exist between oral and written language.

Lull (1929) reported a study involving intermediate grade pupils in which he found that the pupil's ability in written expression overtakes his/her spoken expression during Grades IV and V. Bushnell (1930), working with tenth grade pupils from a New York public high school, found that pupils' oral compositions were slightly longer than those which were written but that the written compositions were significantly superior in thought and sentence structure; in addition, he reported that the abler students used more simple sentences and that written themes (and the better oral themes) contained more subordinate introductory clauses. In another early study, Lemon and Buswell (1943) examined the differences in oral and written expression among Grade IX pupils, noting that the average number of errors in the informal conversations (21) was greater than the number of errors in the written work (15).

In a significant study conducted in St. Paul, Minnesota, and involving subjects aged 9, 11, 13, and 15; Harrell (1957) reported that the students used more subordinate clauses in writing than in speaking. At the same time, he found "no indication that for any of the measures used a mature level has been reached in either written or oral stories" (p. 71).

Also of interest and relevance are the studies conducted by Goldman-Eisler (1958, 1961) on the relationships between speech and mental processes. She observed that "...initial delay

in the production of speech accompanying verbal planning at a high level of cognitive activity, such as abstraction and generalisation, pays off in the ultimate efficiency of the process of reproduction" (1961, p. 231). One might well speculate on the implications of such findings with respect to writing processes.

McLean (1964) and Bavery (1968) conducted studies with intermediate level pupils (McLean with pupils in Grades IV and V; Bavery with Grade V pupils) to compare aspects of their oral and written language development. The findings from these studies indicated that pupils at that age level used more words, more different words, and more complicated syntax (as indicated by clauses per T-unit) in written over oral discourse.

In a study involving ninth grade pupils, Tovatt and Miller (1967) asked their subjects to compose aloud into a tape recorder as they were writing. Afterwards, they were to listen to the recording and then to read and refine what they had written. The results which they reported indicated that this process did not result in superior written materials.

A study which can be considered monumental in many respects was conducted by Loban (1976). Begun in 1953 with 338 kindergarten pupils, this longitudinal study followed 211 students through to the completion of Grade XII. The data collected included transcribed annual interviews, written compositions,

reading and IQ scores, listening scores and ratings, and teacher ratings on specified language factors. From the total sample, subsamples of thirty-five superior, thirty-five low, and thirty-five randomly selected subjects were obtained and used for analysis. Among the findings relevant to the present study is the observation that from Grades I to VII, "the oral language words per unit tends to be slightly higher than the written average. In grades seven through nine a rapprochement seems to be occurring, and in grades ten through twelve longer units occur in writing" (p. 34). Loban continued:

The most prominent feature, however, is that the oral and written averages are similar for any given group in any given year. In other words, in reference to average number of words per communication unit, the subjects tend to speak *and* write in units of virtually the same average length. (p. 35)

Another conclusion reached by Loban seems highly significant for the purposes of the present study:

Apparently, learning to write in a way that uses a large repertoire of syntactical strategies develops more slowly for those who lack proficiency in oral language. Very plausibly, they need to develop and practice syntactical complexities in speech before they can use them in writing. (p. 63)

Because of the size of the sample, the volume of the data gathered, and the uniqueness of this longitudinal approach, the importance of Loban's work cannot be underestimated.

Although Groff (1978) asserts that "one must be concerned at this point with the lack of research evidence that any...oral

language component' actually has had a positive effect on the quantity, the complexity, or the fluency of children's writing" (p. 188), Loban's work would seem to suggest otherwise.

It cannot be proposed that research indicates that the cognitive processes of speech and writing are in any sense identical. (Indeed, many of the differences have already been discussed in Chapter 2.) Olson (1977) also noted that "explicit written prose" differs from speech in two fundamental ways: (1) in writing, the authority or rhetorical functions are subordinated to the logical functions, and (2) in writing, language must be much more explicit and conventionalized.

Kroll (1977, 1978) explored the manifestation of Piaget's concept of egocentrism in fourth grade children's spoken and written discourse. He reported that, for the young writer, the act of writing creates greater egocentric obstacles to communication than does speaking. He concluded that:

The line of research presented in this study would appear to open a new avenue for the explanation of audience awareness in written discourse. The cognitive-developmental orientation calls attention to the dependency of audience awareness on specific cognitive functions in a speaker or writer. Writers who can decenter their perspective, taking the view of a hypothetical readership, are more likely to display audience awareness than writers who are embedded in their personal view of reality. Hence, the crucial factors in an investigation of audience awareness are not salient characteristics of audiences, but the constructive processes operative in the mind of the writer. (pp. 279-280)

The aspects identified by Kroll obviously need further study as the relationships between written and spoken language are explored more completely.

The relationships between speech and writing were also investigated by Cayer and Sacks (1979) in a study whose subjects consisted of eight community college freshmen. The authors reported that "tentative as the findings of the present study must be regarded, they do indicate some evidence of the adult basic writer's reliance on the oral repertoire when communicating in the written mode" (p. 127).

Despite the fact that this area has generated much research interest and concern for some considerable period of time, it would appear that the relationships between oral and written language still require further study inasmuch as the evidence is incomplete, unclear and, at times, even contradictory.

Pre-Writing: The "Incubation" Period

Of particular significance to the present study is the notion or concept of "pre-writing", the initial stage in the composing process. Also referred to as "preanalysis" (Monk, 1971) and "prevision" (Murray, 1978), it is intended to include those activities identified by Britton *et al.* (1975) as conception and incubation.

Stallard (1976) suggested that in order to better understand the composing process, one must begin with something analogous to the "task analysis" approach of the systems analyst. In so doing, the perspective of the communication process must be kept clearly in mind.

The view of composition that limits the process chiefly to transcription from thought to written prose has ignored the key task facing any writer, the conceptualization, origination, or invention of the message to be communicated. Communication is, hopefully, the end of compositional behavior, while originating the message is the primary cognitive task of the writer. As such, communication is not the initial concern of the writer. (p. 182)

Thus, we are reminded, the initial task of the writer is determining or discovering what can be said about a topic. Key to this stage is the role of perception and (as Stallard pointed out) perception is related to one's existing cognitive structure.

The degree to which the writer has written the message he is capable of writing will depend significantly upon the degree to which he has searched his cognitive structure for the components of the message available to him. (p. 183)

A case can be made, then, for some sort of exercises or activities which serve to help the writer to shape his/her thoughts, to aid in the processing of the writing experience. Called "interaction" exercises by Moffett and Wagner (1976), these activities initiate or operate as a catalyst for the actual writing.

In his study of the effectiveness of common strategies in teaching composition to Grade IX pupils, Monk (1971) concluded

that, "of all basic procedures, a preanalysis of the topic is probably the single most valuable activity a teacher and class can undertake and has the greatest transfer value" (p. 22).

Baden (1975), concerned about the relationship between thinking and writing, suggested that pre-writing activities served the purpose of stimulating or motivating the writer:

...before valid thought can take place and certainly before meaningful writing can occur the *feelings* of the writer must be stimulated to the extent that he is willing and able to make an emotional, sensuous commitment to his task. (p. 368)

The need appears evident. One basic question remains, however: what procedures are most suitable?

Snipes (1973) advocated an oral approach to the composing process. This is achieved by having the student use a tape recorder in a talk-retalk-write-rewrite method. Arguing that this process is thus student-centered throughout, Snipes also suggested that a peer-group composing situation be utilized. The advantage of this method would thus be immediate audience response and evaluation. Unfortunately, Snipes did not delineate the activities which would take place *before*, *during*, and *after* the writing itself.

Smith (1975) reported a study which brought together two teaching methods: the writing workshop and peer tutoring. He found that specific and definite improvements in student attitude and writing resulted.

Exercises designed to sharpen students' observational skills were used by Hillocks (1975, 1979) in a study involving students from seventh grade through to state university levels. Results indicated that the students: (1) increased the level of specificity in their writing; (2) accomplished this in a very short period of time; (3) also wrote more creatively; (4) prepared compositions which were judged better organized and supported than those in a control group which did not have these observational experiences.

Rohman and Wlecke (1964) and Rohman (1965) developed a method of pre-writing which requires the student to maintain a journal, to apply principles derived from religious meditation, and to use analogy as the primary instrument for examining the experience upon which writing is based.

Rhetorical procedures involving the use of heuristics (questioning techniques) have been popular for some period of time, and are widely advocated and used in college composition classes. Though the methods vary somewhat in terms of their specific features, their overall design is similar. Essentially, the student uses heuristic procedures to aid the inquiry process, to analyze and identify problems, to explore information and to test solutions. Among the more notable of the methods used are classical invention (Corbett, 1965); Burke's dramatic method (used by Winterowd, 1965; 1975); and Pike's system of tagmemic

invention (developed by Young, Becker, and Pike, 1970). Such procedures are reported on, utilized by and advocated by Young and Becker (1965); Odell (1973, 1974); Jurkiewicz (1975); and Woods (1977). However, there is at this time little solid research evidence confirming the value of such procedures and questions must be raised with regard to the effectiveness and the appropriateness of these methods below the college level.

Two interesting and somewhat related approaches were proposed by Hawkins (1976) and Behrens (1978). Group inquiry techniques were utilized by Hawkins to encourage classroom interaction in small, autonomous groups in college composition classes. Behrens, suggesting that writing cannot really be taught (the pupil has to learn by writing), recommended the use of role-playing tactics as a means of motivating students and helping them prepare to write.

Yet another instructional method that has implications for the pre-writing aspect of the writing process is known as "talk-write" and was designed from the theoretical framework which Zoellner (1969) presented in his "behavioral pedagogy" for composition. In this method, students work in pairs; one student composes aloud, while the other records the ideas presented and questions the composer. The developing composition is often written on a chalkboard or on a large piece of paper taped to the wall. Subsequently, the students reverse roles. During the

process, students are free to wander around the classroom and to interact with other students. This strategy, originally conceived for use at the college level, has been adapted for use at the high school level as well. Among the proponents of it are Radcliffe (1972) and Wixon and Stone (1977).

Pre-writing has received considerable attention as an instructional goal. However, at this point there is little firm research evidence to support its legitimacy and even less to indicate what types of strategies are appropriate, desirable, and effective. It is not enough to suspect -- to know tacitly -- that a practice is suitable. If we are to acquire new insights into the composing process, we must also know *why*.

Fluency in Writing

Fundamentally, fluency is concerned with the way that a written exercise is generated. "Flow of words" cannot and should not be conceived as a goal in itself. However, to the extent that fluency contributes to the smooth construction of the writing exercise, and to the extent that it permits the ideas to be expressed clearly -- in short, to the extent that it aids the communication process -- it may be seen as a desirable attribute and a worthy goal.

Surprisingly little research has paid attention to the notion of fluency. Van Bruggen (1966) conducted a study involving eighty-four pupils at the junior high school level. Using an instrument called a kymograph, records were kept of the regularity of the flow of words in three composition exercises. Among the findings he reported were the following: (1) ability in mechanics and effectiveness of expression are not related to the flow of words; (2) dominating, extrovertive, emotionally stable pupils wrote with a rapid flow of words; (3) the amount of planning done by the student influenced the flow of words. Van Bruggen suggested, as a result of his investigation, that composition teaching should emphasize thinking and writing in thought units.

Loban (1976) observed that "readiness and smoothness of speech are a part of proficiency with oral language" (p. 72). He also pointed out that fluency (or flow of language) can be adversely affected by "too many hesitations, false starts, and nonfunctional repetitions" (p. 74). He referred to such interference as mazes.

It is only in speech that these language tangles occur, and if one listens attentively to anyone's oral language, or indeed one's own, it soon becomes apparent that the phenomenon is universal. Obviously, it appears to be related to the problems of putting thought into words, what might be called verbal planning. In writing, one can pause as long as desired, crossing out extraneous words or bungled phrases, thus eliminating mazes. (p. 74)

Despite the fact that one *can* pause in writing, the question

should still be raised as to the desirability of frequent pauses. At what point does a lack of fluency interfere with the act of communication?

Syntactic Maturity in Writing

Measures of Syntactic Maturity

Considerable research into syntactic structures and their relationship to writing maturity has been reported over the years so that the volume of literature that has accumulated is quite extensive. In view of the fact that syntactic maturity is merely one variable in the present study and in view of the fact that the existing research has already been adequately reviewed, its inclusion here in total would seem both unnecessary and redundant. Particular reference might be made to the studies of Erwin and Miller (1963) and O'Donnell *et al.* (1967) which include comprehensive summaries of the applicable literature.

At least since the time that studies were reported by Seegars (1933) and LaBrant (1933), it has been recognized that the inclusion of subordinate or dependent structures in written work is an indication of a mature writing style. In a way, the concept of syntactic complexity or maturity can be seen as an outgrowth of fluent writing.

The twin concepts of syntactic maturity and fluency have received considerable attention in the composition research

of the recent past. The measurement of fluency of writing has been greatly improved by the studies of Hunt (1965), O'Donnell (1967), Mellon (1969), and O'Hare (1971). Of course, it is possible to arrive at some measure of writing fluency simply by counting the number of words in a particular passage. Hunt (1965), however, extended the concept of fluency to include syntactic maturity. In Hunt's method, a composition is divided into T-units or "minimal terminable units" without concern for punctuation, so that each unit consists of one main clause and its modifiers. Student syntactic maturity is then judged on the mean number of words per T-unit for the passage.

Endicott (1973) attempted to revise the concept of syntactic maturity by applying a theoretical model based on a transformational and morphemic analysis of language. In so doing, he intended to define syntactic complexity in psycholinguistic terms. The result shifted the focus from T-units to units known as co-memes. However, O'Donnell (1976) reviewed Endicott's technique (as well as others) and concluded that:

It may turn out that in spite of its lack of precision, T-unit length is still the most useful and useable index of syntactic development over a wide age-range and that the mean clause length is the best single measure of syntactic complexity at the high school level and beyond. (p. 38)

For the time being, at least, it would appear that T-unit length would be the most useful and efficient technique for determining syntactic maturity.

Influences on Syntactic Maturity

LaBrant (1933), in an early study of language development in children, reported that "the tendency to use an increasing proportion of subordinate clauses is a mark of increasing language development from grades 4 to 9, inclusive...and this tendency is a function both of mental and chronological age" (p. 483). Similar findings were also reported by Heider and Heider (1940), who also discovered that student compositions increased in length up to age 13, then dropped somewhat. In his study based on T-unit lengths, Hunt (1964, 1965) found that T-unit length varies with age. O'Donnell *et al.* (1967) discovered that the relationship between T-unit length and age was a function of speech as well as of writing. At the same time, Hunt (1967) reported that T-unit length appeared to vary with mental age and not just chronological age. Thus, there is considerable research evidence to establish a relationship between the length of T-units and age.

Another factor which appears to influence syntactic maturity is the mode of discourse in which the writing takes place. Seegars (1933), in his study at the fourth, fifth, and sixth grade levels, observed that "writing in the form of argumentation tends particularly to multiply the use of dependent clauses" (p. 54). Investigations by Rosen (1969), San Jose (1972), Pope (1974), Perron (1977), and Crowhurst and Piche (1979) have confirmed Seegars' findings. Dilworth, Reising and Worth (1978),

reviewing the research in this area, point out that the relationship between language patterns and thought development is crucial and conclude that "the ways in which language structure and cognition interact appear to deserve more rigorous consideration by the profession" (p. 105).

It would also appear that the writing audience exerts an influence on syntactic maturity. Crowhurst and Piche (1979), in a study conducted with students in Grade VI and Grade X, reported that the compositions written for the teacher were more complex than those directed toward a "best friend" audience. It is interesting to note that these findings apply to the group taken as a whole and to the Grade X group; the results are not significant for the Grade VI students.

Instructional programs proposed by Miller and Ney (1968), Mellon (1969) and O'Hare (1973), and supported by the psycholinguistic model proposed by Ney (1974), have indicated that syntactic maturity may be enhanced by programs utilizing audio-lingual drills and transformational sentence-combining procedures. In short, there are particular instructional strategies which have proven useful in assisting students to write sentences which are more mature or complex.

Summary

Taken as a whole, it would appear that our progress towards developing useful theories of composition or discourse is moving somewhat faster than our efforts in the direction of supporting research. Granted, a theoretical framework is important. However, theories can only be useful insofar as they are defensible on the basis of existing evidence. It is to be hoped that a period of vigorous research will follow so that our understanding of the composing process and its constituent parts -- as well as the factors which advance or inhibit it -- will be steadily improved.

CHAPTER IV

DESIGN OF THE STUDY

Fundamentally, the plan and purpose of this study was to determine the effect of certain types of pre-writing experiences or activities on the fluency (or quantity) and syntactic maturity (or complexity) of the written products.

Research Proposal

A research proposal was developed in the autumn and winter of 1978 and 1979. Subsequently, an application was made to conduct the proposed research in School District No. 61 (Greater Victoria), Victoria, British Columbia. Permission was granted in April of 1979.

Letters were sent to the principals of three schools in the District selected. All schools contacted agreed to participate. (A copy of the letter of invitation is included as Appendix A.)

The actual research was undertaken in the schools during the weeks of May 7 - 11, 1979, and May 14 - 18, 1979. All work was completed and returned according to the schedule which had been established.

The Sample

Student Population

Six classes were involved in this study (two from each of the schools selected). In total, four teachers participated in the study.

Since three treatment groups were proposed and since in two of the participating schools both classes were taught by the same teacher (only in one school were two different teachers involved), the assignment of treatment group was made by school. Thus, all of the students in each school followed the same instructional method.

A total of 156 students participated in all or part of the study. However, insufficient or incomplete data was submitted in thirty-five cases, leaving a total useable population of 121. (The breakdown of the student population is provided in Table 1.) Because the student data from one school reflected a significant imbalance in the number of boys and girls, the sample was reduced further using random selection procedures. Utilized in this

study, then, were the compositions of ninety students (45 boys and 45 girls), with thirty students in each of the three treatment groups.

Table 1
Summary of Student Population Employed in
the Study

Treatment Group*	Total Available Cases	Incomplete Data**	Useable Cases		
			Total	Male	Female
A	52	16	36	20	16
B	48	10	38	18	20
C	56	9	47	16	31
TOTAL	156	35	121	54	67

*Two classes were assigned to each treatment group.

**Incomplete data refers to students who wrote only one of the two composition exercises or who did not provide the required personal information.

Selection of the Experimental Population

English 10 pupils were selected for this study for two reasons. First, the researcher was currently working with pupils

at that grade level; thus, there was an opportunity to test the instructional materials and to adapt them to the needs of the students. Second, since Grade X is the final grade at the junior secondary level in British Columbia schools, the opportunity was available to consider the students' writing at the end of one level of schooling, a level in which the English courses focus quite directly on sentence-building skills.

Instructional Methods

As noted above, the three participating schools were randomly assigned to one of the three treatment groups. There were, as a result, two classes utilizing each instructional procedure.

Pre-Measure Composition

A Pre-Measure Composition was written by the participating classes during the week of May 7, 1979.

All six classes were assigned an identical composition exercise which required students to write essentially in the expressive mode. A student assignment sheet was provided for each student and a lesson plan was made available to each teacher. (Appendix C shows the lesson plan and Appendix D consists of the Student Assignment Outline.)

For the Pre-Measure Composition, all classes followed the same instructional procedure. The composition exercise was presented; the students were allowed fifteen minutes to prepare an outline and/or rough draft of their ideas. The students then had forty minutes to write the composition itself. No teacher or student talk was permitted once the outline was begun.

The written work (outline and final copy) was collected, stapled together, and forwarded to the researcher for scoring.

Test Composition

The Test Composition was written by all classes during the week of May 14, 1979.

Once again, all six classes wrote on the same topic, using the expressive mode. The pre-writing activities were varied for each group but the time allowed for these activities was the same (15 minutes). Once the pre-writing activity was completed, students were given forty minutes to write the final copy of the composition.

The pre-writing activities were varied for the three instructional groups as follows:

1. Group A was given written materials as for the Pre-Measure Composition. Students were given fifteen minutes to plan their composition, according to the written

instructions given. (See Appendix F for the lesson plan for Group A.)

2. Group B followed a lesson plan prepared by the researcher. The two classes in this group took part in activities designed to provide for student-teacher interaction which was directed by the teacher. The pre-writing session was again fifteen minutes in length. (See Appendix G for the lesson plan used with Group B.)

3. Group C also followed a lesson plan prepared by the researcher. The classes in this group took part in activities designed primarily to provide for student talk or "free discussion" on the topic. Fifteen minutes were allowed for this activity. (The lesson plan for Group C is shown in Appendix H and the Student Discussion Guide distributed to the discussion groups is found in Appendix J.)

Students in all three treatment groups were given the same assignment outline. (A copy of the Student Assignment Outline is provided in Appendix K.)

The completed written work, including the outline and the final copy, was collected, stapled together, and forwarded to the researcher for scoring.

Selection of the Mode of Discourse

The students were directed to write using the expressive mode of discourse as far as possible and the topic selected in each case was designed to foster adherence to the selected mode. The decision to use this mode (as distinct from the transactional or poetic modes) was made arbitrarily by the researcher but reflects a belief that the expressive mode would probably be most easily handled in the available time.

Scoring Procedures

Word Count

Three assistants were employed to conduct the word count for all of the compositions (both the Pre-Measure and Composition Test papers). The count was made twice: once from beginning to end, and then from the end back to the beginning. A discrepancy of two words was permitted (and where such a discrepancy occurred, the "markers" were instructed to record the highest total). Where a larger discrepancy appeared, the "markers" were required to conduct a total recount (going through the papers twice).

The assistants were given the following additional guidelines:

1. abbreviations counted as one word;
2. dates were to be considered as two words;
3. expressions of time counted as one word;
4. contractions were taken to be two words;
5. compound nouns written as one word counted as one word;
6. compound nouns written as two words and hyphenated word pairs counted as two words.

The researcher checked for reliability by randomly selecting twenty percent (18 Pre-Measure and 18 Composition Test) of the papers. In all instances the papers were correctly scored within the allowable discrepancy (two words).

T-Unit Count

Two assistants (both experienced English teachers) were employed to determine the number of T-units written in each composition. The following guidelines were provided:

1. a T-unit was considered to be one main clause plus any subordinate clause or nonclausal structure attached to or embedded in it;
2. a fragment which resulted from the omission of a word counted as a T-unit;
3. other fragments were to be discarded;
4. unintelligible strings of words ("garbles") were to be discarded.

In addition, the "markers" were instructed to re-check any T-unit greater than fifteen words in length.

The marking assistants were first required to read the composition through, breaking it into T-units. Then, the number of T-units was to be counted and checked. No discrepancy in number was permitted.

The researcher randomly selected and checked twenty percent of the compositions to determine the reliability of the scoring. Only one paper (a Pre-Measure Composition) was incorrectly scored; one T-unit was missed. (All of the Composition Test papers checked for reliability were correctly analyzed and counted.)

Index of Syntactic Maturity

One assistant was employed to calculate the Index of Syntactic Maturity (words per T-unit).

The Index of Syntactic Maturity was calculated by dividing the number of words in the composition by the number of T-units used in that composition.

The researcher checked all calculations for reliability. There were no errors.

(The instructions given to the "marking" assistants appears in Appendix L.)

Statistical Treatment

In order to allow for the statistical analysis of the results of this study, the procedures outlined below were undertaken.

Student Identification Code

Each student was assigned a unique identification number which indicated:

1. the treatment group to which he/she had been assigned;
2. his/her number within the treatment group (01 to 30, based on an alphabetical listing of the group by surname).

Also, the sex of each student was recorded for use in analyzing possible differences based on this variable.

Test Data

The following data were recorded for both the Pre-Measure and Composition Test results:

1. the number of words written;
2. the number of T-units written;
3. the index of syntactic maturity (allowing for two decimal places).

Level of Significance

As previously noted, the hypotheses under study were tested for significance at the .05 level.

Variables

Following is a summary of the variables used in the experimental design of this study.

Independent Variable. The independent variable used was the pre-writing method employed for the Composition Test.

Dependent Variables. The following dependent variables were used:

1. the number of words written;
2. the number of T-units written;
3. the index of syntactic maturity (words per T-unit).

Extraneous Variables. Among the extraneous variables included in this study were the following:

1. the outside language experiences of the students;
2. the student-teacher relationship existing in the classes involved in this study.

Summary

In this chapter, the design of the study has been detailed. The procedures used to obtain the sample and to determine the actual data to be used have also been outlined.

The sample has been described in detail as have the instructional procedures and the scoring methods. Finally, the method for recording the data for statistical analysis and a summary of the variables employed have also been provided.

A complete discussion of the statistical technique, along with an analysis of the results of the study, will follow in the next chapter.

CHAPTER V

THE RESULTS OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this chapter is to present the data obtained in this study, to describe the statistical treatments applied to them, and to discuss the findings as they pertain to the stated hypotheses.

The four basic hypotheses are restated below in order to provide a clear focus for the results of this study as they are presented. Each hypothesis was tested for significance at the .05 level.

1. There will be no significant differences among the classes involved in this study with respect of quantity of writing or syntactic maturity, as determined by a composition pre-measure written by all students involved in the study under similar conditions.

2. There will be no significant differences among the instructional groups involved in this study with respect to the total number of words written in the test composition.
3. There will be no significant differences among the instructional groups involved in this study with respect to the number of T-units written in the test composition.
4. There will be no significant differences among the instructional groups involved in this study with respect to the syntactic maturity of the students as indicated by the test composition.

In order to provide an organizational framework for this chapter, the three dependent variables will be examined in turn. As a consequence, the second, third, and fourth hypotheses will be considered. The first hypothesis will be analyzed in the context of the other three. This structure should permit a clear presentation of the results of this study.

Adjustment to Sample

After the scoring procedure was completed and the data had been processed for statistical treatment, it was apparent

that incomplete data existed for a male student in Group A. Although this subject did write the Pre-Measure composition and completed the planning for the Composition Test, no final composition was submitted for the Composition Test. Because it was not known whether the student's work was misplaced or whether the student simply refused to write the final copy, it was decided to delete this subject from the study on the suspicion that, by reporting "zero" results for him, the data might be in some way contaminated.

As a result, Group A consisted of twenty-nine subjects (14 males and 15 females). The other groups remained intact at thirty students in each group (15 males and 15 females).

Fluency (Number of Words)

The first variable to be considered was that of fluency as reflected in the mean number of words written in the compositions (the Pre-Measure and the Composition Test). Table 2 presents a summary of the means for all three treatment groups on both composition measures.

The purpose of the Pre-Measure was to determine the degree of homogeneity existing in the three treatment groups. (It had been assumed that by selecting students from a limited

geographical area, the students would be reasonably homogeneous in terms of their composing abilities.) The analysis of variance procedure was used to provide information with respect to the similarities of the three treatment groups. A summary of the results is presented in Table 3.

Table 2

Comparison of Pre-Measure and Composition Test Mean Scores
for Variable of Fluency (Number of Words)

Pre-Measure			Composition Test		
Instructional Group	N	\bar{X}	Instructional Group	N	\bar{X}
A	29	223.75	A	29	239.48
B	30	217.83	B	30	244.60
C	30	334.53	C	30	264.53

The same statistical procedure (analysis of variance) was also used to compare the group means for the Composition Test. (See Table 4.)

The results of these analyses showed that, for the Pre-Measure, significant differences did exist among the three groups (the F value of 14.60 was significant beyond the .001

level) but that these differences did not appear in the Composition Test results ($F = .526$; $p = .593$).

Table 3
Analysis of Variance of Pre-Measure Scores
for Variable of Fluency (Number of Words)

Source of Variation	Degrees of Freedom	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F
Between groups	2	258015.00	129007.50	14.60*
Within groups	86	759809.00	8834.99	
Total	88	1017824.00		

*significant beyond .001 level.

Table 4
Analysis of Variance of Composition Test Scores
for Variable of Fluency (Number of Words)

Source of Variation	Degrees of Freedom	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F
Between groups	2	10409.00	5204.50	.526
Within groups	86	850830.00	9893.37	
Total	88	861239.00		

It might be tentatively offered, therefore, that the nature of the topic in some way affected the way students wrote, that the class environment or the class composition (the "make-up" of the class) exerted subtle influences on the writing situations. Speculation aside, it is important to note that the classes involved in this study reacted quite differently to the two composition assignments. (No clear pattern emerges if one inspects the means or analyzes the differences among the means. Both Groups A and B wrote more on the Composition Test than on the Pre-Measure; Group C, however, wrote less. On the Pre-Measure, the order of the classes was Group C, with the largest mean number of words written, followed by Group A, followed by Group B; on the Composition Test, Group C was followed by Group B, which was followed by Group A.) Assumptions must be made with care.

Table 5

Comparison of Unadjusted and Adjusted Means for
Composition Test Scores with Variable of Fluency (Number of Words)

Instructional Group	N	Unadjusted Mean	Adjusted Mean
A	29	239.48	255.46
B	30	244.60	263.25
C	30	264.53	230.44

With the apparent differences evident from the analysis of variance, the means were statistically adjusted (see Table 5) and analysis of covariance procedures were applied to control for these differences. The results of this treatment are shown in Table 6.

Table 6
Analysis of Covariance for Three Instructional Groups
on Composition Test Scores with Variable of Fluency
(Number of Words)

Source of Variation	Residuals		<i>F</i>
	Degrees of Freedom	Mean Square	
Between groups	2	6641.53	.812
Within groups	85	8183.89	

The *F* value of .812 resulting from the analysis of covariance was not significant at the .05 level ($p = .448$). Thus, for the first hypothesis, considered with respect to the variable of the number of words, the null was rejected (significant differences did exist among the three instructional groups on the Pre-Measure). However, for the second hypothesis (that there would be no significant differences among the groups with respect to the number of words written on the composition test), the null was

accepted. Students did not write significantly more words in any of the three groups, as far as that variable was concerned.

Fluency (Number of T-Units)

The variable of fluency was also measured in terms of the mean number of T-units written by the students in all three instructional groups for both the Pre-Measure and Composition Test. Table 7 compares the means for this variable.

Table 7

Comparison of Pre-Measure and Composition Test Mean Scores
for Variable of Fluency (Number of T-units)

Pre-Measure			Composition Test		
Instructional Group	N	\bar{X}	Instructional Group	N	\bar{X}
A	29	17.17	A	29	22.97
B	30	21.53	B	30	25.70
C	30	27.57	C	30	22.23

The analysis of variance procedure was again used to compare the three groups on both the Pre-Measure and the Composition Test. The results of these statistical treatments are presented in Tables 8 and 9.

Table 8
 Analysis of Variance of Pre-Measure Scores
 for Variable of Fluency (Number of T-units)

Source of Variation	Degrees of Freedom	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	<i>F</i>
Between groups	2	1610.13	805.06	9.71*
Within groups	86	7128.98	82.90	
Total	88	8739.10		

*significant beyond .001 level

Reference to Table 8 indicates that, once again, significant differences did exist among the three groups on the Pre-Measure (the *F* value was 9.71; significant beyond the .001 level).

However, this time the groups followed a different pattern (Group A wrote the fewest number of T-units, followed by Group B, followed by Group C). It can be asserted that the first hypothesis can also be rejected for the variable of fluency, as indicated by the number of T-units.

Table 9 shows the results of the analysis of variance computation for the variable of fluency (as indicated by the number of T-units) on the Composition Test. The *F* value of .855 was not significant ($p = .429$). Once again, the pattern which applied for the Pre-Measure did not apply to the Composition Test. (Group B used the largest number of T-units; Groups A

and C wrote virtually the same number on the average, with Group A having a slight edge.)

Table 9
Analysis of Variance of Composition Test Scores
for Variable of Fluency (Number of T-units)

Source of Variation	Degrees of Freedom	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	<i>F</i>
Between groups	2	199.86	99.93	.855
Within groups	86	10054.64	116.91	
Total	88	10254.50		

The results of these analyses would indicate that the two fluency measures, contrary to what might be expected, reveal quite different results. (Number of words and number of T-units do not necessarily reveal similar findings.) It may again be suggested that the influence of topic, class organization or "make-up" and/or other environmental factors may influence these variables.

Table 10 shows the computed adjusted and unadjusted means for comparison purposes. The analysis of covariance procedure was then used to compare the adjusted means. The results of this treatment are reflected in Table 11.

Table 10

Comparison of Unadjusted and Adjusted Means for
Composition Test Scores with Variable of Fluency
(Number of T-units)

Instructional Group	N	Unadjusted Mean	Adjusted Mean
A	29	22.97	25.17
B	30	25.70	25.97
C	30	22.23	19.83

Table 11

Analysis of Covariance for Three Instructional Groups
on Composition Test Scores with Variable of Fluency
(Number of T-units)

Source of Variation	Residuals		<i>F</i>
	Degrees of Freedom	Mean Square	
Between groups	2	288.25	2.83
Within groups	85	101.84	

The analysis of covariance yielded an *F* value of 2.83 ($p = .07$). Although these results approach significance, for the purposes of this study the third hypothesis (that significant differences would not exist among the three treatment groups with respect to

the number of T-units written in the test composition) must be accepted. Thus, the differences in the instructional methods used with the classes for the Composition Test did not significantly affect the number of T-units written.

Syntactic Maturity

The third variable considered was that of syntactic maturity, as indicated by the mean or average number of words written per T-unit. Table 12 presents a summary of the means obtained for this variable on both the Pre-Measure and the Composition Test.

Table 12

Comparison of Pre-Measure and Composition Test Mean Scores
for Variable of Syntactic Maturity (Words/T-units)

Pre-Measure			Composition Test		
Instructional Group	N	\bar{X}	Instructional Group	N	\bar{X}
A	29	13.43	A	29	10.91
B	30	10.29	B	30	9.81
C	30	12.72	C	30	12.74

Analysis of variance was used to compare the three groups for the variable of syntactic maturity on the Pre-Measure

composition. The results of this treatment are indicated in Table 13.

Table 13
 Analysis of Variance of Pre-Measure Scores
 for Variable of Syntactic Maturity (Words/T-units)

Source of Variation	Degrees of Freedom	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	<i>F</i>
Between groups	2	160.55	80.28	8.57*
Within groups	86	805.21	93.63	
Total	88	965.77		

*significant beyond .001 level.

The *F* value of 8.57 (significant beyond the .001 level) indicates that the first hypothesis (that significant differences would not exist among the three instructional groups on the Pre-Measure for the variables of fluency -- as indicated by number of words and number of T-units -- and syntactic maturity) cannot be accepted for the variable of syntactic maturity. Thus, real differences did exist among the three classes on the Pre-Measure composition.

Table 14 indicates the results of the analysis of variance computation for the Composition Test measure. The *F* value yielded by this procedure (8.02) is significant at the .001

level. It would appear, then, that differences also existed among the three instructional groups for the Composition Test as well as for the Pre-Measure.

Table 14

Analysis of Variance of Composition Test Scores
for Variable of Syntactic Maturity (Words/T-units)

Source of Variation	Degrees of Freedom	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F
Between groups	2	130.89	65.45	8.02*
Within groups	86	702.13	81.64	
Total	88	833.02		

*significant at .001 level.

Table 15

Comparison of Unadjusted and Adjusted Means for
Composition Test Scores with Variable of Syntactic Maturity
(Words/T-units)

Instructional Group	N	Unadjusted Mean	Adjusted Mean
A	29	10.91	10.69
B	30	9.81	10.12
C	30	12.74	12.64

The compared unadjusted and adjusted means for the variable of syntactic maturity are shown in Table 15. Using the adjusted means, the analysis of covariance procedure was used to indicate the differences among the three groups. The results are indicated in Table 16.

Table 16

Analysis of Covariance for Three Instructional Groups
on Composition Test Scores with Variable of Syntactic Maturity
(Words/T-units)

Source of Variation	Residuals		<i>F</i>
	Degrees of Freedom	Mean Square	
Between groups	2	49.93	6.25*
Within groups	85	7.99	

*significant beyond .01 level.

The analysis of covariance treatment revealed an *F* value of 6.25 (significant beyond the .01 level). Thus, the fourth hypothesis (that differences would not exist among the three instructional groups with respect to the variable of syntactic maturity) cannot be accepted. Significant differences did exist among the three instructional groups.

Referring again to the adjusted means (see Table 15), it would appear that the students in Group C (who had the "free

discussion" pre-writing experience) wrote using a more mature style than did the students in the other two groups. Although Group A (with no formal pre-writing experience) and Group B (with the teacher-directed pre-writing lesson) wrote with virtually the same complexity, it is interesting to note that the Group B students wrote slightly less maturely. In other words, their pre-writing activities did not help them to write with any greater maturity of style than did the students who had no formal lesson. One might speculate that the Group B students merely "absorbed" the teacher-and-class-processed pre-writing experience in small bits and then reproduced them as such in their final composition.

Summary

To return to the four hypotheses as a review for the results of this study, it can be reported that:

1. The hypothesis that no significant differences would exist among the classes with respect to quantity of writing or syntactic maturity, as determined by the Pre-Measure composition was not accepted; significant differences did exist.

2. The hypothesis that no significant differences would exist among the classes with respect to the number of words written in the Composition Test was accepted; no significant differences were apparent.

3. The hypothesis that no significant differences would exist among the classes with respect to the number of T-units written in the Composition Test was accepted, although results did indicate that differences were approaching significance.

4. The hypothesis that no significant differences would exist among the classes with respect to their syntactic maturity as indicated by the Composition Test was not accepted; significant differences did exist among the classes in favour of Group C, which wrote following a pre-writing experience which featured "free discussion" of the topic.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

The present study was designed to determine the effects, if any, of particular (and commonly used) pre-writing strategies on the fluency and syntactic complexity of student composition writing at the Grade X level. For this study, the student population consisted of three groups, each of which was given a different type of pre-writing experience in a composition test situation.

In essence, the purpose of this chapter is to summarize the key findings of this study, to put these findings into the context of existing research, and to discuss their implications for instructional practice. In addition, an attempt will be made to look to some directions that appear promising for further research.

Conclusions

Statistical treatments of the Pre-Measure scores revealed that significant differences existed among the three instructional groups for all three of the variables being tested in this study. Further, it was not possible to detect particular patterns among the groups. The assumption had been made that, since the students appeared to come from similar community and school populations (although admittedly no test of socio-economic background or other such index was attempted), homogeneity would be reflected in the development of writing abilities. Indeed, the students involved in the study themselves showed differences from one writing experience to another. These findings may well indicate that the writing process consists of a complex of elements which are subject to a great many factors and which, when they are, may influence the product of the writing experience quite considerably. Also, it would appear desirable that researchers be prudent in making assumptions with respect to the writing process. Because writing is so complex and because it is subject to so many variables, it is wise to test what would seem to be quite safe notions.

That pre-writing is an important aspect of the writing process was another assumption implicit in the present study. The results obtained would appear to confirm the validity of this claim. However, the findings would also indicate that the

type of pre-writing experience which is presented may well influence the product as well, at least with respect to the syntactic maturity of the piece. It may be tentatively offered that pre-writing experiences presented to students should focus on free discussion or, at least, on maximum student-student interaction. Pre-writing experiences which feature no or little opportunity for student talk may not be very worthwhile, at least as far as the expressive mode of discourse is concerned.

The lack of significance of the results of the analyses for the fluency variables (number of words and number of T-units) is also interesting but, perhaps, is not too surprising. In the first place, the students were directed to write for a specific (and relatively short) period of time. It may well be that, with such constraints of time and place, significant variations were unlikely. In addition, the findings of the present study with respect to the length of the student writing would appear to be consistent with the observations of Heider and Heider (1940) and Loban (1976) that composition length may peak in early adolescence and then stabilize or even drop slightly. Stated another way, as students develop maturity in their writing style, quantity of writing may balance off or decrease to some extent.

Some Implications for Further Research

The results of the present study do indicate a number of areas for promising research. Among these are the following:

1. The present study should be replicated with larger and different populations to determine the reliability of the results obtained.

2. The present study should be undertaken involving students at different grade levels. Thus, comparisons and contrasts would be possible and valuable insights into the developing composing process would be achieved.

3. Research should be initiated to see if the results of this study vary with a change in the mode of discourse (transactional or poetic, rather than expressive).

4. The audience identified for the students involved in this study was that of a peer. Further investigations might well attempt to examine the effect of a change in the writing audience that is identified.

5. The present study was concerned with the variables of fluency (as indicated by the number of words and the number of T-units) and syntactic maturity. No investigation of the *quality* of student writing was made. Such research should be attempted.

6. Other pre-writing activities might well be studied to compare the results with those obtained in the present study. In particular, the talk-write (Zoellner, 1969), the observational enhancement (Hillocks, 1975; 1979), and the tagmemic/heuristic approaches are worthy of investigation.

7. An experimental writing program which places major emphasis on its pre-writing component and which utilizes maximum student-student interaction should be developed. The results of student achievement (both in terms of the variables of concern in the present study and in terms of writing quality) should be examined using comparison-group procedures.

8. Longitudinal studies should be undertaken to examine student behaviour over a period of time, particularly with respect to skill and concept development during the pre-writing and production phases of the composing process.

Summary

It is vitally important that investigations into aspects of the writing process in general, and pre-writing in particular, continue. Without such research, instructional programs are little more than guesswork, hit-and-miss operations which improve student writing abilities by accident as much as by design. Though

the hyperbole is evident -- and intended -- it overstates the situation only slightly. Because significant results are obtained from a study of a specific writing program is some indication that the particular method used was successful in a specific kind of situation. We do not really know, as a result, *why* this was so. Until we do, we will be little further ahead.

Even for the findings evident from the present study, we can only speculate that the significant differences obtained for the group which featured maximum student-student interaction came about because the pre-writing experience permitted the students to process their ideas in terms of their own cognitive operations, that the language experience was immediately internalized, and thus was applied when the writing itself took place. We do not *know* that this occurred. One would hope that future investigations will help us to know.

In the meantime, teachers of writing would do well to plan for a pre-writing component in their composition programs. The results of the present study would also indicate that such a pre-writing component would best serve the students' interests if it permitted active student involvement and interaction.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A
LETTER TO PRINCIPALS
INVITING
SCHOOL PARTICIPATION

1896 Laval Avenue,
Victoria, B.C.

Dear _____:

At the present time, I am completing the thesis requirement for my Master of Arts program at the University of Victoria.

In April, I hope to complete the research part of my work by undertaking a study to determine the effects of three types of pre-writing activities used in the teaching of composition to English 10 pupils. My research will involve using two English 10 classes in each of three schools. The students will be expected to write two compositions (using a one-hour period for each), approximately one week apart. Should I receive approval to proceed, I hope to have the students write their compositions during the weeks of April 9 and April 16, 1979.

I would very much like to conduct part of my study in your school and would request therefore that two regular-stream English 10 classes from _____ Junior Secondary School participate.

It is my intention to provide complete lesson plans and all necessary materials. Teachers who agree to participate will be required only to follow the instructions given; they will have no preparation. I want to assure you that there will be no attempt to assess the composition program offered by any of your teachers or to make comparisons among the schools involved. The only comparisons that will be made will involve the types of instruction (as randomly assigned) and the effects of this instruction on the fluency (or quantity) of the students' writing and on the complexity of the sentences written in the compositions that are produced.

I have submitted a request to conduct research in the Greater Victoria School District through the Committee on the Use of Human Subjects at the University of Victoria. The Committee has requested, however, that I determine that classes are available for this study before permission to proceed is granted.

. . . /2

At this time, I am requesting simply that you indicate to me, in writing, that you and members of your staff would be willing to participate in my proposed research study, subject to the approval of the University of Victoria Committee on the Use of Human Subjects and the Greater Victoria School District. If possible, I would also like you to indicate to me the name(s) of the teacher(s) who will be involved. I would, then, forward your letter for inclusion with my research request.

Should you or members of your staff require further information or clarification with respect to the proposed study, I would be most pleased to visit with you or to share the research proposal with you. I may be reached at 477-6945 (Cedar Hill Junior Secondary School) or 477-5770 (home).

I believe that my proposed study would provide little inconvenience to your school as I have taken every possible step to minimize the burden on teachers and students. At the same time, I feel that the results of this study should provide some useful insight into the writing process at the Grade 10 level.

I do hope that you will agree to assist me in this research and I want to take this opportunity to thank you for your serious consideration of my request and for your prompt reply to this letter.

Yours very truly,

Robert S. Mitchell

APPENDIX B

PRE-MEASURE:

LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

1896 Laval Avenue,
Victoria, B.C.

Thank you for agreeing to participate in my study of composition pre-writing strategies. I do appreciate that what I am requiring of you is one more commitment in an already busy schedule; I will do my best, therefore, to minimize the inconvenience.

Enclosed is the first set of materials you will require, to be administered during the week of May 7, 1979. I have included:

- (1) a lesson outline. Please follow the prescribed procedures exactly.
- (2) sufficient copies of the composition assignment so that one copy can be given to each student.
- (3) a supply of paper (foolscap).

Should you require further information or clarification on any matter concerning this study, please do not hesitate to contact me (Home: 477-5770; School: 477-6945). Please note that I will be out-of-town during the period May 8 to 12, so I would ask you to contact me before 3:00 p.m. on Tuesday, May 8, should you require assistance.

Again, my sincere thanks for your help.

Yours very truly,

R. S. Mitchell

Enclosures

APPENDIX C

PRE-MEASURE:

LESSON PLAN

COMPOSITION RESEARCH PROJECT

Lesson Plan: Pre-Measure

Date: Week of May 7, 1979.

Time: 1 hour (plus a small amount of organizational time).

Procedures

PLEASE ENSURE THAT THE FOLLOWING LESSON OUTLINE IS FOLLOWED EXACTLY.

1. Distribute to each student a copy of the "Student Assignment Outline" (blue).
2. Have the students complete the information required in the box in the top right-hand corner of the Student Assignment Outline. They are asked to PRINT.
3. Allow a few minutes for the students to read over the General Information section of the assignment outline.
4. Please read aloud the Topic section of the outline. Do not discuss or comment on the assignment and do not give the students any additional instruction.
5. Allow the students exactly 15 minutes to prepare a written outline for their compositions. (They are directed to use the back of the assignment outline.)
6. Distribute the foolscap provided to each student and allow exactly 40 minutes for them to write their compositions. They must stop when the time is up.
7. The students will submit their completed compositions and their rough work. The compositions should be stapled to the Student Assignment Outline (so that the outline will be on top, face-up).
8. You are asked to forward the completed compositions to Mr. R.S. Mitchell, using the envelope provided, as soon as convenient after they have been written.

APPENDIX D

PRE-MEASURE:

STUDENT ASSIGNMENT OUTLINE

COMPOSITION RESEARCH PROJECTStudent Assignment Outline

Please print

NAME: _____
Last Name First Name

SCHOOL: _____

DIVISION: _____ BLOCK/SECTION: _____

SEX: M or F

ENGLISH TEACHER: _____

DATE: _____

General Information

The purpose of this composition project is to learn something of the way that students approach the task of writing a composition in class. More specifically, the intent is to look at how the things you do before you actually write the composition influence what and how you write.

Please do your best work, carefully following the directions given to you by your teacher.

Thank you for your help!

Topic

All of us like to remember the special places we've visited and the exciting things we've done. In order to help our friends share these experiences, we should try to tell them things that will help them make a mental picture of the scene: the colours, the motions, the sounds, the smells, and the feelings which have made the experience mean so much to us. Study the topic given below. Use your imagination and your writing skill to create a life-like word picture of such a scene, and the impressions it made on you. Concentrate on describing the sights, sounds, and smells, rather than merely telling what happened.

THE DINNER TABLE AT THANKSGIVING

Instructions: Plan your story so that it is as clear as possible. Use the back of this paper to jot down and organize your ideas. After fifteen minutes, your teacher will provide you with some lined paper on which to write your composition. You will have forty minutes to complete this writing assignment.

APPENDIX E

COMPOSITION TEST:

LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

1896 Laval Avenue,
Victoria, B.C.

Enclosed you will find the second set of materials -- and the last -- for my study on composition pre-writing strategies. It would be appreciated if you would administer these to your class(es) during the week of May 14, 1979.

I would appreciate the prompt return of the completed composition assignments so that I can proceed with the necessary statistical work.

Since, for most classes, this second composition is administered in a different fashion from the first, I would request that you adhere to the outlined procedures most carefully. (There are, however, control groups who will follow exactly the same format as for the previous composition.)

I am available, once again, to answer any questions you may have. My home telephone number is 477-5770; the school number is 477-6945.

I am most grateful to you for your help, especially at this very busy time of year. Thank you.

Yours very truly,

R. S. Mitchell

Enclosures

APPENDIX F

COMPOSITION TEST:

LESSON PLAN - GROUP A

Lesson Plan: Group A

Date: Week of May 14, 1979.

Time: 1 hour (plus a small amount of organizational time).

Procedures

PLEASE ENSURE THAT THE FOLLOWING LESSON OUTLINE IS FOLLOWED EXACTLY.

1. Distribute to each student a copy of the "Student Assignment Outline" (blue).
2. Have the students complete the information required in the box in the top right-hand corner of the Student Assignment Outline. They are asked to PRINT.
3. Allow a few minutes for the students to read over the General Information section of the assignment outline.
4. Please read aloud the Topic section of the outline. Do not discuss or comment on the assignment and do not give the students any additional instruction.
5. Allow the students exactly 15 minutes to prepare a written outline for their compositions. (They are directed to use the back of the assignment outline.)
6. Distribute the foolscap provided to each student and allow exactly 40 minutes for them to write their compositions. They must stop when the time is up.
7. The students will submit their completed compositions and their rough work. The compositions should be stapled to the Student Assignment Outline (so that the outline will be on top, face-up).
8. You are asked to forward the completed compositions to Mr. R. S. Mitchell, using the envelope provided, as soon as convenient after they have been written.

APPENDIX G

COMPOSITION TEST:

LESSON PLAN - GROUP B

COMPOSITION RESEARCH PROJECT

Lesson Plan: Group B

Date: Week of May 14, 1979.

Time: 1 hour (plus a small amount of organizational time).

Procedures

PLEASE ENSURE THAT THE FOLLOWING LESSON OUTLINE IS FOLLOWED EXACTLY.

1. Distribute to each student a copy of the "Student Assignment Outline" (blue).
2. Have the students complete the information required in the box in the top right-hand corner of the Student Assignment Outline. They are asked to PRINT.
3. Allow a few minutes for the students to read over the General Information section of the assignment outline.
4. Please read aloud the Topic section of the outline.
5. Using the chalkboard or overhead projector to record pertinent points, present the following brief lesson to the class. (The italicized comments/questions should be spoken directly or in paraphrased form.)
 - (a) Write the topic on the chalkboard or overhead projector transparency. *What ideas come to your mind as you read this topic? Jot down the ideas which come from the class.*
 - (b) *Refer to the assignment outline. To whom is this composition going to be directed? (Answer: Friends) How does the reading audience affect the way in which you write your composition? Jot any suggestions down on the chalkboard or transparency.*
 - (c) *Again refer to your assignment outline. What is your purpose in writing this composition? What are you trying to do? (Answer: Describe the sights, sounds, smells, and feelings which made the experience real to us. To help our friends share an experience.) How does our purpose affect our composition? Jot suggestions on the chalkboard once again.*

- 2 -

- (d) Write the following, leaving space to add ideas later: sight, sound, taste, touch (feeling), smell. *What ideas come to mind when you consider the topic in relation to each of these senses?* Summarize the ideas which are forthcoming under the headings, trying to get down as many ideas as possible and involving as many students as you can.

You should take exactly 15 minutes for this lesson. Allow as much time as possible for students to share their ideas with the class. (This is important.) However, you must also keep your eye on the clock -- do not exceed the time limit.

If they wish, students may make notes on the back of the assignment outline paper.

6. Distribute the foolscap provided to each student and allow exactly 40 minutes for them to write their compositions. They must stop when the time is up. (Leave the summary of ideas on the chalkboard or overhead projector screen so that students may refer to them if they wish.)

7. The students will submit their completed compositions and any rough work. The compositions should be stapled to the Student Assignment Outline (so that the outline will be on top, face-up).

8. You are asked to forward the completed compositions to Mr. R. S. Mitchell, using the envelope provided, as soon as convenient after they have been written.

APPENDIX H

COMPOSITION TEST:

LESSON PLAN - GROUP C

COMPOSITION RESEARCH PROJECTLesson Plan: Group CDate: Week of May 14, 1979.Time: 1 hour (plus a small amount of organizational time).

Procedures

PLEASE ENSURE THAT THE FOLLOWING LESSON OUTLINE IS FOLLOWED EXACTLY.

1. Distribute to each student a copy of the "Student Assignment Outline" (blue).
2. Have the students complete the information required in the box in the top right-hand corner of the Student Assignment Outline. They are asked to PRINT.
3. Allow a few minutes for the students to read over the General Information section of the assignment outline.
4. Please read aloud the Topic section of the outline.
5. Ask the students to assemble in assigned discussion groups (no more than five to a group).

Important Note: If time will be a problem, it is suggested that students be assigned to discussion groups at the end of the previous class period.

Distribute the "Discussion Guide" (yellow) to one person in each group. Direct the students to keep their discussion to the composition topic by using the Discussion Guide. (It is not a time for free conversation.) Please circulate around the room to see that these instructions are carried out.

Students should meet in their discussion groups for exactly 15 minutes. Do not allow the groups to exceed this time limit.

If they wish, individual students may also make notes on the back of the assignment outline paper.

6. Distribute the foolscap provided to each student and allow exactly 40 minutes for them to write their compositions. They must stop when the time is up.

It is permissible for students in a group to share any notes that they may have made on the Discussion Guide.

7. The students will submit their completed compositions and any rough work. The compositions should be stapled to the Student Assignment Outline (so that the outline will be on top, face-up).

8. You are asked to forward the completed compositions to Mr. R. S. Mitchell, using the envelope provided, as soon as convenient after they have been written.

APPENDIX J

COMPOSITION TEST:

DISCUSSION GUIDE - GROUP C

COMPOSITION RESEARCH PROJECTDiscussion Guide

Directions: Use this guide to direct your discussion concerning the composition topic which has been presented to you. It is important that you keep to the topic, as you only have fifteen minutes to prepare for writing.

The group members may want to make notes as you go along. If you do, you should use the back of the Student Assignment Outline.

1. You have just read over the topic section for this composition assignment.

What ideas come to mind immediately?

2. Look again at the topic.

To whom is it directed?

How does your reading audience affect the way that you will write your composition?

3. Refer again to the topic section of the Student Assignment Outline.

What is your purpose in writing this composition? What are you trying to do?

4. Think of Hallowe'en Night in connection with its impact or effect on your senses. Everyone in your group should think of at least one idea connected with the sense of:

(a) sight

(b) sound

(c) smell

(d) taste

(e) touch (feeling)

5. What are some word-pictures or images we can associate with the topic (Hallowe'en Night)?

- 2 -

Can you think of some word-pictures as a result of the ideas which came out of your discussion of the senses?

Can you come up with a word-picture (or image) for each sense?

6. Consider other ideas that come to mind.

What other ideas can you associate with Hallowe'en Night that might be suitable in your description.

7. Remember your reading audience and your purpose.

How might a descriptive paragraph using some of the ideas you have suggested be most effectively organized?

APPENDIX K

COMPOSITION TEST:

STUDENT ASSIGNMENT OUTLINE

COMPOSITION RESEARCH PROJECTStudent Assignment Outline

Please print

NAME: _____
Last Name First Name

SCHOOL: _____

DIVISION: _____ BLOCK/SECTION: _____

SEX: M or F

ENGLISH TEACHER: _____

DATE: _____

General Information

The purpose of this composition project is to learn something of the way that students approach the task of writing a composition in class. More specifically, the intent is to look at how the things you do before you actually write the composition influence what and how you write.

Please do your best work, carefully following the directions given to you by your teacher.

Thank you for your help!

Topic

All of us like to remember the special places we've visited and the exciting things we've done. In order to help our friends share these experiences, we should try to tell them things that will help them make a mental picture of the scene: the colours, the motions, the sounds, the smells, and the feelings which have made the experience mean so much to us. Study the topic given below. Use your imagination and your writing skill to create a life-like word picture of such a scene, and the impressions it made on you. Concentrate on describing the sights, sounds, and smells, rather than merely telling what happened.

HALLOWE'EN NIGHT

Instructions: Plan your story so that it is as clear as possible. Use the back of this paper to jot down and organize your ideas. When it is time to write, your teacher will provide you with some lined paper on which to write your composition. You will have forty minutes to complete this writing assignment.

APPENDIX L

PRE-MEASURE and COMPOSITION TEST:

"MARKING" INSTRUCTIONS

COMPOSITION RESEARCH PROJECT"Marking" InstructionsWord Count

1. It is first necessary to determine the number of words written in each composition.
2. Proceeding from beginning to end, count the number of words which have been written. Write the total at the end of the composition.

Please note that:

- (a) abbreviations count as one word;
- (b) dates (eg. October 31, 1974) are to be considered two words;
- (c) expressions of time (eg. 10 p.m.) are to be counted as one word;
- (d) contractions (eg. can't, doesn't, etc.) are to be considered as two words;
- (e) compound nouns written as one word are counted as one word;
- (f) compound nouns written as two words and hyphenated word pairs are counted as two words.

3. Check the total by counting the number of words from the end to the beginning. Enter the total at the top of the paper.
4. If the two totals are identical, or if there is a discrepancy of no more than two words, enter the number of words in red ink (using the felt-tip pen provided) in the top left-hand corner of the blue cover paper (eg. W = 345). Where there has been a discrepancy of one or two words, enter the highest total.
5. If there has been a discrepancy of more than two words (three or more), the paper will have to be recounted two more times (from beginning to end and from the end to the beginning).

T-unit Count

1. It is also necessary to determine the number of T-units used in each composition.
2. Read through each composition, breaking it up into T-units. Mark off the T-units using the blue felt-tip marking pen provided.

- 2 -

Please note that:

- (a) a T-unit is one main clause plus any subordinate clause or nonclausal structure attached to or embedded in it;
- (b) fragments which result from the omission of a word count as a T-unit;
- (c) other fragments are to be discarded;
- (d) unintelligible strings of words ("garbles") are to be discarded.

3. Any T-unit longer than fifteen words in length should be re-checked.

4. Proceeding from beginning to end, count the number of T-units in each composition. Check the total by recounting (proceeding from the end to the beginning).

5. It is important that the exact number of T-units be determined. (There can be no discrepancy.) Enter the total in the top left-hand corner of the blue cover sheet (eg. T = 9).

Index of Syntactic Maturity

1. The index of syntactic maturity will then be calculated.

2. The index of syntactic maturity is calculated by dividing the number of words (W) by the number of T-units (T).

$$S = \frac{W}{T}$$

3. The index of syntactic maturity will be indicated in the top left-hand corner of the blue cover page using the green felt-tip marker provided (S = 15.53).

VITA

Surname: MITCHELL *Given Names:* ROBERT SINCLAIR

Place of Birth: ST. BONIFACE, MAN. *Date of Birth:* SEPTEMBER 13, 1944

Educational Institutions Attended, with Dates of Entering and Leaving:

UNIVERSITY OF VICTORIA, VICTORIA, BRITISH COLUMBIA 1962 to 1967

Degrees, Diplomas, Etc., Awarded, with Dates and Names of Institutions:

Bachelor of Education (Secondary) 1967 University of Victoria,
Victoria, British Columbia

Honors and Awards:

(1) Parent-Teacher Association Bursary, 1962, Mt. View Senior

Secondary School, Victoria, B.C.

(2) Canadian Daughters' League, Assembly No. 5 - Gertrude M. Ralston

Memorial Bursary, 1966, University of Victoria, Victoria, B.C.

(3) Rose's Limited Jewellers Watch, 1967, University of Victoria,

Victoria, B.C.

(4) Dr. Maxwell A. Cameron Memorial Medal and Prize, 1967,

University of Victoria, Victoria, B.C.

Publications:

nil

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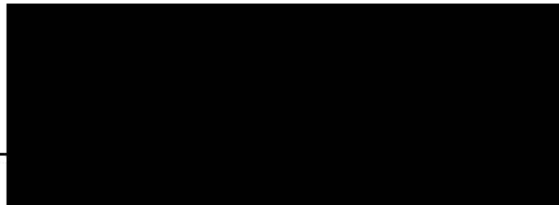
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Title of Thesis/Dissertation

THE PRE-WRITING EXPERIENCE IN COMPOSITION TEACHING

FOR GRADE TEN PUPILS

Author



ROBERT SINCLAIR MITCHELL

Name

August 24, 1979

Date