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A CORRELATIONAL AND DESCRIPTIVE STUDY OF

STUDENT WRITING IN THREE AIMS OF DISCOURSE

by

William McCarthy Stone

An <u>Abstract</u>

Of a thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in English
in the Graduate College of
The University of Iowa

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Thesis supervisor: Associate Professor Paul Diehl

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The purpose of this study was to determine if students who are successful in one writing task are equally successful in another, different writing task and to describe some of the features students use in successfully completing these tasks.

The study consisted of two major sections: a correlational analysis and a description of writing samples. In the first section, a literature review discussed the differences between the modes and aims of discourse and then described, chronologically, the relatively few studies which have controlled aims and/or modes in measuring student writing performance.

The correlational analysis that followed was an attempt to determine if there would be a significant correlation between a student's performance in one aim of discourse and either of the other two examined aims. During the spring of 1979, 109 community college freshmen each wrote three twenty-minute responses, one in each of three aims of discourse (referential, expressive, and persuasive.) These samples were then scored for primary trait, and the scores were subjected to a correlational analysis using the Statistical Analysis System. The results of this examination showed no significant correlation between a student's performance in one aim of discourse and either of the other two aims, suggesting that writing assignments should be spread

across all three aims of discourse, not concentrated on one or two.

The second half of the study began with a review of recent, descriptive research in writing, which had controlled the aims and/or modes of discourse. The study then described successful student writing performance in terms of selected syntactic and stylistic features and compared that performance with results from other studies of student writing. The findings, limited to the samples considered in the study, indicate that students possess a wide range of synatctic and stylistic skills and that they do not use them to the same extent in each aim of discourse. These results tend to complement those of the correlational study and again suggest that students may benefit from exposure to and experience in all the aims of discourse.

Abstract approved: _____
Thesis supervisor

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November 23, 1981
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CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

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PH.D. THESIS

_____

This is to certify that the Ph.D. thesis of

William McCarthy Stone

has been approved by the Examining Committee
for the thesis requirement for the Doctor of
Philosophy degree in English at the December,
1981 graduation.

Thesis committee: _____*Paul B. Diehl*_____
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Member

_____*Richard Lloyd-Jones*_____
Member

_____*Brooks Landon*_____
Member

_____*Charles R. Cooper*_____
Member

To Janet

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The limits of my language
are the limits of my world.

Wittgenstein

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This thesis would not have been possible were it not for the generosity and graciousness of Professor Carol Anne Boyd of Black Hawk College. I met Carol early in my course of study at Iowa, and her constant smile, friendly conversation, and continuing encouragement made some of the more difficult days enjoyable. But it was her offer of student writing samples, that she had collected during months of hard work, that made my study possible. My tenure at Iowa had been foreshortened, and I had no time to collect writing samples of my own. Only because of Carol does this study exist.

Of course, the data alone was not enough. Any successes in this work are the result of the intelligent and compassionate direction of my chairman, Paul Diehl, and my other committee members, Richard Lloyd-Jones, Brooks Landon, Jim Sandrock, and Charles Cooper, who served as friends and colleagues, helping me through this process of discovery. The bright spots in this document are reflections of their wisdom and guidance.

I'm grateful also to another group of friends: Bill McCarron, Ruth Lucas, Harry Caldwell, Owen Brady, Chris Knowles, Jan Dalby, Jon Toof, and Doris Miller. They cast

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Perhaps my greatest debt is to my wife, Janet, and our daughter, Erin. How they survived these past few years with such a grumpy, grouchy, oft-times disillusioned husband and father I'll never know. I do know that I survived because of them.

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PART A

INTRODUCTION AND LITERATURE REVIEW

CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM

Aim of the Study

My purpose in this investigation is to determine if students who are skillful in one writing task are equally skillful in another, different writing task and to describe some of the features students use in successfully completing these tasks.

Teachers have traditionally assumed that there are good writers and weak writers, all of whom perform consistently regardless of the writing task at hand. Perhaps the good writers will improve, perhaps the weak will become mediocre, but the assignment will have little effect on their performance.

It is little wonder that such a belief has persisted--most school assignments restrict the type of writing available to the students to a single task, "academic prose," i.e., exposition. Bound in this scholastic box, students who write exposition well will succeed, those who can not will not.

My contention is the reverse of this common assumption; I believe that the writing assignment is a major cause of

success or failure in student discourse. If indeed it is, what demands do different assignments make on writers and how do writers satisfy those demands?

Significance of the Study

In a 1980 presentation at the University of Iowa, Professor Hans Guth called the past century of composition teaching an "Ice Age."[1] Others have referred to it less imaginatively perhaps, but in their discussions of this time, their words share Guth's connotation. John Warnock calls this a period of "conventional pedagogies," where teachers have viewed "the English theme, expository or literary critical, as the pattern (and crown?) of all discourse," where teachers have seen "'good writing' in naive Platonic terms, as something good for all rhetorical occasions," and where teachers perhaps still see "good writing as something that may be achieved by following certain recipes."[2] It has been a period, he says, where "for the last 70 years teachers have got their principles neither from empirical research nor from the best that has been known and thought in the world."[3] In his 1959 book, Roots for a New Rhetoric , Father Daniel Fogarty named this period a time of "current-traditional" rhetoric, [4] and Richard Young further defined the term as a paradigmatic phase (from Kuhn) where the members of the English profession have shared a "stable sys-

tem of beliefs," a system consisting of an:

> emphasis on the composed product rather than the composing process; the analysis of discourse into words, sentences, and paragraphs; the classification of discourse into description, narration, exposition, and argument; the strong concern with usage (syntax, spelling, punctuation) and with style (economy, clarity, emphasis); the preoccupation with the informal essay and the research paper; and so on.[5]

Such a paradigm encourages acceptance of beliefs rather than a testing of them.

Recently, however, a number of researchers and teachers have begun to challenge the paradigm. Composition has come to be viewed as a process, a "knowing how" in Warnock's terms, rather then a canned product, a "knowing that." Invention (largely neglected in the past century) has become popular once again and new theories of invention have been proposed in such works as Kenneth Burke's A Rhetoric of Motives , Rohman and Welcke's Pre-Writing: The Construction and Application of Models for Concept Formation in Writing , and Young, Becker, and Pike's Rhetoric: Discovery and Change. Other, even broader theories of discourse, such as those in James Britton's (and others') The Development of Writing Abilities, 11-18 , Richard Lloyd-Jones' "Primary Trait Scoring," and James Kinneavy's A Theory of Discourse , have surfaced in the past decade or so.

These new theories confront the past and develop a new set of assumptions about invention, about the writer's

purpose, about the relationship between writer, subject, and audience. But just as these theories test the "current-traditional" paradigm, they too must be tested.

As Lee Odell has said, ". . . we will need to ask new kinds of questions. Is a given theory valid? Does it do justice to the complexities (and the simplicities) of the writing we see everyday? Are the theory's assumptions borne out in writing done by our students?"[6] Two separate but related questions that Odell mentions form the basis of my project:

1) Are students who are successful with one sort of writing task equally successful with other kinds of writing tasks?

2) Do different kinds of writing elicit different kinds of syntactic and stylistic performance from students?[7]

It is my hope that the answers, however tentative, to these questions may help us, as English teachers and researchers, help our students write.

Description of the Study

This investigation is both correlational and descriptive. From a population of some 300 papers, more than a 100 samples in each of three different types of writing, I first attempt to correlate the quality of the performance of

writers across the three types of discourse. In the second phase of the study, I analyze a sample of 24 students' papers in order to describe selected syntactic and stylistic features which could have contributed to the successful per-formances, in order to see if there is any correlation between the aim and the mix or frequency of occurrence of these features. I then conclude with an evaluation of the study.

Footnotes for Chapter I

[1] Hans P. Guth, University of Iowa, Department of English , Iowa City, Iowa, March, 1980.

[2] John Warnock, "New Rhetoric and the Grammar of Pedagogy," Freshman English News , 5 (1976), 1.

[3] Warnock, p. 1.

[4] Daniel J. Fogarty, Roots for a New Rhetoric (New York: Teacher's College, Columbia University, 1959).

[5] Richard Young, "Paradigms and Problems: Needed Research in Rhetorical Invention," Research on Composing , ed. Charles R. Cooper and Lee Odell (Urbana, Illinois: National Council of Teachers of English/NCTE, 1978), p. 31.

[6] Lee Odell, "Teachers of Composition and Needed Research in Discourse Theory," College Composition and Communication (CCC), 30 (Feb 1979), 39.

[7] Odell, pp. 41-42.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE: TYPES OF WRITING

AND MEASURING STUDENT WRITING PERFORMANCE

Types of Writing: Modes and Aims

At least as early as Aristotle man has attempted to separate his discourse into different kinds or types, perhaps to make his understanding and discussion of it somewhat easier.[1] Although for the past 100 years the profession has taught writing according to "mode," recent composition theorists have begun again to stress the "aims" approach to discourse. This paper will describe writing where aim was controlled. Few examples of similar research are available, largely due to the "newness" of the aims approach. Far more research has been done controlling mode.

The Modes of Discourse

The modes (or forms) of discourse, as they are currently taught, came into prominence in the late nineteenth century when Alexander Bain classified them as description, narration, exposition, and argumentation. As James Kinneavy has pointed out in A Theory of Discourse, these four modes "actually are grounded in certain philo-

sophic concepts of the nature of reality considered as being

or becoming."[2] Thus, Kinneavy continues,

> To each of four modes of discourse there corresponds a principle of thought which permits reality to be considered in this way. Therefore, each of the modes has its own peculiar logic. It also has its own organizational patterns, and, to some extent, its own stylistic characteristics.[3]

A more detailed discussion of these forms can be found in

Frank D'Angelo's "The Modes of Discourse":

> Each form is assumed to have its own function, its own subject matter, its own organizational patterns, and its own language. The primary function of descriptive writing is to evoke sense impressions of people and things. Its subject matter is the objects of sense experience. It organizes its materials in space and time. Its language is a combination of the denotative and connotative, the literal and figurative, the objective and the impressionistic. Narrative writing is that kind of discourse which functions to tell a story or narrate an event. Its subject matter is people and events which it organizes in space and time. Like the language of descriptive writing, the language of narration often combines the denotative and the connotative, the literal and the figurative, the objective and the impressionistic. The function of expository writing is to inform or to instruct, to present ideas and general truths as clearly and as objectively as possible. Its subject matter is ideas and generalizations. Its organizational patterns are logical, the most predominant being analysis and classiification. Its language is generally denotative and factual. Argumentative discourse is that mode of discourse which attempts to convince or persuade, defend or refute a particular issue or point of view. Its subject matter is issues about which there is considerable difference of belief and opinion. Its organizational patterns are deduction (especially syllogistiic progression) and induction (especially the example). Its language may be factual or emotive, depending on the kind of appeal (logical, emotional, ethical) being used.[4]

As I stated earlier, our profession has almost invariably limited its teaching of writing to concentrating on mode, typically the expository. In a recent survey of some 13 Florida high schools, researcher Nancy McGee found that "assigned writing is brief and consists primarily of exposition and reporting given for the purpose of extending and/or expanding in-class activities."[5] This same emphasis has been reported earlier in studies such as Hays (1936), and Kitzhaber (1953) who said college composition courses had become "little more than paragraph construction;... Unity, Coherence, and Emphasis; and the 'Four Forms of Discourse.' All three of these items of theory encouraged a mechanical conception of writing, a view of writing as a classroom exercise without social implications."[6,7] Perhaps we have all been, or at least known, teacher "x": who "tends to emphasize the structure of discourse and the rhetorical characteristics...the modes of discourse--narration, description, exposition, argumentation...the structure of the paragraph... exposition and argumentation [handling of] abstract problems, literary analysis...theme evaluation and revision."[8] If indeed we do stress the modes of discourse approach in our teaching, what are its weaknesses and what are its alternatives?

Although D'Angelo points out that the means of development supposedly intrinsic to one mode can be found in any

type of writing and that often the forms (modes) overlap, perhaps a greater weakness was uncovered in 1914, when Sterling Leonard complained that modes do not take account of the writer's _purpose_ in expressing his thoughts and ideas.[9,10] This same objection has been stated more recently by James Britton: "...the effect on the writer of what he writes, the needs he is statisfying, his actual procedures--these are obscured rather than illuminated by the distinctions embodied in the [modes of discourse]."[11] The modes center on the written product and what it means, a product achieved prescriptively or imitatively; the aims of discourse center on the writer's purpose, the processes of his mind, the uses of his language.

The Aims of Discourse

Recent composition theorists, in an attempt to understand better how we write (process) rather than what we write (product), have concentrated not on the forms of discourse but instead on the goals, purposes, aims of discourse. Researchers and theorists like Emig, Britton, Jakobson, Moffeet, Kinneavy, Klaus, and Lloyd-Jones have developed theoretical models of the ways we put language to use. Although, like modes, aims of discourse can overlap, they tend to center on the three points of the communications triangle: subject, speaker/writer, and audience.

The number of aims can vary, from two (Britton) to six
(Jakobson), but for the purposes of this study I've followed
Klaus and Lloyd-Jones' three part model:

Explanatory (or Referential)

(Subject Oriented)

Expressive

(Discourser Oriented)

Persuasive

(Audience Oriented)[12]
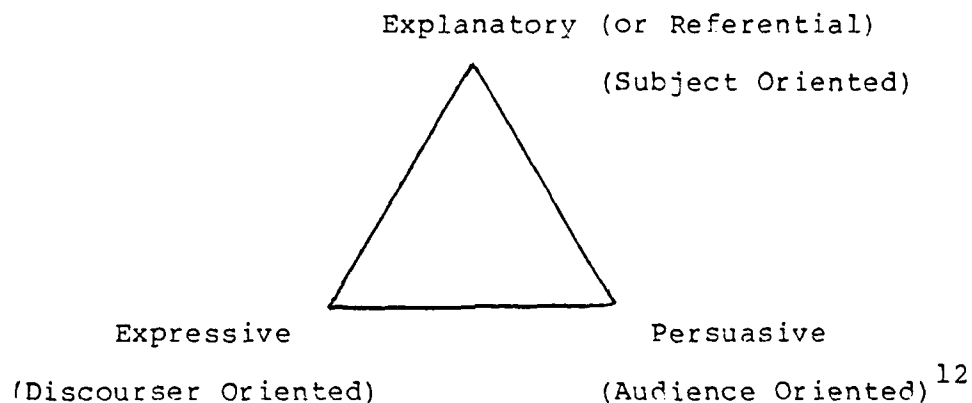
Klaus and Lloyd-Jones selected this particular model
for its simplicity and usefulness; it was "based on the pur-
pose (goal,aim) of the discourse and reflected whether the
character of the writing grew out of a focus on the writer,
the audience, or the subject matter."[13]

In this model, expressive writing, for example, could
consist of role-playing, story-telling, or letter-writing,
for any of these activities would produce writing which
"grew out of a focus on" the writer. Expressive writing is
also important to the model in a "developmental sense," for
it is:

the step upon which other, more mature, forms of writing are built. Though expressive writing conveys a view of experience which emphasizes the self of the writer, it also aims to convey the content of experience which is the basis of explanatory writing, and it is concerned with moving a reader to sympathize with a particular view of experience which is the dominant orientation of persuasive writing. Thus expressive writing represents a primary use of language from which explanatory and persuasive writing emerge.[14]

This model was developed for use in the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), as the theoretical foundation of a more informative method of analyzing and describing writing than the atomistic and other holistic (such as that used by the Educational Testing Service) devices which preceded it. This new method, the primary trait system of assessment, was used in my research and I will explain it in Chapter III. The importance of the aims approach to seeing writing is best summed up by Professor Kinneavy, again in A Theory of Discourse :

> The aims of language are the reason for the existence of all the preceding aspects of language. Sounds, morphemes, syntactic patterns, meanings of all kinds, skills in speaking and the other arts of discourse--all of these exist so that humans may achieve certain purposes in their use of language with one another.[15]

Measuring Student Writing Performance

In their landmark 1963 study of then-current research in composition, Braddock, Lloyd-Jones, and Schoer emphasize that when we attempt to measure student writing it is

critical that we control the assignment as much as possible, to include the topic, the mode, the time allowed, and the examination situation.[16] As I've outlined earlier, we now need to add to these concerns the aim of discourse and it is my purpose in this section to review past research where mode and/or aim were controlled.

Controlling Mode

There have been few studies in which mode was controlled in an effort to measure student writing performance. I've not found any attempt to use the mode of description exclusively, although the other three modes have seen limited investigation and all four are examined in one study.

In 1979, Lester Faigley restricted the papers of 138 college freshmen to the narrative mode and then evaluated this writing on a holistic scale. He determined that instruction in generative rhetoric did increase writing effectiveness in narration, while admitting that other researchers might not find this surprising.[17]

Two 1978 studies controlled their students' writing in the expository mode. Ann O. Gebhard analyzed writing quality and fluency, and discovered that students rated "good" in the expository task were far more fluent (ave. 489 words/paper) than those rated poor (ave. 307 words/paper). She concluded that "fluency is not only a corollary of writ-

ing superiority but a basic ingredient of it" and recommended (based on her observations and other research) that schools elicit writing which emphasizes personal narrative <u>rather</u> than exposition.[18]

In the second study, a measurement of syntactic performance in exposition, Maimon and Nodine hypothesized that "there will be differences in syntatic skill attributable to differences in types of writing assignments" and concluded that "students' sentence-combining performance, even after specific practice, may be lowered when they write in the analytic [expository] mode," perhaps reinforcing Gebhard's conclusion and again questioning the schools' emphasis for the past century on expository writing.[19]

In "An Analysis of Readers' Responses to Essays," Ellen Nold and Sarah Freedman restricted all four of their different topics to the argumentative mode, based on Braddock's admonition that "variations in mode of discourse may have more effect than variations in topic on the quality of writing."[20] They discovered that "sophistication in modification...is indicative of good writing in expository and argumentative discourse--as well as the narrative and descriptive discourse on which Christensen based most of his work."[21] In addition, they concluded that the argumentative mode may elicit fewer instances of free final modification than the other modes. Perhaps their most significant

finding, however, is that for essays in the expository and argumentative modes, variances in student scores are due to "the depth and elaboration of the writer's stance towards the reader," notions which have much to do with the aim of the discourse.[22]

A final study which controlled mode in measuring writing performance was ironically the earliest (conducted in 1968) of the above group and also the most comprehensive (in considering mode). Veal and Tillman examined all four modes in the writings of elementary school students in order "to determine similarities and differences in the rated quality of compositions...."[23] Each writer (second, fourth, and sixth graders) wrote one composition in each mode and these papers were then evaluated using a model or comparison rating technique. The results showed that "second and fourth grade papers were rated at about the same level of quality, regardless of mode, but the level of rated quality for sixth grade papers far outdistanced...the two lower grades, again irrespective of mode."[24] They also discovered that across grades, quality increased maximally in the expository mode and minimally in the argumentative mode, giving rise to the question of whether specific instruction or cognitive development (or both) underlie such qualitative variance.[25] Regardless, the modes of discourse do appear to account for differences of quality in measured writing performances, at

least in a limited, developmental sense according to this evidence. Do the aims of discourse also appear to account for such differences?

Controlling Aim

Although there have also been in the past only a few studies of writing quality controlling aim, recent discourse theory (as discussed earlier) has begun to elicit more of these types of research.

Referential

The only study analyzing the quality of papers in the referential mode was a 1978 doctoral dissertation at the University of Texas, in which Lynn A. Phillips compared ratings of upper-division referential papers with those of a lower-division required composition course (English 306) which supposedly serves as a preparatory instrument for writing upper-division assignments. Although the study did show that comprehensiveness, logical relationships, and information value were "the features most closely related to grades in this aim of discourse, grading practices were largely inconsistent within the preparatory course and between it and the upper-division courses."[26]

Persuasive

Most of the measurement work in controlling the aims of discourse has been in the persuasive aim, with perhaps the earliest study being that of Sanders and Littlefield in 1975. Finding fault with much of the composition research that had attempted to show the effects of instruction on quality, these authors highlighted a significant problem: papers written according to the "aims" approach may suffer in quality ratings if judged by the "modes" (standard expository criteria) approach but will not if they are judged by specific norms for each aim. In order to test their hypothesis, they subjected papers written in the persuasive aim (by students being instructed in the "aims" approach) to two different ratings: one, the California Essay Scale, using standard, generalized, expository critieria and the other, a device using persuasive criteria created expressly for the course at hand. What Sanders and Littlefield discovered was that, in this instance, the rating scales did not affect demonstration of writing quality. However, they did add in the caveat that the likely reason was that the persuasive aim "is closer to the thesis writing measured by the California Essay Scale than certain other aims (e.g., self expression, exploration, certain forms of information, etc.)" and that their hypothesis may well have been accepted

if they had selected "another aim of composition further removed from thesis writing."[27]

A more recent study which controlled the persuasive aim of discourse was conducted at the SUNY/Buffalo campus in New York under the direction of Charles Cooper.[28] Recognizing that "most freshmen arrive at college having written very little, having written only in limited modes of discourse, and having received poor, even downright misleading, instruction in writing," Cooper and his associates set out to measure and describe the performance of incoming freshmen in accomplishing a persuasive writing task.[29] The papers were measured by a norm-referenced, general-impression evaluation but the importance of the study lay in its detailed description of a 50 paper sample, which I will discuss later in this chapter.

A final study which controlled the persuasive aim, and which like the Cooper study has its greatest interest and significance in describing performance rather than measuring it, was conducted by researchers at the University of Iowa for the National Institute of Education.[30] In this research, using the primary trait system, the investigators were able to describe, but not thoroughly define, successful persuasive writing. I will reserve a more detailed discussion of their description of the papers for Chapter V.

Combined Aims

There have been only two recent studies in which more than one aim of discourse has been controlled. Perhaps the most comprehensive of the two is the writing portion of the National Assessment of Educational Progress conducted during the late 1960s and early 70s. The first assessment (1969-1970) measured papers written for transactional purposes by students nation-wide on a general, holistic scale, but, since 1972, NAEP has been using the primary trait system to evaluate papers written in the persuasive, referential, and expressive aims of discourse. This study is important in its objectives for it attempts to show that we do write for different purposes, purposes other than to write an "expository theme," and that some of us may "have an abundance of talent for writing--for verbalizing--even though what is produced may not fit traditional [especially pedagogical] concepts of 'writing.'"[31]

The second study, by Dilworth, Reising, and Wolfe in 1978, analyzed high school student writing in the referential and expressive aims and measured, as superior or typical, the quality of each paper. The results show that while half the students chose to write in each aim, only 27% of the superior papers were written in expressive discourse. Thus, "the data indicate a modest but clear tendency for the heads of English departments in this sample to place a

premium on relatively abstract signification in the papers."[32] The bias inherent in such judgments says more about the nature of English instruction than it does about the writing quality of our students.

Controlling Aim and Mode

William McCleary, in a 1979 note in <u>RTE</u> , states that "procedures for improving validity now require that the experimenter control the aim and mode of discourse that the students are asked to write."[33] Only a few researchers, like Sanders below, have done so however.

In a 1973 doctoral study, under the direction of James Kinneavy, Sara Sanders compared two semester-long courses, one taught by the "aims" approach, the other by mode, and concluded that there were no significant differences between the groups based on impromptu pre/post test essays. She wisely questions the use of such impromptu measures as the only valid means of demonstrating growth in writing.[34]

Footnotes for Chapter II

[1] In his _Rhetoric_ , Aristotle segments oratory into three kinds: deliberative, forensic, epideictic. Book I, Chapter 3.

[2] James L. Kinneavy, _A Theory of Discourse_, (New York: W.W. Norton, 1971), p. 37.

[3] Kinneavy, pp. 37-38.

[4] Frank J. D'Angelo, "Modes of Discourse," in _Teaching Composition: 10 Bibliographic Essays_, ed. Gary Tate (Fort Worth, Texas: Texas Christian University Press, 1976), p. 115.

[5] Nancy R. McGee, "Writing in the Content Areas: A Survey of the Instructional Uses of Writing in Selected Central Florida High Schools," _DAI_, 38 (1978), 6505A (Florida Atlantic University).

[6] Edna Hays, "College Entrance Requirements in English: Their Effects on the High Schools," _Contributions to Education_, No.675 (New York: Columbia University Teachers College, 1936, as cited in Richard Braddock, "English Composition," _Encyclopedia of Educational Research_, 1969 ed., p. 444.

[7] Arthur R. Kitzhaber, _A Bibliography of Rhetoric in American Colleges, 1850-1900_ (Denver, Colorado: Denver Public Libraries, 1954), p. IV.

[8] Paul H. Jacobs and William H. Evans, _Illinois Tests in the Teaching of High School English_, Interim Report (Champaign: Illinios State-wide Curriculum Study Center in the Preparation of Secondary School English Teachers, 1969, as cited in William T. West, "Composition, Teaching of," _The Encyclopedia of Education_, 1971 ed.,II,363-4.

[9] D'Angelo, 117.

[10] Sterling Leonard, "As to the Forms of Discourse," _The English Journal_, 3 (April, 1914), 202, as cited in D'Angelo, 118-9.

[11] James Britton and others, _The Development of Writing Abilities (11-18)_ (London: MacMillan Education Ltd, 1975), p. 5.

[12]Richard Lloyd-Jones, "Primary Trait Scoring," in Charles R. Cooper and Lee Odell's Evaluating Writing: Describing, Measuring, Judging (Urbana, Illinois: NCTE, 1977), p. 39.

[13]Lloyd-Jones, p. 37.

[14]Carl H. Klaus, et al, Composing Childhood Experience: An Approach to Writing and Learning in the Elementary Grades (St. Louis: CEMREL, Inc., 1979), p. 4.

[15]Kinneavy, pp. 37-38.

[16]Richard Braddock, Richard Lloyd-Jones, and Lowell Schoer, Research in Written Composition (Champaign, Illinois: NCTE, 1963), pp. 7-10.

[17]Lester Faigley, "The Influence of Generative Rhetoric on the Syntactic Maturity and Writing Effectiveness of College Freshmen," RTE 13 (Oct. 1979), 197-206.

[18]Ann O. Gebhard, "Writing Quality and Syntax: A Transformational Analysis of Three Prose Samples," RTE 12 (Oct 78), 211-231.

[19]Elaine P. Maimon and Barbara F. Nodine, "Measuring Syntactic Growth: Errors and Expectations in Sentence-Combining Practice with College Freshmen," RTE 12 (Oct 78), 233-244.

[20]Braddock, p. 8, in Ellen W. Nold and Sarah W. Freedman, "An Analysis of Readers' Responses to Essays," RTE 11 (Fall 77), 166.

[21]Nold and Freedman, pp. 172-173.

[22]Nold and Freedman, p. 174.

[23]L. Ramon Veal and Murray Tillman, "Mode of Discourse Variation in the Evaluation of Childrens' Writing," RTE 5 (Spring 71), 38.

[24]Veal and Tillman, pp. 41-42.

[25]Veal and Tillman, pp. 43-44.

[26]Lynn Therton Phillips, "An Assessment of the Preparatory Value of a College Course in Freshman Composition," DAI, 39 (1979), 4030A (University of Texas).

[27] Sara E. Sanders and John H. Littlefield, "Perhaps Test Essays Can Reflect Significant Improvement in Freshman Composition: Report on a Successful Attempt," RTE 9 (Fall 75), 152.

[28] Charles Cooper et al., "Writing Abilities of Regularly-Admitted Freshmen at SUNY/Buffalo," Unpublished Report, SUNY/Buffalo, 1979.

[29] Cooper, p.2.

[30] Paul Diehl et al., "Correlation of Syntactic/Stylistic Fluency and Judgement with Rhetorical Fluency and Judgement in the Persuasive Writing of 17-Year Olds," Unpublished NIE Report, University of Iowa, 1980.

[31] NAEP, "Expressive Writing: Selected Results From the Second National Assessment of Writing, November, 1976," Report No. 05-W-02, p.35. Available, along with all other Writing Assessment Reports, from Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C., 20402.

[32] Collett B. Dilworth, Jr., et al, "Language Structure and Thought in Written Composition: Certain Relationships," RTE 12 (May 78), 102.

[33] William J. McCleary, "A Note on Reliability and Validity Problems in Composition Research," RTE 13 (Oct 79), 274-5.

[34] Sara Elise Sanders, "A Comparison of the `Aims´ and `Modes´ Approaches to the Teaching of Junior College Freshman Composition Both With and Without An Auxiliary Writing Lab," DAI, 34 (1974), 5666A (The University of Texas at Austin).

PART B

MEASUREMENT AND CORRELATION OF STUDENT

PERFORMANCE ACROSS THE AIMS OF DISCOURSE

CHAPTER III

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

The Subjects

The subjects in this study were 109 freshman students enrolled at Blackhawk College, a two-year community college in Moline, Illinois, during the spring semester of 1979.

The study includes almost the entire population of English 101 (see Appendix A) during that semester, a total of seven sections taught by three different instructors. Eleven students were not included because they either did not complete all of the writing samples or did not complete the course.

Collection of the Data

All of these subjects wrote three essays (one in each of the three aims, referential, expressive, and persuasive) in class during March 1979.

These essays were collected and described by Carol Anne Boyd for her dissertation, "Field-Dependence-Independence and Writing and Revision in the Referential, Expressive, and Persuasive Aims," (University of Iowa, 1979). Because she, not I, devised these tasks and collected them from her stu-

dents, I have paraphrased or quoted her discussion (Chapter IV of her study) throughout most of this chapter. Our studies were designed for different purposes, even though we share the same data, and as I stated earlier, I am in her debt for this gracious generosity.[1]

The instructors at Blackhawk College were asked not to inform the students of the writing tasks ahead of time. The students were allowed twenty minutes per essay; they wrote one essay on the first testing date and completed the second and third essays on the second day. The order of the essays varied by section to lessen the influence of any possible fatigue factor. (See Appendix B for the testing schedule.) Each student also signed a release the first day of testing, recognizing that his or her work would be used for research purposes only.

Testing conditions were maintained as uniformly as possible; students were given pencils and ample paper, and all the assignments, presented here on the following three pages, were identical in format.

The Writing Tasks

In designing these assignments for her study, Professor Boyd chose them

> to elicit writing in the three aims . . . these three aims, referential, persuasive, and expressive, correspond to the emphasis of recent theories of discourse on subject, audience, and

Referential Assignment

Name_____

Section_____

Date_____

Here is an object that has come into your possession, and you would like to get another one exactly like it. A mail-order business that sells everything, called the Universal Store, has such an object. The problem is that the store can locate what it sells only by a written description. Write your order out below, giving whatever details you think the store will need to find the object. A messenger will be here in twenty minutes to take your order to the store. Space is provided below and on the next two pages.

Dear Universal Store,

_____

_____

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Source: Carol Anne Boyd, "Field-Dependence-Independence and Writing and Revision in the Referential, Expressive, and Persuasive Aims," Diss. University of Iowa 1979, p. 122.

Expressive Assignment

Name_____

Section_____

Date_____

Someone you care for very much is celebrating a special occasion. Think of something you now own that you want to give to your friend or relative. Write a message to that person, describing the gift, telling what it means to you, and why you're giving it to that person. Space is provided below and on the next two pages.

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Source: Carol Anne Boyd, "Field-Dependence-Independence and Writing and Revision in the Referential, Expressive, and Persuasive Aims," Diss. University of Iowa 1979, p. 123.

Persuasive Assignment

Name_____

Section_____

Date_____

Some high school students have proposed converting an old house into a recreation center where young people might drop in evenings for talk and relaxation. Some local residents oppose the plan on the grounds that the center would depress property values in the neighborhood and attract undesirable types. A public hearing has been called. Write a brief speech that you would make supporting or opposing the plan. Remember to take only ONE point of view. Organize your arguments carefully and be as convincing as possible. Space is provided below and on the next two pages.

_____

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Source: Carol Anne Boyd, "Field-Dependence-Independence and Writing and Revision in the Referential, Expressive, and Persuasive Aims," Diss. University of Iowa 1979, p. 124.

speaker. By positing several aims of discourse, we acknowledge that different skills are needed for different types of writing, and that excellence in one aim does not necessarily predict excellence in another [one of the topics of this study]. For example, a person who can write a clear report of an accident may not also be able to write his employer an effective letter persuading him that he should be considered for a promotion. When this principle is understood, it is easy to see that writing can best be evaluated by a consideration of how well its aim has been achieved.[2]

Thus, two of the assignments used (persuasive and expressive) were selected from National Assessment exercises (see note 10, Chap. II) exactly because they had been created to sample those specific aims of discourse. The third (referential) was designed by Professor Boyd in 1978 to sample that aim of discourse, and a pilot study conducted late that year confirmed the adequacy of the exercise. All of these tasks, then, had been developed to see how successfully students could write when they were given a specific purpose (or aim) for writing. It is important to note here that each assignment might also elicit secondary characteristics of other aims, just as any piece of writing may show a variety of modes; the design and evaluation of each assignment, however, concentrates on the primary aim of discourse. These samples of purpose-based prose were evaluated using a Primary Trait Scoring System, also developed for the National Assessment of Educational Progress.

Primary Trait Scoring

Professor Richard Lloyd-Jones of the University of Iowa, one of the creators of this particular scoring system, describes it as follows:

> The goal of Primary Trait Scoring is to define precisely what segments of discourse will be evaluated, . . . and to train readers to render holistic judgments accordingly. The chief steps in using the Primary Trait System are to define the universe of discourse, to devise exercises which sample that universe precisely, to ensure cooperation of the writers, to devise workable scoring guides, and to use the guides.[3]

The scoring guides and their sample papers were adapted from those used by NAEP for the persuasive and expressive aims. Professor Boyd devised a separate guide for the referential exercise she had created, based on the results of her 1978 pilot project:

> To devise the scoring guides for this referential task, I used the eighteen papers from this field test. Two other readers and I read the papers individually and sorted them into four categories according to how nearly they achieved the primary trait (emphasis mine). We then compared our scores, discussed those papers on which we disagreed, arrived at specific criteria for each scale point (ascending in value from 1 to 4), and selected sample themes for each scale point. . . . Using the format of the NAEP scoring guides as a model, I then wrote the first draft of the scoring guide for this referential assignment.[4]

Copies of the scoring guides and their unedited sample papers follow:

Persuasive Task: Speech for Hearing on Rec Center

Scoring Guide

The Directive

Some high school students have proposed converting an old house into a recreation center where young people might drop in evenings for talk and relaxation. Some local residents oppose the plan on the grounds that the center would depress property values in the neighborhood and attract undesirable types. A public hearing has been called. Write a brief speech that you would make supporting or opposing the plan. Remember to take only ONE point of view. Organize your arguments carefully and be as convincing as possible. Space is provided below and on the next two pages.

Primary Trait

Persuasion through invention of arguments appropriate to specified issues.

Rationale of Trait

The key terms in the directive are "be as convincing as possible" and "supporting or opposing the plan," indicating the persuasive orientation, and "local residents oppose the plan on the grounds that..." which specify the issues.

Scoring Guide

Competence is indicated by the invention and elaboration of arguments appropriate to chosen point of view and to specified issues.

Non-Ratable

These papers do not display the points in arguable form. Outlines and lists fall into this category.

Scale Point 1

These papers contain <u>no</u> relevant arguments. There may be positions, opinions, desires, or attitudes asserted but there is no supporting detail or elaboration present. They do not argue either of the specific issues-- property values or undesirables.

Scale Point 2

These papers show <u>some</u> evidence of inventing arguments appropriate to <u>one</u> of the specific issues. They may contain sketchy or underdeveloped ideas, conflicting arguments or irrelevant details, or arguments which are inappropriate to the issue, but they do attempt to argue one of the issues.

Scale Point 3

These papers invent arguments appropriate to <u>both</u> specific issues. All details present are appropriate and at

least one argument is fully developed with details connected to assertions.

Scale Point 4

These papers invent arguments appropriate to both specific issues __and__ develop them fully and evenly. There may be other arguments present but all of them are relevant to the issue. __All__ assertions present are connected to specific details or supporting evidence so that an argument is actually developed rather than an opinion, attitude, or desite merely being expressed.

Sample Papers

Non-Ratable: Persuasive

Oppose

1. Deprivation of privacy

more traffic

introducing strangers to the area

more people   more noise

2. Up Keep

more clutter

disrespect for property

3. Supervision

undesirable behavior

Rationale

This paper does not present the points in arguable form. The writer may have been intending to argue these points orally, but the directive specifies that the arguments be made convincing in written form as well.

Scale Point 1: Persuasive

Having a student recreation center for young people is one of the best ways to help our student. It will keep them of the streets, also giving them something to do to keep them out of trouble, providing a center of relaxation were they can meet friend in the eventing and study, also pay games, talk about sports, this is why I thing It is important for young people to have a recreation center, for them to meet. If we had more thing for our young people to do they grow to be better citizens. The kind of people we need in our country.

Rationale

This paper does not mention either of the issues (property values or undesirables). There is some discussion of a third issue, but it is extraneous to the concerns of the people in the audience.

Scale Point 2: Persuasive

The local residents have the right idea in opposing the proposal. A teenage hangout in a residential area would create problems that few teenagers can foresee, but the older, established residents have no trouble in foreseeing problems that could arise. If, as the local residents fear, several "undesirable types" invade the residential domain, anything from mugging to vandalism could occur. A person who reads the newspapers knows that upwards of 65% of the major crimes committed in this country involve juveniles from ages 11-17, or junior high to high school age. (The FBI recently quoted these statistics.) The amount of major crimes committed by juveniles is staggering and the residents who oppose the recreation center obviously know this fact.

Considering my exposure to junior high and high school students within the past several years I would find it extremely difficult to support anything they propose. The arrogance, lack of consideration for other people's property, drug and alcohol use are but to name a few of the misgivings I have concerning high school students. Their value systems are totally different as compared to when I was in high school, but nevertheless, consideration for other people and their property seems to be generally lacking in today's high school students.

Rationale

Only one issue (undesirables) is argued. No mention is made of the other issue (property values).

Scale Point 3: Persuasive

I'm speaking tonight on behalf of the proposed recreation center. I think that the students have a wonderful idea. Since we are a small community out on the country their really isn't anything for our kids to do in the evening. A recreation center would get them off the streets at night and reduce the rash of vandalizms we have been expieriencing. I also think that the oppositions argument is rediculous. The restoration and clean up of that old house would actually improve the appearance of the neiborhood. The only thing I would impose on them is occational adult suppervision. This would discourage undesirables and wild parties. The recreation center would do this comunity a lot of good and I think we should help the students with their project.

Rationale

Both issues are addressed in this paper but are not argued forcefully. More attention is paid to one issue (property values) than the other (undesirables).

Scale Point 4: Persuasive

On television, in newspapers, in our everyday life we often hear of juvinial crimes and vandelism. Shocked by this as we may be we often feel there is nothing that we can do about it. We take the attitude that if a kid wants to do it there is nothing that will prevent him. What we seem to ignore is what caused him to do it in the first place. If you think about that for a moment you'll realize that the causes are probably getting attention or the lack of nothing better to do.

Eliminate the cause and you eliminate the problem. The solution to juvinile crime in our community may very well lie in the converting of an old house into a recreation center. By doing this we would give the teenagers a place to congragate, have fun, and most importantly keep them out of trouble.

Many questions have been raised by the home owners in the neighborhood in which the house is located. What will do to our house values? What about all the wild undesirables?

Lets look at that first question--House Values. The house values in the neighborhood would not decrease. In fact, just the opposite is likely to occur. By having the recreation center in the neighborhood, many child- owning families would be attracted. Also the old rundown house

that now stands certainly doesn´t help property values. If the recreation center is built, the house would turn into a lovely asset to the community.

Let´s take a look at that second question--undesirables. The converting of the house in no way would attract undesirables any more than the old abondend house does now. As it stands it is the perfect target and meeting place for criminals and drug addicts. If the house were converted into a supervised recreation center it would attact clean-cut, well mannered teen-agers and warn of those undesirables.

The converting of the old house is an ideal solution not just for the teenagers, but for the entire community. Won´t you support their effort to make this community and neighborhood a better place to live?

Rationale

Both issues are argued fully and evenly. Writer has attempted to accommodate the feelings of the audience, not to alienate them. All assertions are connected to specific details or supporting evidence.[5]

Expressive Task: Gift for a Special Occasion

Scoring Guide

The Directive

Someone you care for very much is celebrating a special occasion. Think of something you now own that you want to give to your friend or relative. Write a message to that person, describing the gift, telling what it means to you, and why you're giving it to that person. Space is provided below and on the next two pages.

Primary Trait

Expression and substantiation of value and feeling through recollection and invention of appropriate detail.

Rationale of Trait

The stimulus for this exercise--"Someone you care for very much is celebrating a special occasion. Think of something you now own that you want to give to your friend or relative"--establishes the expressive orientation of the exercise, predicating an expressive situation which is in all respects peculiarly intimate and intense. The first directive, "describing the gift, telling what it means to you," requires the respondent to recollect and invent details sufficient to define and substantiatre the personal

signigficance, the value, of the gift to the respondent. The second directive, "telling...why you're giving it to that person," requires the respondent to recollect and invent details to define and substantiate the appropriateness, the significance, the value of the gift for the recipient.

Scoring Guide

Competence is indicated by specific and concrete details in writing which express and substantiate the dual signigficance or value of the gift--for the respondent/giver and the recipient.

Non-Ratable

These are papers which do not confront the task. They may not mention a gift, they may not have a gift to give, the gift may be intangible (love, hope, a prayer), they may be third-person reports of a gift, or they may be a parody of gift giving and message writing.

Scale Point 1

These papers do not show evidence of using writing to express and substantiate value and feeling through recollection and invention of detail. They consist merely of statements which name or identify the gift with little or no substantiation of value either for the respondent/ giver or the

recipient. Often, they assert or claim that the gift has value, but they never offer more than one detail to define and substantiate the nature of the value attached to the gift.

Scale Point 2

These papers show some evidence of using writing to express and substantiate value and feeling through recollection and invention of detail. They offer a few details (at least two or three) to substantiate the value of the gift for the respondent/giver _or_ they offer a few details (at least two or three) to substantiate the value of the gift for the recipient. But they do not substantiate the dual significance of the gift--for _both_ respondent/giver _and_ recipient.

Scale Point 3

These papers use writing to express and substantiate value and feeling through recollection and invention of detail. They offer details to substantiate the significance or value of the gift for _both_ the respondent/giver _and_ the recipient, as well as in some way suggesting the sense in which the gift is expressive of the relationship that exists between the respondent/giver and the recipient. These responses differ from "4" papers in being imbalanced,

being generalized, or containing irrelevant or inappropriate details.

Scale Point 4

These papers systematically use writing to express and substantiate value and feeling through recollection and invention of detail. They offer concrete, specific, and usually vivid detail to substantiate the value of the gift for the respondent/giver and the recipient, and in the process of substantiating they provide details which precisely authenticate the "relational" significance of the gift.

Sample Papers

Non-Ratable: Expressive

I would actually want to give the gift of time. For as we grow older, it seems like we seldom have enough time to spend with our closest friends.

But if had to be something, then I would buy her $20.00 worth of "EEPS," which are little round colored fuzzies, with eyes, ateneas and feet. She always said she had wanted a whole box of them to put all over her room, but could never find them.

Congratulations on your 19th birthday, Theresa, I am glad to see you have made it this far. I have enclosed a box containing something I have always had and in which you

have wanted. I hope you like this present and may it mean to you as much as it meant to me.

Rationale

The first paragraph gives an intangible gift, time. The second paragraph does not directly address the recipient but is instead a report of a gift. Also, the gift is not something the writer now owns. The third paragraph does not say what the gift is.

Scale Point 1: Expressive

It's not very old, probably just a year. It can play all sizes of albums and 8-track tapes. I like it very much because it's just about the first thing I owned in my bedroom-- It probably didn't cost over $200.00, but I got it on sale and I'd only get rid of it because I want a bigger one and I can finally afford a new one. If you haven't already guessed it's my stereo.-- It would be perfect for a bedroom, a rec room, or a den. It's light weight, but it handles 20 watts per channel so you get excellent sounfd out of it. I really don't want to part with it, but since your a great friend, and this is such an important time I want you to have it!! What! You don't want it! Well forget you!! But hey, by the way you know anybody who would like to buy it?!

Rationale

There is no substantiation of value for the recipient and only one detail ("first thing I owned") for the giver. The writer undercuts his own desire to give the gift to this particular person when he imagines that the recipient does not even want the gift. The last part of this paper would almost cause it to be considered Non-Ratable.

Scale Point 2: Expressive

Above our mantel a stuffed pheasant rests in a flying repose. Since my wife and I will have a chance to get another one, we would like you to have this particular bird. Besides being a very interesting conversation piece, this particular bird holds much sympathetic value to Debbie and me.

On opening day in Iowa, Nov. 5, 1977, Debbie and I drove to Tipton, Iowa to hunt pheasants and rabbits. The bird that we decided to have stuffed was the second and last bird of the day. The first bird's colors weren't as striking or brilliant as the second, and second bird was not mutilated by the buckshot to a severe degree, which helped us in our decision to have it mounted.

Debbie placed the bird in her sweatshirt and rolled it up. She carried it as if it were a precious living thing, but that was because she didn't want anything to happen to

it. She carried that bird for at least 5 hours, making sure that no damage happened.

We decided that since you have such a huge home, and a huge brick fireplace with absolutely no ornaments on the wall of your fireplace, this bird would be the perfect gift for you. I shot it, Debbie carried it, and it can hang on your fireplace to add to the beautiful decor of your home. Your huge red, brick fireplace will definitely be enhanced by the strikingly bold colors of ring-necked pheasant.

Rationale

The description of the gift moves the paper toward the referential rather than the expressive aim. It is not description for the purpose of specifying the value of the gift to the giver or receiver. The writer is selfish rather than altruistic in giving the gift because he has a chance to get another one. This is not the emotion generally associated with giving. The giver evokes no sense of connection to the recipient; the language is all surface, much like an advertisement for home furnishings.

Scale Point 3: Expressive

Dear Suzi,

Happy Birthday! What I'm sending you isn't really much, but I hope it will mean a lot to you. You've always said you like the poems I write, so I put them altogether in

a hard-covered book for you. Now that you and Keith are married, we rarely get to see each other, so maybe you can pull this book out and glance through them once in awhile. Especially the ones I wrote aout friendship. Most of those are for you! As I said, it's not much, but I hope it'll mean a lot to you.

<div style="text-align: right">

Love,
Terri

</div>

Rationale

The value of the gift is established for both the giver and the recipient. The gift is endowed with some symbolic value which, while it evokes genuine emotion, decreases the overtness of the relationship between giver and receiver. The feelings of the two people are not as particularized as they would be in a "4" paper.

Scale Point 4: Expressive

Dear Bob,

After much thought on what to give you on such a special day, I finally came up with the idea of giving you something that means alot to me. I can't ever begin to tell you how happy I am for you, but perhaps my gold watch will somehow show you.

I've had this watch for over fifteen years. My grandfather gave it to me on my sixth birthday, but I didn't

begin to wear it untill a few years ago. I can still remember the very day he gave it to me. We were sitting under a big oak tree by the pond. He pulled a small box out of his shirt pocket and told me to open it. Then I took the cover off the box, and saw the watch, I could only tell him how much I loved him.

The watch itself is 14 Karrot gold and has the date my grandfather gave it to me, and now the date that I'm giving it to you. Its lifetime guarantee will see that it is never broken down, and always running smoothly. It a very special watch, take good care of it.

I realize how happy you must be this day. You know that I wish you all the luck in the world.

Ever since childhood when we first met, you've been my very closest friend. There is noone who I would sooner see have this than you.

<div style="text-align: right">Your friend, Kevin</div>

Rationale

The giver shows that he is tied to the recipient by a temporal relationship, the steps by which he received the gift from his grandfather. The description of the gift substantiates a particular emotion of affection, sincerity, unselfishness, that is involved in giving a gift, something that is done voluntarily and happily. The motivation for

giving and the relationship between giver and recipient is implicit rather than explicit to avoid sounding insincere. The feelings between the two people are particularized.[6]

Referential Task: Order for a Chess Pawn

Scoring Guide

The Directive

Here is an object that has come into your possession, and you would like to get another one exactly like it. A mail-order business that sells everything, called the Universal Store, has such an object. The problem is that the store can locate what it sells only by a written description. Write your order out below, giving whatever details you think the store will need to find the object. A messenger will be here in twenty minutes to take your order to the store. Space is provided below and on the next two pages.

The Object

The object is a white ceramic chess pawn, 3 inches high and 1 1/4 inches in diameter. It is clear glazed and cast from a mold. The inside is hollow.

Primary Trait

Reference writing describing an object so that it can be located from among many objects.

Rationale of Trait

The key terms in the directive are "another one exactly like it" which indicates accurate recreation of the object in words and "a written description" which indicates how the object is to dealt with. The description is to contain "whatever details that efficiency in locating the object is part of the trait.

Scoring Guide

Competence is indicated by the supplying of accurate detail describing the object in some systematic way so that the store can distinguish it from other objects and locate it quickly.

Scale Point 1

The papers in this category show little or no attempt to engage in the task, or they may not take the task seriously. There may be scattered details, but these are vague and inaccurate. Such papers may be brief--one or two statements--or lengthy lists of irrelevent traits that bear little relationship to the object. The store has no idea where to start looking for the object.

Scale Point 2

These papers show an attempt to engage in the task. The store will probably find some object after much searching and send it, even though it may be the wrong one. The description in these papers has not accomplished its purpose as it stands but may if some things are corrected. It may contain such misleading or inaccurate details as gross errors in size, misstatements of the material it is made of, or use of general adjectives that tend to lead the reader astray. There may even be an abundance of detail, but it is not ordered in such a way as to facilitate the search for the object; it tends to lead away from, rather than toward, an accurate mental picture.

Sample Papers

Scale Point 1: Referential

Please send me a white bishop for my chess set, like the one I have enclosed, to the address above and bill me later.

P.S. Please forgive my ignorance if this piece is not called a bishop.

Rationale

This paper does not attempt to engage in the task. It ignores the directive that the store can locate what it sells only by a <u>written</u> description. Also, there is no

description, only a name. Even if the store knew what the name meant and responded to it, the wrong item would be sent. Furthermore, the writer undercuts his confidence in the correctness of that name by the second sentence.

Scale Point 2: Referential

This is a litter chasnut man. It is white, and abut two inich tall, It has litter nut on top 1/2 in round, It has tow eyes, noise, mouth, and below the bas is abut two inich round, It lookes like as chasnut men. And it is white. It is hallow on the bottem.

Rationale

This paper is a "2" rather than a "1" because it does attempt to engage in the task. The name has significance because it doesn't attempt to mislead the reader; it tells that there is an object that could have this name.

Scale Point 3: Referential

I wish to order a chess piece. This piece is a pawn with the face of a man. It stand about two and a half inches high, with a half inch base. The pawn is wearing a helmet that is about an inch and three fourths high. The helmet forms an "M" of the face and is squared off in the back. It has a guard which projects from the middle front of the helmet and protects the nose. The leaves the eyes,

cheeks, mustache, mouth, and chin visible. The helmet also has a ball shaped object on its top. The remaining space between the helmet and base is one fourth inches. It shows the neck of the pawn.

Rationale

This paper attempts to engage in the task. There is much detail, not all accurate, but roughly so (half inch base). It has no definite order; if so, it would be a "4." The aim is roughly met; the store will be able to find the object with some searching.

Scale Point 4: Referential

I would like to order a chess piece from your store. It is a knight made of white porcelin. It is approximately 2 inches high and weighs 2 oz. It has a shiny glaze finish. The knight is hollow and is the head only. The knight has a helmet and has a mustache.

If you have any questions or need more of a description, please advise.

Rationale

This paper contains significant detail stated in such a way that the store can find the object quickly.[7]

Using the papers collected by Profesor Boyd in response to her three writing tasks, and also using the scoring

guides developed for those tasks, two readers and I set about scoring all 357 student papers. My two readers were both teachers, one an elementarv/junior high school teacher of learning disabilities, the other a college English professor. Because the second reader had no experience in primary trait scoring and the first reader's experience with the system was limited, I began by conducting a brief training session using sample papers written for the 1978 Boyd pilot study. The reader with no experience had difficulty adjusting to the system at first. The reason for this difficulty perhaps derives from the uniqueness of the Primary Trait Scoring System, in which "excellent prose which is an inappropriate response to a situation may well be rated 1 [a low score]; in some writing situations a top score [4] might appropriately be awarded to prose judged to be non-standard dialect."[8] For a college English professor, accustomed perhaps to giving great evaluative weight to mechanical correctness and the use of Edited American English, it would be (and was) initially difficult to award a top score to a paper written in nonstandard dialect. In training the readers, I reminded them that in Primary Trait Scoring the degree to which the writer succeeded in responding to the purpose-based task was the only criterion for evaluation, not his grammar or mechanics or spelling.

The results of our scoring sessions are as follows:

1) Of the 357 papers scored, the two initial scorers agreed on 182, the third scorer agreed with one of the two initial scorers on 131 (54 with scorer A and 77 with scorer B), and 44 were submitted to arbitration among all three scorers.

2) Of the 175 papers which needed a third scorer or arbitration, 73 were referential, 58 were expressive, and 44 were persuasive.

3) Also, of these 175 papers, 137 of the initial scores were contiguous (e.g., 4 and 3), while 38 were not.

I might note here, in considering paragraph 2) above, that the papers were scored in this order: referential, expressive, persuasive. As one can see from the data above, as the scoring progressed, fewer and fewer papers needed a third scorer or arbitration and the "learning curve" for the scorers had begun to flatten out. Such a trend argues very favorably for as extensive a training period as funds and time will allow. (For further details of the scoring results, by aim, see Appendices C, D, and E.)

Footnotes for Chapter III

[1]Carol Anne Boyd, "Field-Dependence-Independence and Writing and Revision in the Referential, Expressive, and Persuasive Aims," Diss. University of Iowa 1979.

[2]Boyd, pp. 54-55.

[3]Lloyd-Jones, from Boyd, p. 55.

[4]Boyd, p. 58.

[5]Boyd, pp. 155-164.

[6]Boyd, pp. 144-154.

[7]Boyd, pp. 135-141.

[8]Lloyd-Jones, p. 45.

CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

Statistical Design

Once I had the final scores of each student in each aim
of discourse, I sought statistical help from the University
of Iowa's Statistical Consulting Center. My null hypothesis
was that student writing performance would vary across the
aims of discourse; in other words, there would be no signi-
ficant relation between a student's score in one aim of
discourse and either of the other two aims. In order to
test this hypothesis, I received help in programming (and
later interpreting) the data using the Statistical Analysis
System in order to receive a product which would show if
there was any significant correlation between a student's
score in one aim and in the others. I used the University's
360 Computer at the Linquist Center in analyzing the 109
student papers.

Statistical Analysis

My results are presented in Table 1, following, which
shows the correlation between aims of discourse:

Table 1

Correlation Coefficients and Degrees of
Significance of Student Scores in Three Aims of Discourse

Aims of Discourse	Correlation Coefficient	Level of Significance
Referential/Expressive	0.15428	0.1092
Referential/Persuasive	0.16921	0.0786
Expressive/Persuasive	0.10203	0.2911

The results here lead me to accept my null hypothesis as true: there is no significant correlation between a student's performance in one aim of discourse and either of the other two examined aims. If a significant positive correlation had existed, it could have indicated that students who write well (or poorly) in one aim write equally well (or poorly) in the other two. If a significant negative correlation had existed, it would have indicated that students who wrote well (or poorly) in one aim of discourse would have written equally poorly (or well) in another. But, perfect correlations are plus or minus 1.00 and thus the above figures, approaching .00 show almost no correlation; put another way, a student's expressive score has almost no relationship to his persuasive or referential score.

Discussion

This lack of relationship between scores indicates that perhaps we ought to take a harder look at our assignments. Although in elementary school children often receive expressive as well as referential writing tasks, by high school almost all of their writing is of some sort of referential nature (literary analysis, report writing, journalism, etc.) Perhaps, if writing assignments were spread constantly and consistently across the aims of discourse throughout a student's schooling, he or she would eventually write well in each of those aims. (At least we do know from the above data, that good writers don't always write well and poor writers don't always write poorly.) But if we are to begin assigning and teaching writing in all of the aims of discourse, how do we know exactly what leads to successful performance in each aim? The third section of my study, which follows below, is an initial attempt to answer that question by describing a few successful performances in each aim of discourse.

PART C

LITERATURE REVIEW AND

DESCRIPTION OF WRITING

IN THREE AIMS OF DISCOURSE

CHAPTER V

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE:

DESCRIBING STUDENT WRITING PERFORMANCE

In a comprehensive 1975 article, "Measuring Growth in Writing," Charles Cooper makes a significant point about measuring student writing performance:

> I have commented on each of these measurement and evaluation concepts--task analysis, behavioral objectives, two-way tables, mastery learning, and formative and summative evaluation--because they are increasingly used by school administrators in the context of teacher accountability schemes. . . . I think a better scheme for writing instruction than the general one outlined above is one concerned mainly with <u>diagnosing</u> what students are able to do and what problems they are having.[1]

I included the earlier literature review, on measuring performance, to provide some background for the first part of my study, in which I attempted what was essentially a measurement task, to see if students who are successful in one aim of discourse are equally successful in other aims, essentially a measurement task. But as Cooper points out, perhaps our greatest concern, as teachers, is not so much to rate the quality of performance, but to "diagnose," to describe it and therefore to understand it. Thus, in the

following section, I review studies of researchers whose primary purpose is not so much to measure but to describe and understand what and how their students write. It is this section that provides background for my second question: do different kinds of writing elicit different kinds of writing performances?

Controlling Mode

As in the previous section, most descriptive studies in the past have controlled mode of discourse rather than aim, if indeed either were controlled, and most of these have concentrated on a combination of modes.

Perhaps the first such study, and therefore an important one, was Seegar´ work, in which he discovered "that the form [mode] of discourse in which children write has a definite bearing upon their sentence structure; writing in the form of argumentation tends particularly to multiply the use of dependent clauses."[2] He also noted the increased use of dependent clauses in exposition (although not to the degree used in argumentation), but not in narration or description. His study was followed that same year by Ellen Frogner´s, "Problems of Sentence Structure in Pupils´ Themes," in which she examined the writing of seventh, ninth, and eleventh grade students and discovered that, as students grew older, their sentences became more complex.

Like Seegars, she had found a greater use of dependent clauses in exposition than in narration in each grade level, but she also found an increase across the grade levels, suggesting not only the effect of mode on sentence complexity, but also the effect of age.[3]

The next significant study of sentence struc' re variation according to mode was published in 1965 by Kellogg Hunt. In an analysis of the writings of school children (at the fourth, eighth, and twelfth grade levels) and good adult writers, Hunt discovered, as had Frogner earlier, that syntactic complexity varies both with age and with mode of discourse. Perhaps the greatest value of Hunt's study, however, was his use of a new descriptive tool to measure this complexity, the minimal terminable unit or T-unit: "one main clause with all the subordinate clauses [or nonclausal structures] attached to [or embedded in] it."[4] Although there have been researchers who question the T-unit as the best device for syntactic analysis, most researchers since Hunt have found it useful. (I will continue this discussion in Chapter VI.)

In a 1967 study of third-grade childrens' compositions, Lois Johnson controlled the mode of their discourses to narration, description, and explanation. She discovered that the children were most comfortable in the narrative mode: "on the basis of total number of sentences written by all

children in all compositions 49 percent were in narration, with 25 percent in description, and 26 percent in explanation."[5] A more important finding, perhaps, concerned the use of sentence type (simple, complex, etc.); here, the researcher found that the type varied considerably by mode. For example, the complex sentence was used almost equally in narration and explanation, and in both cases more so than in description. The simple sentence was used predominantly in description (81%) and to a lesser extent in narration (66%) and explanation (52%), suggesting the complexity of exposition as well as evidencing, again, the variation of structure across mode.

The same year, 1967, in a study of the syntactic complexity of students' speech and writing, O'Donnell, Griffen, and Norris controlled the narrative mode and found that in the higher (fifth and seventh) elementary grades, "advances in control of syntax in writing are accelerated far beyond those reflected in speech."[6]

Returning to a tri-modal study, Donald Bortz, in 1969, examined the writing of intermediate grade children in the same modes as had Johnson two years earlier and came to a similar conclusion: "the written language patterns of intermediate grade children are significantly different when they write for different purposes, i.e., descriptive, expository, or narrative compositions."[7] Specifically, Bortz determined

that narrative writing revealed the least syntactic complexity and subordination, expository the most. Also, while descriptive writing in this study elicited the least quantity, as it had in Johnson, expository, not narrative, elicited the most.

Also in 1969, John Mellon recognized the effects of mode on sentence structure, and although he did not analyze modal variations in his Transformational Sentence Combining research, such an assumption was implicit in his design (he insured he would get samples in at least three of the four modes.)[8]

In a 1971 study of the use of transitional devices in the descriptive mode, Lyman Hagan compared the performance of elementary, college, and professional writers and discovered that the "inventory of transitional devices is complete or nearly complete--at least for some students--by the seventh grade," suggesting, perhaps, an increasing ability to handle syntactic complexity with age (third graders used far fewer types of transitions, five versus twelve or more, than did the older writers, but used essentially as many total transitions, 9-12 per 100 words,) as their logical and intellectual abilities increase.[9]

Two significant studies of mode appeared in 1972. In the first, an experiment with fifth graders using three forms of instruction, E.A. Green controlled the narrative

and expository modes and found that a sentence-combining program did increase significantly the students' mean clause length (over more traditional programs).[10] The second, and more comprehensive study, was conducted by Christine San Jose at Syracuse. In her analysis of fourth-graders, she examined all four modes of discourse: "mode was found a highly significant variable in all seven categories of the syntactic index. In argument, in particular, a much greater maturity was found in incidence of many grammatical structures than research has hitherto shown to be produced at fourth grade level."[11] Specifically, she discovered that t-unit length varied according to mode, 8.4 words per t-unit in description, 8.7 in narration, 9.9 in exposition, and 10.4 in argument, thus supporting Hunt and Mellon's earlier work.

Following San Jose, in 1974 John Perron began publishing a series of extensive studies of syntactic variation according to mode, based upon the writings of elementary school children. The conclusion reached by Perron was essentially the same as that discovered by San Jose and other earlier researchers ever since Seegars: "Writers . . . are influenced to a significant degree by the mode of discourse invoked by their writing assignments: different modes invoke different syntactic resources...."[12] Perron found the most syntactically complex writing in

argumentation, and the least complex in description, with narration and exposition nestled at an almost equal level in-between.

The year 1974 brought forth two additional research efforts, the first of which concentrated on controlling the narrative and explanatory modes in children's spoken discourse. In "The Syntax of Fourth Graders' Narrative and Explanatory Speech," Mike Pope hypothesized that he would find no significant syntactic differences between the two modes. However, his results showed that the reverse was quite true, and, in fact, the synatax of narrative discourse (for his subjects) was significantly less complex than that of explanatory, which contained more than twice as many subordinate clauses per T-unit.[13] The other study, by Abraham Stahl, although biased perhaps with regard to subjects and topic, controlled the descriptive mode in a rather innovative effort to analyse the structure of children's written discourse.[14] His conclusions, though, were hardly startling: children's structural performance increases with age.

The most recent descriptive studies which controlled one or more of the modes of discourse were Pianko (1979) and Crowhurst and Piche (1979). In Sharon Pianko's research, "A Description of the Composing Process of College Freshman Writers," she elicited writing in each of the four modes but found that the majority of the writing she received was

narrative, regardless of topic; it's important to note here that she did allow the students to write in any mode on any topic, so the control was not in any way absolute.[15] That most of the students, even when writing in response to an expository assignment for example, chose the narrative mode indicates perhaps the security they perceived in a mode somewhat less complex, both cognitively and syntactically, than, say, exposition or argument. In the Crowhurst and Piche study, the researchers controlled the narrative, descriptive, and argumentative modes in an attempt to describe the effects of mode on syntactic complexity. They also controlled the topic of each assignment. Their results are important: mode of discourse directly affects syntactic complexity, with argument the most syntactically complex and with narration the least. Also, the results showed that there was "no significant difference between grades 6 and 10 in the mode of narration," which led the researchers to conclude that "argument assignments are thus especially appropriate in studies of syntactic development while the reverse is true for narration assignments."[16]

Controlling Aim

A few of the descriptive studies which controlled the aims of discourse have been mentioned earlier, in that they attempted limited measurements of student writing (see

notes 24, 26, 27, 28 in Chapter II). I will discuss them
again in this chapter, concentrating on their descriptive
purposes. I will also review a few other studies which con-
trol aim in an attempt to describe how students write.

Referential

Only two studies have controlled the referential aim
exclusively. Harold Simpson's 1965 dissertation, "A
Descriptive Analysis of Scientific Writing," found that such
writing "has developed a number of mannerisms that interfere
with its capability of communicating," specifically its high
incidence of nominatives, passive predicates, and empty
copulas.[17] In a similar study four years later, under the
sponsorship of Louis Milic, Jean McConochie analyzed contem-
porary written scientific American English and came to con-
clusions almost identical to Simpson's: "the complexity of
scientific writing...seems to reflect a genre preference for
nominal style...the modal pattern is subject, passive verb,
complement, with the subject position filled by a cluster
and the complement position by a prepositional phrase."[18] I
should note here that these two studies reflect professional
referential writing, not student writing.

Persuasive

In a 1974 descriptive analysis of the writing behavior
of "good" student writers, Charles Stallard controlled the

persuasive aim, although he did not control the topic. His findings may pertain to other aims as well as the persuasive and are interesting in view of the light they cast on the composing process: in comparison with randomly selected writers, good student writers spent more time in completing the writing task, revised more, contemplated their work during the process to a greater extent, and perhaps most importantly, "the good writers were concerned about having a purpose in their writing. They reported that they gave thought to purpose before they wrote and while they were writing."[19]

Another persuasive study, by Rubin and Piche (1979), attempted to describe the syntactic and "strategic" aspects of audience adaptation skills in student writing.[20] The results indicate that "a sense of audience can be manipulated in an assigned writing task [low, intermediate, high intimacy audiences] and that the resulting adaptation is manifested both in syntactic complexity and in strategy use."[21] And perhaps more importantly, these results tend to give "additional weight to Crowhurst and Piche's (1979) admonition against accepting specific age 'norms' for syntactic complexity, since audience adaptation may result in differences on these indices of a comparable magnitude to differences due to maturation."[22]

Like the Rubin study above, the Cooper-Buffalo research (which I mentioned earlier in this chapter) was also

interested in controlling the persuasive aim and investigating students' uses of persuasive strategies. The report is far too comprehensive to discuss in detail here, but its conclusions are significant. In analyzing a typical freshman class admitted to SUNY-Buffalo in the late 1970s, the researchers found that, in the persuasive aim, some 50-75% of the entering freshmen were "unable to generate multiple and varied arguments. . .arguments were rarely surprising, novel, or compelling . . . they fail to develop their arguments with examples, facts, details, anecdotes . . . [they exhibit] a lack of concern for audience . . . [and] most worrisome of all: these writers not only fail to examine opposing points of view--they do not even acknowledge them."[23] As a result of this research and the composing problems they identified, the Cooper group recommended that in addition to a required year of freshman composition, "all students should be required to take an upper-division writing course focusing on the discourse types and particular writing tasks of their major field."[24]

Another major, recent study in the persuasive aim, an even more comprehensive syntactic effort than at Buffalo, was the NIE research conducted at the University of Iowa which I mentioned in the measurement section of this study. The investigators, Diehl, Mellon, Klaus, and Lloyd-Jones, evaluated the persuasive writing of 17-year olds on a

primary trait scale for overall performance and on a holistic scale for cohesion. They also related the primary trait scores to student syntactic choices and student performance in various sentence-combining tasks. One of their findings, "that [only] 34% of the 2721 writers were able, or willing, to invent and elaborate arguments appropriate to the course of action proposed by the writing assignment" agrees with to the Buffalo study´s finding that only 25-50% of the entering freshmen were "able, or willing" to create and expand such arguments.[25] The Iowa work is highly descriptive. Some of its other significant results are that successful writers (at least in this study, at least as measured by the primary trait system) use longer clauses, a greater number of clausal and phrasal embeddings, a "higher frequency of non-restrictive phrasal modifiers, restrictive verb phrase modifiers . . . and clauses embedded as as the object of the preposition ´with´; a lower frequency of subordinate clauses . . . a higher frequency of adverbial phrases that precede their referent, verbs in the passive voice, and questions."[26]

I should note one caveat here, repeating the concerns of the Iowa investigators, with regard to the relatively low success rates for both the Iowa and Buffalo persuasive writers. The fact alone that students are being "tested" removes the reality from a persuasive task and makes it

rather artificial. Therefore, perhaps many of the unsuc-
cessful students simply didn't feel either exercise was
"important" enough to risk the same degree of personal
involvement which they might have ventured in a real situa-
tion. And also, short testing times (20 minutes for the
Iowa sample, 80 for Buffalo) may have caused some students
to do much less well than if they had been unconstrained in
their entire process of writing.

Combined Aims

Other recent studies have taken a broader (if less
detailed) look at student writing in the aims of discourse.
I have already mentioned Carol Boyd's work (in Chapter III)
on the relationship of the aims of discourse and field-
dependence and independence. In another study, using James
Britton's transactional, expressive, and poetic aims, Whale
and Robinson (1978) discovered that, in a free-writing
situation, students most often chose to write transactional
(referential and persuasive) discourse.[27] (Perhaps in the
transactional aim they used the narrative mode more than any
other, as Pianko's study suggested, but Whale and Robinson
did not investigate this possibility.) Their findings do
give some support to a speculation that since students
choose, are taught, and are required to write in the tran-
sactional more frequently than in any other aim, their per-

formance should be better in that particular aim.

Another study which used Britton's transactional discourse was Lillian Bridwell's description of student revising strategies. Besides finding that there are developmental differences in the ability to revise success- fully, she discovered that most revisions are "in-process" ones (made as the students wrote, as opposed to between drafts) and most revisions are simple ones (spelling, punc- tuation, capitalization, etc.) on the lexical level rather than on the phrasal to text levels.[28] I would imagine most teachers have suspected such revision behavior for years.

Sondra Perl, in a 1979 study of the composing processes of unskilled college writers, used the aims of discourse formulated by Janet Emig in her seminal 1971 monograph on composing. The two specific aims Perl used were the exten- sive (similar to referential and persuasive) and the reflex- ive (expressive). The subject Perl investigated (a 20-year old student) was able to maintain the distinction between aims throughout his writing, but, interestingly, he always wrote in the narrative mode.[29]

The most comprehensive study to date which examines more than one aim of discourse is Cynthia Watson's 1980 dissertation, "The Effects of Maturity and Discourse Type on the Written Syntax of Superior High School Seniors and Upper Level College English Majors."[30] Her premise, that

syntactic variations caused by differences in aims of discourse may be just as significant as those caused by age, is an important one, especially considering that her research compares this variation across all three aims of discourse (referential, persuasive, expressive). Her findings, well-supported, confirmed her premise: "significant syntactic differences among discourse types--differences which equalled or exceeded differences between the two [student] maturity levels. Particularly striking were the differences between expressive and persuasive syntax within both maturity levels. By traditional syntactic maturity standards, this expressive syntax would be considered ´less mature´ than the persuasive syntax produced by the selfsame subjects."[31] When Watson goes on to state that "the notion of syntactic maturity must be augmented by a new understanding of syntactic variation which has little or nothing to do with the writer´s age," she is reflecting not only the findings and value of her own study, but also, as we have seen, the concerns of Crowhurst, Piche, Rubin, San Jose, and Perron with regard to variation caused by audience and mode of discourse (see notes 11, 12, 16, and 20).[32]

Perhaps Watson´s research is the appropriate place to end this review of the literature of aims and modes. I believe that the significance of the review is that examining modes alone will give us only one perspective on the

writing process. If we are to gain a better understanding of the complexities involved in the processes of discourse production, we must investigate why we write as well as how we write, that we need to examine as well successful student writing performance and technique across the aims of discourse.

Footnotes for Chapter V

[1]Charles Cooper, "Measuring Growth in Writing," *English Journal* 64 (March 1975), 112-113.

[2]J.C. Seegars, "Form of Discourse and Sentence Structure," *The Elementary English Review* X (March 1933), 54.

[3]Ellen Frogner, "Problems of Sentence Structure in Pupils´ Themes," *English Journal* 22 (1933), 742-744.

[4]Kellogg W. Hunt, *Grammatical Structures Written at Three Grade Levels* (Champaign, Illinois: NCTE, 1965), pp. 20-21.

[5]Lois V. Johnson, "Children´s Writing in Three Forms of Composition," *Language Arts* (formerly *Elementary English*) 44 (March 1967), 268-269.

[6]Roy C. O´Donnell and others, *Syntax of Kindergarten and Elementary School Children: A Transformational Analysis* (Champaign, Illinois: NCTE, 1967), inside back cover.

[7]Donald R. Bortz, "The Written Language Patterns of Intermediate Grade Children When Writing Compositions in Three Forms: Descriptive, Expository, and Narrative," *DAI*, 30 (1970), 5333A (Lehigh University).

[8]John C. Mellon, *Transformational Sentence Combining* (Urbana, Illinois: NCTE, 1969), p.27.

[9]Lyman B. Hagan, "An Analysis of Transitional Devices in Student Writing," *RTE* 5 (Fall 1971), 197-198.

[10]Everest A. Green, "An Experimental Study of Sentence-Combining to Improve Written Syntactic Fluency in Fifth-Grade Children," *DAI*, 33 (1973), 4057A (Northern Illinois University).

[11]Christine P.M. San Jose, "Grammatical Structures in Four Modes of Writing at Fourth Grade Level," *DAI*, 33 (1973), 5411A (Syracuse University).

[12]John David Perron, "The Impact of Mode on Written Syntactic Complexity: Part IV--Across-the-Grades´ Differences and General Summary," *Report No. 30, Studies in Language Education* (Athens, Georgia: University of Georgia, Department of Language Education, 1977), Abstract. (Also

ERIC Document ED 147 831; see also, <u>DAI</u> 35 (1975), 4316A; ED 126 531, 126 511, 128 827, 139 009).

[13]Mike Pope, "The Syntax of Fourth Graders´ Narrative and Explanatory Speech," <u>RTE</u> 8 (Summer 74), 219-227.

[14]Abraham Stahl, "Structural Analysis of Children´s Compositions," <u>RTE</u> 8 (Summer 74), 184-205.

[15]Sharon Pianko, "A Description of the Composing Processes of College Freshman Writers," <u>RTE</u> 13 (Feb 79), 5-22.

[16]Marion Crowhurst and Gene L. Piche, "Audience and Mode of Discourse Effects on Syntactic Complexity in Writing at Two Grade Levels," <u>RTE</u> 13 (May 79), 107.

[17]Harold Burton Simpson, "A Descriptive Analysis of Scientific Writing," <u>DAI</u>, 27 (1966), 468A (University of Michigan).

[18]Jean Alice McConochie, "Simplicity and Complexity in Scientific Writing: A Computer Study of Engineering Text-books," <u>DAI</u>, 31 (1970), 379A, (Columbia University).

[19]Charles K. Stallard, "An Analysis of the Writing Behavior of Good Student Writers," <u>RTE</u> 8 (Summer 74), 216-17.

[20]Donald L. Rubin and Gene L. Piche, "Development in Syntactic and Strategic Aspects of AUdience Adaptation Skills in Written Persuasive Communiction," <u>RTE</u> 13 (Dec 79), 293-316.

[21]Rubin and Piche, p. 313.

[22]Rubin and Piche, p. 312.

[23]Cooper et al., "Writing Abilities...," p. 82.

[24]Cooper et al., p. 86.

[25]Lloyd-Jones et al., abstract.

[26]Lloyd-Jones et al., abstract.

[27]Kathleen B. Whale and Sam Robinson, "Modes of Students´ Writings: A Descriptive Study," <u>RTE</u> 12 (Dec 78), 349-55.

[28]Lillian S. Bridwell, "Revising Strategies in Twelfth Grade Students' Transactional Writing," RTE 14 (Oct 80), 197-222.

[29]Sondra Perl, "The Composing Processes of Unskilled College Writers," RTE 13 (Dec 79), 317-336.

[30]Cynthia Watson, "The Effects of Maturity and Discourse Type on the Written Syntax of Superior High School Seniors and Upper Level College English Majors," DAI, 41 (1980), 141-A (SUNY/Buffalo).

[31]Watson, p. 142-A.

[32]Watson, p. 142-A.

CHAPTER VI

SELECTED SYNTACTIC AND STYLISTIC FEATURES

OF *SUCCESSFUL WRITING PERFORMANCE*

Selection of Successful Papers

The second major question of this study--do different kinds of writing tasks elicit different kinds of writing performance--can only be answered by a detailed look at a small number of successful student papers, those with a primary trait score of 3 or 4.

In order to select these successful papers, I could have taken a random sample of the total 357. But this would have resulted in the selection of some unsuccessful papers. Therefore, I took a less than random sample from only the successful papers of the 357, attempting to choose, in each aim of discourse, four 4 papers and four 3 papers, for a total of 24, no two of which were written by the same student. (Of the 357 papers, 43% were judged successful.)

The results that I present in this chapter are those produced by the 24 student papers described above; in Appendix F, I compare some of these results with those obtained from the successful writing of adults.

Selected Syntactic Features

In her 1978 article, "Research in Composition: A Need for Theory," Martha King suggested that "'T-unit' measures applied to types of discourse might throw indirect light on the nature of the differences of the composing process by types. (See Britton, et al., 1976, p. 2 and San Jose, 1972)."[1] Since my purpose here is to throw more light on the types (aims) of discourse, I have taken her advice and used various syntactic measures of length to describe the pieces of writing in this study. I have also included other syntactic measures which might shed additional light on the aims of discourse.

Historically, researchers consistently used the sentence as a syntactic measure of length. With the onset of transformational grammar in the late 1950s, however, the efficacy of the sentence as a descriptive tool began to fade and in 1965 the "T-unit" (as I described earlier) began to replace it. Many current researchers, such as Stotsky, Stewart, O'Donnell and others, advocate the use of mean T-unit length in analyzing the writing of college students. Others, however, have begun to question its value. In 1978, Ann Gebhard stated that ". . . mean T-unit length, an established indicator of syntactic development, appears to have limited value as a measure of writing quality. Mean clause length is probably the most easily measurable indicator of

1.0

1.1

1.25

2.8

3.2

3.6

4.0

1.4

2.5

2.2

2.0

1.8

1.6
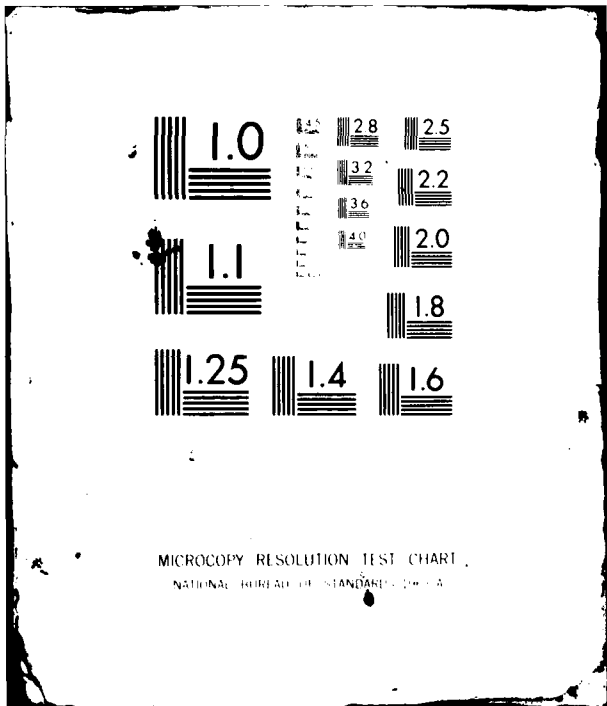
MICROCOPY RESOLUTION TEST CHART

NATIONAL BUREAU OF STANDARDS-1963-A

writing quality available to purely quantitative assessment."[2] And, interestingly, even Kellog Hunt, who first named and used the T-unit, found that ". . . the biggest single developmental difference between the superior adult and the average twelfth grader is in the length of clauses. "[3] Since the jury is apparently still out on which of these three measures of length is the most helpful, I have decided to look at all of them. After I present my results using these tools, I will discuss the other syntactic measures I selected.

Sentence Length

Hundreds of stylistic studies during this century have attempted to make pronouncements on an author's style by analyzing the length of his "typical" sentence. The value of this type of work is often questionable (do Hemingway's "shorter" sentences make him less of a successful novelist than Faulkner's "longer" ones?) However, one recent study by Mary Lois Marckworth and Laura M. Bell goes a bit deeper into the effect of sentence length and attempts "to determine whether sentence length is a significant parameter in the quantitative description of writing style in the various literary prose genres . . . ; i.e., does the genre impose some sort of constraint in this matter on the individual practitioner?"[4] Their last question here is especially

applicable to my study: does the aim of discourse impose any constraints upon the writer?

After examining a corpus of some million words consisting of some fifteen different genres (from detective novels to government documents), Marckworth and Bell discussed a result of their work which is central to this study: "Sentence-length distribution is highly dependent upon the classification of the genre as informative or imaginative prose, and, more speculatively, is subtly dependent upon the expected relationship between author and audience, the nature and/or purpose of the information being conveyed, and the expected pattern set by previous examples of the genre."[5] What they discovered, in other words, is the importance and significant effect of aim on sentence length.

Although Marckworth and Bell restricted themselves to the referential and literary aims of discourse, their procedure is a valid one and I attempted to follow it in analyzing the student papers in the referential, persuasive, and expressive aims. My results show a Mean Sentence Length (MSL) for the entire sample (24 papers) of 15.38 words per sentence. The specific findings in each aim and the ranges of sentence length are given in Table 2 following.

Table 2

Mean Sentence Length
in Three Aims of Discourse

Referential	12.64 words/sentence*
Expressive	16.25 words/sentence**
Persuasive	16.62 words/sentence***

*Range: 8.69-17.17;
**Range: 14.00-18.17;
***Range: 14.56-20.60.

The results are interesting: the MSL's for both per-
suasive and expressive are about the same, while that of
referential is considerably shorter. It could well be that
the low referential MSL is due to the nature of the writing
task, one which elicits precise, descriptive sentences,
easily digested by the audience (much like following a
recipe or directions in a strange town) in order to simplify
the job of finding the chess piece amidst a crowd of other
merchandise. Audience, too, could have been a factor in
these sentence lengths. In both the persuasive and expres-
sive tasks, the writer must have felt quite close to his
audience, either emotionally (as in the expressive letter)
or physically (as in the persuasive speech). In the
referential task, however, the writer's job was to
correspond with an unidentified individual in a large and

distant store, who could have been an established owner or a newly hired clerk. This remoteness of audience could well have led the writers to shorten their sentences in a perhaps subliminal attempt to increase the readability of the referential writing in order to avoid confusion or delay. So perhaps, as Marckworth and Bell implied, the purpose and audience for which we write may well have an effect on the length of the sentences we produce. As Hunt in his 1965 study pointed out, however, sentence length may not be our best tool in analyzing written discourse. Because of the punctuation problems and some writers' tendency to compound clauses rather than begin new sentences, Hunt believed we could and should develop a better analytic device, the minimal terminable (or T-) unit.

T-Unit Length

Hunt defined the T-unit as one main clause plus any subordinate clause or non-clausal structure that is attached to or embedded in it.[6] Its use would avoid any possible problems of sentence length and would, he believed, be a much better indicator of syntactic complexity in writing. Since 1965, his index has become accepted by most researchers in writing and I have analyzed the T-unit length of my student discourses in an attempt to discover any significant variations. The results are shown in Table 3 below.

Table 3

Mean T-Unit Length (MTUL)
in Three Aims of Discourse

Referential	12.0 words/T-unit*
Expressive	14.8 words/T-unit**
Persuasive	16.6 words/T-unit***

*Range: 10.60-15.60
**Range: 12.10-17.10
***Range: 13.10-20.60

It is apparent that the persuasive task in this study elicited longer T-units than either of the other two aims, perhaps because of the greater complexity that such a formal, argumentative speech would require. And, again, perhaps the short T-unit length in the referential aim could be attributed to the writer's heightened awareness of a remote audience and a therefore necessarily readable text. In any case, the differences between aims here are considerable and may well attest to the effect of aim on a writer's selection of syntactic alternatives. My findings above are in keeping with the results of earlier research (see notes 11, 12, and 16 in Chapter V), all of which indicates that persuasive discourse elicits the greatest syntactic complexity (words/ T-unit).

Clause Length

As a final measure of syntactic length, I looked at both dependent and independent clauses (summed) in the student papers. The results are presented below in Table 4.

Table 4

Mean Clause Length (MCL)
in Three Aims of Discourse

Referential	9.34 words/clause*
Expressive	7.39 words/clause**
Persuasive	9.04 words/clause***

*Range: 7.74-12.00
**Range: 5.89-8.87
***Range: 7.12-10.80

Perhaps the interesting fact available from the above table is that clause length for referential discourse is the longest of the three aims, perhaps because, in describing the chess piece, the writers constantly added descriptive words and phrases to their base clauses ("the chess piece is white, tall, round at its base," etc.). The descriptive embedding may also account for the relatively long persuasive clauses, as they concern the writers' attempts to define the types of children and the condition of the old house/recreation center in the neighborhood.

Another explanation of clause length variation is based

on audience and the writer's intimacy with an audience. In their recent study of persuasive communication, Rubin and Piche found that "longer clauses were directed to low intimacy targets."[7] Their findings support exactly the results in Table 4 above. Clause length was longest for the most remote audience (an unknown clerk in the referential task) and the shortest for the most intimate audience (a friend or relative the writer cares for very much in the expressive task). The rather high persuasive clause length might be explained not so much by the relatively intimate physical situation (speaker-audience) in the task, but rather by the relatively remote intellectual situation (an audience, at a public hearing, composed of local residents , some of whom oppose the plan).

Subordination Ratio

This syntactic tool is really not so much a measure of length as the previous three, but it is computed using much of the same information (number of clauses divided by number of T-units, per paper). It will serve as a good summary of this portion of my chapter on syntax because of that commonality. I've presented it in the table below, in addition to summarizing the other findings, so that the reader may view all of what I've been discussing in a consolidated form.

Table 5

Mean Sentence, T-Unit, Clause Length and
Subordination Ratio (CL/TU) by Aim of Discourse

Aim of Discourse	MSL	MTUL	MCL	CL/TU
Referential	12.64	12.00	8.86	1.35
Expressive	16.25	14.76	7.47	1.98
Persuasive	16.62	16.62	8.92	1.86

The subordination ratio, discussed first by Hunt in 1965, indicates the degree to which the writer consolidates T-units by subordinating independent clauses, and it is thus another indicator of syntactic complexity and performance.

Perhaps the high expressive subordination ratio is due to the high degree of recollection required by the task, in order to substantiate the value of the gifts to the giver; I would expect, in such recollection, a high number of subordinate adverbial clauses of time (such as, "When I was seven, . . .).

The low referential ratio could be attributed to the writer's attempt at clarity by using mostly independent clauses and repeating the descriptor ("this chess piece", "the figure") as subject for emphasis, while the relatively high persuasive ratio could result from the inherently logi-

cal syntactic patterns ("if . . . , then" etc.) elicited by the argumentative task.

Consideration of audience may also help explain these ratios. Rubin and Piche found that "highly subordinated structures were characteristic of messages addressed to high intimacy subjects," and that the more remote an audience, the lower the subordination ratio, a finding completely in accord with the results in Table 5 above for all three aims of discourse.[8]

Some Other Syntactic Features

As interesting as these numbers and speculations are, however, it may be that measures of syntactic length alone are inadequate tools in describing successful writing. In fact, in the only other study to date that has examined syntactic variation across these three aims of discourse, Cynthia Watson discovered that measures of length were but two of six syntactic features that were particularly good at distinguishing the aims of discourse from one another in the writing of high school and advanced college students. Those six features (of 17 examined) were:

1. Mean T-Unit Length (MTUL)
2. Mean Clause Length (MCL)
3. Adverb Phrases of Time (APT)
4. Adverb Clauses of Condition and Concession (ACCO)

5. Adjective Clauses (AJCL)

6. Noun Phrases (NP)

The results of the Watson study were particularly informative:

Expressive/Persuasive Contrasts. High school seniors and college English majors both created three marked distinctions between these two types of discourses. In their persuasive discourse they wrote significantly longer T-units and used significantly more adverb clauses of condition and concession. In expressive discourse they used more adverb phrases of time than they did in persuasive.

Persuasive/Explanatory Contrasts. Both groups make significantly greater use of noun phrases and adverb clauses of condition and concession in persuasive discourse than in explanatory.

Explanatory/Expressive Contrasts. Two of these significant contrasts show both groups writing longer clauses and using more adjective clauses in explanatory than in expressive discourse. The third distinction arises from the fact that the writers use more adverb phrases of time in expressive discourse than in explanatory.[9]

In an effort to confirm the Watson findings, I examined the responses of my student writers and analyzed their use of these six syntactic features. The results of my examination are presented in Table 6, following, along with the Watson numbers.

Table 6

A Comparison in Two Studies of Selected
Syntactic Features Which Distinguish
Between Three Aims of Discourse*

Syntactic Feature	Study Name	Expressive Discourse	Persuasive Discourse	Referential Discourse
MTUL	Stone	14.76	16.62	12.00
MTUL	Watson	13.12	14.73	13.98
MCL	Stone	7.47	8.92	8.86
MCL	Watson	8.04	8.47	9.03
APT	Stone	29.66	14.73	0.76
APT	Watson	21.81	13.48	14.73
ACCO	Stone	1.38	8.73	1.52
ACCO	Watson	2.36	5.26	2.24
AJCL	Stone	15.17	19.64	13.67
AJCL	Watson	9.12	9.57	11.69
NP	Stone	10.35	19.09	1.52
NP	Watson	14.67	17.93	13.31

*Based on the number of occurrences in 60 T-units of discourse.

An analysis of the results presented in Table 6 indicates that, even considering the use of different stimuli (assignments), certain syntactic features do indeed distinguish between different aims of discourse. Specifically,

<u>Mean</u> <u>T-Unit</u> <u>Length</u>: the writers in these studies apparently wrote their longest T-units in persuasive, followed by referential and then expressive;

<u>Mean</u> <u>Clause</u> <u>Length</u>: these writers' longest clauses appeared in their referential writing, followed by persuasive and then expressive;

<u>Adverb</u> <u>Phrases</u> <u>of</u> <u>Time</u>: more, considerably more, of these phrases were used in expressive writing than in either of the other aims;

<u>Adverb</u> <u>Phrases</u> <u>of</u> <u>Condition/Concession</u>: these appeared far more frequently in the writers' persuasive responses than their other writing;

<u>Adjective</u> <u>Clauses</u>: the writers used *fewer* adjective clauses in expressive writing than were used in referential or persuasive;

<u>Noun</u> <u>Phrases</u>: by far the greatest use of noun phrases occurred in persuasive discourse, followed by expressive and then referential.

In addition to examining the syntactic features, I also looked at some stylistic choices a writer might make which could possibly distinguish between aims of discourse.

Selected Stylistic Features

The 1980 NIE study, cited in Chapter II, discovered five stylistic choices that correlated highly with primary trait score, in persuasive writing. These five features were:

- adverbial phrases that precede their referents (APPR);

- passive verbs (PV);

- questions (Q);

- contractions (C);

- expletive constructions (E).[10]

I decided to examine these features, as well as three others listed below, because I suspected that they might make particularly sharp distinctions between aims:

- imperatives (I);

- superlatives (S);

- personal pronouns (PP).

In Table 7 below I present the actual number of occurrences of these features in successful student writing as well as frequency per 100 T-units. And in Table 8, following, I compare these frequencies in persuasive discourse.

Table 7

Stylistic Features Which May Distinguish
Between Three Aims of Discourse

Aim	T-units	APPR	PV	Q	C	E	I	S	PP
EXP	87	2	5	0	18	5	4	6	258
EXP	100	2	6	0	21	6	5	7	297
PER	110	8	26	4	15	10	0	2	140
PER	100	8	24	4	14	9	0	2	127
REF	79	3	2	0	2	2	0	0	89
REF	100	4	3	0	3	3	0	0	113

Table 8

A Comparison in Two Studies of Selected
Stylistic Features Which Occur in Persuasive
Discourse in Response to the "Rec Center" Task*

Study Name	Stylistic Feature							
	APPR	PV	Q	C	E	I	S	PP
Stone**	8.0	24.0	4.0	14.0	9.0	0.0	2.0	127.0
NIE**	8.7	14.5	5.7	9.9	7.2	2.0	–	–
NIE***	5.0	8.8	2.5	18.5	11.0	1.5	–	–

*Based on frequency of occurrence in 100 T-units of discourse.
**Combined average of successful papers.
***Combined average of unsuccessful papers.

In comparing the results of the NIE study with the results produced by my student writers, the NIE findings for persuasive discourse were confirmed:

"3," "4" papers have a higher frequency of:

- adverbial phrases which precede their referents;

- passive verb forms;

- questions.

"3," "4" papers have a lower frequency of:

- contractions;

- expletive constructions. [11]

In looking at my papers alone, a limited sample of 24 successful discourses, eight written in each aim, I would venture the following statements about stylistic differences across the three aims:

Expressive: a higher frequency of imperatives, contractions, personal pronouns, and superlatives; a lower frequency of questions and adverbial phrases which precede their referents.

Persuasive: a higher frequency of passives, expletive constructions, adverbial phrases which precede their referents, and questions; a lower frequency of imperatives.

Referential: a lower frequency of all eight features, with the exception of adverbial phrases which precede their referents.

Footnotes for Chapter VI

[1]Martha L. King, "Research in Composition: A Need for Theory," RTE 12 (Oct 78), 200.

2Gebhard, p. 217.

[3]Hunt, from Gebhard, p. 217.

[4]Mary Lois Marchworth and Laura M. Bell, "Sentence-Length Distribution in the Corpus," in H. Kucera and W.N. Francis (eds.), Computational Analysis of Present-Day English (Providence, Rhode Island: Brown University Press, 1967), p. 368.

[5]Marckworth and Bell, p. 375.

[6]Hunt, pp. 20-21.

[7]Rubin and Piche, p. 312.

[8]Rubin and Piche, pp. 312, 303.

[9]Watson, p. 189.

[10]Lloyd-Jones, pp. 27,29.

[11]Lloyd-Jones, pp. 27,29.

CHAPTER VII

COHESION AND COHERENCE

Most research in English composition has centered on the sentence-level type of analysis I presented in Chapter VI, an analysis which examines syntactic and stylistic features within sentence boundaries. But it is equally important, in describing student writing, to look across sentences boundaries to attempt to discover some of those features of the writing that transform it from a string of random (even if well-formed) sentences to a unified, under- standable, successful whole. For as teachers, we will have failed if we allow our students to lose track of their rhe- torical situation, their audience, their purpose, simply because they have become enamored with their ability to form correct sentences.

Cohesion

In a recent and comprehensive effort to describe how writers pull their sentences together to create discourse, researchers M.A.K. Halliday and Ruqaiya Hasan have published Cohesion in English , a book which describes not so much what is within a sentence but how sentences cohere with one

another. Halliday and Hasan present five major categories of cohesion:

1. Reference - personals, demonstratives, and comparatives which, "instead of being interpreted semantically in their own right, they make reference to something else for their interpretation."[1] An example of reference cohesion would be,

Kathy took the children inside.
She was afraid it might rain.

where the personal pronoun she ties the two sentences together by its referring back to the proper noun Kathy in the first sentence.

2. Substitution - simply "the replacement of one item by another."[2]

Bob finally bought a motorcycle.
He had always wanted one.

In this case, the sentences are held together by the replacement of motorcycle in the first sentence by its substitute one in the second.

3.   Ellipsis - "An elliptical item is one which, as it were, leaves specific structural slots to be filled from elsewhere."[3]

>   Who's your favorite poet?
>   Frost is the best.

Here, poet does not appear in the second sentence after best , but is understood and therefore acts, just as if it were a substitute such as one , to connect the two sentences.

4.   Conjunction - these items are "cohesive not in themselves but indirectly . . . they express certain meanings which presuppose the presence of other components in the discourse."[4]   Although there are a number of different types of conjunction, additive, adversative, causal, and temporal, one example will serve to show how this element functions:

>   Joan parked the car.
>   Then she closed the garage door.

The temporal conjunctive feature here, then , expresses the relationship in time between the two actions and thus binds them together.

5.   Lexical Cohesion - whereas the previous four types of cohesion were grammatical in nature, lexical cohesion is

"the cohesive effect achieved by the selection of vocabulary."[5]

> I rode a 747 to Hawaii last year.
>
> I love flying in 747s.

Here the same item (747) is repeated in the second sentence, and it is this repetition that makes the two sentences cohere.

Halliday and Hasan have delineated numerous subcategories of these cohesive elements, but I have presented only the key definition and one example of each in order to simplify the discussion.

The purpose of this half of my study, as I've stated before, is to discover certain features of successful student writing across three aims of discourse. Perhaps by examining the cohesion of these student texts, I will be able to find differences between aims.

Holistic Scoring for Cohesion

I subjected the 24 papers to a holistic scoring by three independent readers. In this exercise, which follows that used in the NIE study, the readers were asked to award scores from 1 (lowest) to 4 (highest) to each paper based on how cohesive they thought the paper to be; in other words,

did it hang together as a unified whole? The scoring guide
I used, taken from the NIE study, follows:

Scoring Guide for Cohesion

In a strictly linguistic sense "cohesion" refers to the
ways clauses and sentences are related to each other and can
be thought of as the gathering and ordering of related
ideas. If the parts of a discourse cohere, they are "bound"
together. In this sense cohesion is achieved by ties of
considerable variety. And these ties can be both semantic
and structural. Halliday and Hasan identify the following
kinds of cohesion ties: lexical cohesion, conjunction,
reference, substitution, and ellipsis. Examples of each
follows:

Lexical

I like <u>rain</u> on school days but I dislike <u>rain</u> on week-
ends.

I stepped right into a puddle. That <u>puddle</u> was a com-
plete surprise to me. OR that <u>muddle</u> <u>hole</u> ruined my day.
OR That <u>place</u> fooled me.

Conjunction

Additive: It was a muggy day, <u>and</u> I couldn't stay
awake.

Adversative: I really didn't feel like going to school in the rain, <u>but</u> I did anyway.

Causal: I love rainy school days <u>because</u> my mom always lets me stay in bed.

Temporal: I put on my raincoat <u>when</u> it rains. <u>Then</u> I put on my plastic hat. <u>Finally</u>, I get myself out the door.

Reference

Personal: Rainy mornings are never fun for me. <u>I</u> get wet waiting for the school bus.

Demonstrative: I feel sad on rainy school mornings. <u>That</u> feeling is one I don't like.

Comparative: Today's the same kind of rainy day <u>as the one</u> we had yesterday.

Substitution

Nominal: I couldn't find my yellow raincoat, but my mom told me to take the other <u>one</u>.

Clausal (use of <u>so</u> and <u>not</u>) : Was it going to rain all day? The weatherman said <u>so</u>.

Ellipsis

Nominal: This was not the first rainy day I'd stayed in bed, only the second [   ].

Verbal: I usually stay in bed on rainy mornings, but I didn´t [   ] this time.

Clausal: I could either stay in bed or get up and go to school, but I couldn´t decide which [   ].

However, in a larger sense, "cohesion" includes any linguistic activity within and across sentences and clauses that binds a discourse together.   In scoring for cohesion then, scorers need to be attentive not only to cohesion ties in the limited sense but also to any other activity that serves to bind clauses, sentences, and other units of discourse together.   The following example achieves cohesion by lexical, conjunction, reference, and substitution ties, and these various kinds of cohesion are further bound by numerous incidents of syntactic repetition:

A rainy school morning makes me feel awful.   I feel like being mean to my brothers for no reason. On a rainy morning the whole world seems against me.   I wake up on the wrong side of the bed and I´m grouchy.   On a rainy school morning nothing goes right.   I´m late for breakfast, slow in getting dressed, and usually I forget something I need for school.

Scoring Guide Categories

1 = Little or no evidence of cohesion: clauses and sentences are not connected beyond pairings.

2 = Attempts at cohesion: evidence of gathering details but little or no evidence that these details are meaningfully ordered. In other words, very little seems lost if the details were rearranged.

3 = Minimal cohesion: details are both gathered and ordered in the ways illustrated briefly in the definition above. The parts are not so bound that the sense of the whole discourse is greater than the sense of its parts. In these pieces of writing there are large sections of details which cohere but these sections stand apart as sections.

4 = Cohesion: While there may be a sense of sections within the piece of writing, the sheer number and variety of cohesion strategies bind the details and sections into a wholeness. This sense of wholeness can be achieved by a saturation of syntactic repetion throughout the piece (see description above) and/or by closure which retrospectively orders the entire piece and/or by general statements which organize the whole piece.

NOTE: Scorers should not take mechanics or transcription

errors into consideration. Also, the scorers should judge only the <u>interrelatedness</u> of the ideas, NOT the truth value of those ideas.[6]

The readers were not asked to consider only the specific kinds of cohesive types outlined by Halliday and Hasan, but rather were asked to consider the discourse as a whole and score based on <u>any</u> cohesive activity that existed within it. My results are presented in Table 9, following.

Although I am somewhat distrustful of these numbers (because of a lack of inter-rater reliability, which I'll discuss in my concluding chapter), they are, with one exception, generally in keeping with the NIE cohesion scoring of persuasive discourse. In that study, 39 papers which scored 4 on primary trait and 40 papers which scored 3 on primary trait had a combined mean cohesive score of 3.2.[7] As Table 9 indicates, in my study the cohesive combined mean of 3 and 4 primary trait papers in both expressive and persuasive discourse was a similar 3.0.

The exception, however, is referential discourse where the combined mean of 3 and 4 primary trait papers was only 2.7 for cohesion, and this figure even includes Reader B's rather inflated 4.0 mean. What this seems to say is that at least in this specific referential exercise, a writer's use of cohesive strategies is less significant in achieving his

Table 9

Holistic Scoring for Cohesion
and Primary Trait (P-T) Score

Paper Number	Aim of Discourse	(Reader) Score			Holistic Mean	P-T Score
		(A)	(B)	(C)		
1	EXP	3.0	4.0	4.0	3.7	3.0
2	EXP	3.0	4.0	3.0	3.3	4.0
3	EXP	2.0	4.0	2.0	2.7	3.0
9	EXP	2.0	4.0	2.0	2.7	4.0
23	EXP	2.0	3.0	3.0	2.7	3.0
24	EXP	2.0	3.0	3.0	2.7	4.0
40	EXP	2.0	4.0	4.0	3.3	4.0
98	EXP	2.0	4.0	3.0	3.0	3.0
	MEAN:	2.3	3.8	3.0	3.0	3.5
5	REF	2.0	4.0	2.0	2.7	4.0
10	REF	3.0	4.0	2.0	3.0	4.0
70	REF	3.0	4.0	2.0	2.7	4.0
71	REF	2.0	4.0	2.0	2.7	3.0
89	REF	3.0	4.0	1.0	2.7	3.0
97	REF	1.0	4.0	2.0	2.3	3.0
103	REF	1.0	4.0	3.0	2.7	3.0
104	REF	1.0	4.0	2.0	2.3	4.0
	MEAN:	2.0	4.0	2.0	2.7	3.5
14	PER	4.0	4.0	3.0	3.7	4.0
32	PER	2.0	3.0	4.0	3.0	3.0
54	PER	3.0	4.0	2.0	3.0	4.0
63	PER	2.0	3.0	2.0	2.3	3.0
80	PER	2.0	4.0	2.0	2.7	3.0
90	PER	2.0	4.0	3.0	3.0	3.0
111	PER	3.0	4.0	3.0	3.3	4.0
112	PER	2.0	4.0	3.0	3.0	4.0
	MEAN:	2.5	3.8	2.8	3.0	3.5

purpose in the discourse than in either expressive or persuasive discourse. The reason for this difference may lie in the referential scoring guide for primary trait which gives higher ranking to a more organized collection of details (see Chapter III) or in the stimulus itself, which tells the writer to give details, but doesn't hint at any particular ordering for those details.

This lack of cohesiveness in referential discourse would seem to defy traditional advice in technical writing, for example, where teachers recommend a particular spatial ordering (front to back, right side to left side, etc.) when a writer is to describe a physical object. But in this case, almost all the writers gave a general description of the object ("a man's head") early on, and because of its familiarity, the readers may have had no trouble ordering subsequent details in their own minds, even if they had not been ordered in a cohesive way by the writers.

Coherence

This last point hints at a significant distinction that must be made between cohesion and coherence. Cohesion depends entirely upon strategies which exist within the text; just as cohesion goes beyond the sentence, however, coherence goes beyond the text and depends upon not just the text but on the rhetorical situation in which the writer,

reader, subject, and text co-exist. A text, for example, could be extremely cohesive but would be incoherent if it lacked what Halliday and Hasan call a "consistency of register"; that is to say, if it had no "continuity of meaning [shared by writer and reader] in relation to the situation."[8] The opposite of this, I believe, explains the referential exercise above. Although the texts do not display a great degree of cohesiveness (in relation to the other aims), the writers have succeeded in creating and maintaining a consistency of register for the distant store-keeper (and primary trait reader) that compensates for any weakness in cohesion.

To be more specific, a register consists of differing values of situational features, called field, mode, and tenor:

> The FIELD is the total event, in which the text is functioning, together with the purposive activity of the speaker or writer; it thus includes the subject-matter as one element in it. The MODE is the function of the text in the event, including therefore both the channel taken by the language--spoken or written, extempore or prepared--and its genre, or rhetorical mode, as narrative, didactic, persuasive, 'phatic communication' and so on. The TENOR refers to the type of role interaction, the set of relevant social relations, permanent or temporary, among the participants involved.[9]

In this referential exercise, the writers succeed because they have defined the register so well: why they are writing (to order a particular item), what they are writing for ("it

looks like a man's head"), the function of their writing (a descriptive letter), and the role interaction between writer and reader (Dear Sir, Respectfully Yours, etc.).

I don't mean to imply by these statements about the referential exercise that the writers of the persuasive or expressive exercises were any less successful in maintaining a consistency of register. What I am suggesting is that both cohesion and consistency of register are necessary for a text to be successful, and each is complementary and supplementary to the other. Together, even if in differing degree, they make a text coherent.

When I began this study, I had contemplated a specific analysis of cohesive devices in the student papers, using Halliday and Hasan's categories and methodology. (For example, see Halliday and Hasan's Chapter 8.) Other studies have begun to examine these features in the past two or three years, and have become quite accurate in identifying specific cohesive devices and ties.[10,11] However, for the reasons I have stated above, i.e., cohesion is acontextual, some of these scholars and others, such as R.J. Tierney of the University of Texas, have come to question the value of such specific cohesive analyses, which Tierney sees as a premature application of structural tendencies to describe texts.[12] Even the authors of a very current study of specific cohesive features, Stephen Witte and Lester Faigley

in "Coherence, Cohesion, and Writing Quality," realize the

necessity for a more global view and say that:

> while cohesive relationships may ultimately affect
> writing quality in some ways, there is no evidence
> to suggest that a large number (or a small number)
> of cohesive ties of a particular type will posi-
> tively affect writing quality. All discourse is
> context bound--to the demands of the subject
> matter, occasion, medium, and audience of the
> text. Cohesion defines those mechanisms that hold
> a text together, while coherence defines those
> underlying semantic relations that allow a text to
> be understood and used. Consequently, coherence
> conditions--conditions governed by the writer's
> purpose, the audience's knowledge and expecta-
> tions, and the information to be conveyed--
> militate against prescriptive approaches to the
> teaching of writing. Indeed, our exploration of
> what cohesion analyses can and cannot measure in
> student writing points to the necessity of placing
> writing exercises in the context of complete writ-
> ten texts. Just as exclusive focus on syntax and
> other formal surface features in writing instruc-
> tion probably will not better the overall quality
> of college students' writing, neither will a nar-
> row emphasis on cohesion probably produce signifi-
> cantly improved writing.[13]

It was exactly for these reasons that I did not go for-

ward with such a "narrow" analysis of specific cohesive dev-

ices.

Footnotes for Chapter VII

[1] M.A.K. Halliday and Ruqaiya Hasan, Cohesion in English (London: Longman, 1976), p. 31.

[2] Halliday and Hasan, p. 88.

[3] Halliday and Hasan, p. 143.

[4] Halliday and Hasan, p. 226.

[5] Halliday and Hasan, p. 274.

[6] Diehl (see note 26, Chap. II).

[7] Diehl, p. 6.

[8] Halliday and Hasan, p. 23.

[9] Halliday and Hasan, p. 22.

[10] Cooper.

[11] Stephen P. Witte and Lester Faigley, "Coherence, Cohesion, and Writing Quality," RTE 32 (May 1981), 189-204.

[12] R.J. Tierney, remarks delivered at the Texas Writing Research Conference, Austin, Texas, March 24-25, 1981.

[13] Witte and Faigley, p. 202.

PART D

CONCLUSION

CHAPTER VIII

DISCUSSION

Summary of the Results

The purpose of my study has been to determine if students who are skillful in one writing task are equally skillful in another, different writing task and to describe some of the features students use in successfully completing those tasks.

My correlational analysis in Chapter IV, looking at a sample of some 327 student papers, showed that there was no significant correlation between a student's performance in one aim of discourse and either of the other two aims. These results answer the first question above in the negative: students who are skillful in one writing task are not necessarily equally skillful in another, different writing task.

Chapter VI addressed the second part of my purpose, to describe the three aims of discourse in terms of selected syntactic and stylistic features which may distinguish between each of the aims in successful written discourse. The results, by aim, were:

Expressive - successful expressive discourse in the

papers I analyzed consisted of relatively short T-units and clauses, a high frequency of adverb phrases of time, imperatives, contractions, superlatives, and personal pronouns, and a low frequency of adjective clauses, adverb phrases which precede their referents, and questions.

Persuasive - successful discourse in this aim was distinguished by relatively long T-units, a high frequency of adverb phrases of condition and concession, noun phrases, passive verbs, expletive constructions, adverb phrases which precede their referents, and questions, and a low frequency of imperatives.

Referential - in response to the referential task, these successful papers consisted of relatively long clauses, and a relatively low frequency of all other examined features, except possibly adverb phrases which precede their referents.

The implication of my study is that syntax and style vary across aim (similar to Perron's and San Jose's results across mode) and, therefore, we should be careful making statements about synatctic maturity in general, especially when statments about such maturity are based upon samples from a single aim or mode of discourse.

Interpretations and Conclusions

These results confirm my contention that the classroom writing assignment is an all-important aspect of teaching writing.

If we, as teachers, were to continue to base our judgment of student writing ability on just the referential aim (i.e., literary analysis, report writing, research papers), we could very easily fail students who might be completely successful expressive or persuasive writers. It may well be, as the results of my study imply, that the key to a student's success in all three aims of discourse is dependent upon his experience in all three aims. If we concentrate on and evaluate one aim only, we'll be doing a disservice to our students and to our profession.

The feature analysis in the second half of my study indicates clearly that students possess a wide range of syntactic and stylistic skills, but what is even more important is how they use these skills to write successful discourse. They could apply them equally to all three aims of discourse; they do not. Thus, the more we learn, in studies such as this one, of how students actually succeed in written discourse, of what features they use to succeed, in each aim, the better prepared we will be to teach writing across all the aims of discourse.

Evaluation of the Study

As with much in life, we learn as we progress through a given experience. There have been many such opportunities in this study, and if I have not taken complete advantage of them all, perhaps the few listed below will serve to at least warn another student who may choose to follow a similar path.

1. Research in composition has recently become one of the most dynamic and fruitful opportunities available to a teacher of English or a graduate student and prospective teacher of English. For those about to indulge in this rewarding work, I strongly encourage a few courses in statistics. The basic statistical tools needed by a researcher in composition are not that many, but are immensely helpful. This knowledge would even be beneficial to a teacher who merely wanted to keep in tune with current research but not conduct any herself. Also, it would be especially helpful, in graduate programs around the country, if English departments that encouraged work in composition allowed such statistical course work to fulfill, even partially, the language requirement.

2. The sample size I used dwindled from over three hundred papers, to twenty four, to six, and this limited size severely restricted the significance and perhaps the applicability of my findings. Although time and money

usually constrain a graduate student to relatively small samples, if the opportunity exists, the sample should be as large as possible. (The NIE study, for example, with considerable funding, used a data base of some 3,000 papers.)

3. Another key to successful research is a pilot study. This allows the researcher to discover weaknesses in his design well before he is too far along to correct them. I successfully piloted my correlational analysis in a seminar during the early stages of this study and had worked to a limited extent with the NIE group on feature analysis. However, as I indicated in Chapter VII, the results of my holistic scoring for cohesion were disappointing, primarily because I had not piloted the scoring exercise. Instead, I relied on the NIE guide alone. I should have run a short pilot study and a considerable scorer training program. If I had, my results may have been more helpful.

4. With regard to the particular design of my study, there are a few adjustments I'd make, most of which reflect the concerns stated in the "bible" of composition research, Research in Written Composition, by Braddock, Lloyd-Jones, and Schorer.

The students in my study were allowed only 20 minutes to complete each writing task, and only one sample was written in each aim. Ideally, the students should have a much longer time in which to write, perhaps a number of hours,

and should be asked to write a number of responses in each aim of discourse.

Also, as one can see from my review of the literature, few studies have controlled topic, aim, and mode. All three should be controlled if possible, not just aim as in the present study.

Another concern with design was the topic for the persuasive task. In this case it elicits written discourse, as with the other aims, but unlike the other, written discourse which is to be spoken in front of an audience. A better persuasive stimulus would not compound these two verbal media, but would elicit written discourse meant to be read by an audience, not heard.

5. As an added note to this review of the study, had time and funds allowed I would like to have analyzed other aspects of the written product, such as performance in mechanics and spelling, organizational strategies, and diction, but even more so, I would have liked to interview these student writers about their writing, their choices of features and strategies. In this way, I might have learned more about how they succeeded, how they composed successful discourse, rather than simply analyzing the results of their composing process.

Implications and Suggestions

for Future Research and Teaching

Besides those suggestions I've made above concerning improved research methods and design, I'd like to propose a subsequent study that combines aspects of my research and that of Cynthia Watson.

Syntactically speaking, the Watson study was more comprehensive than mine; however, I question some of her results in that the two groups she evaluated, high school seniors and college English majors, wrote in response to entirely different stimuli. In my research, the stimulus in each aim was the same for all students, yet my syntactic analysis (albeit only a part of my study) was less comprehensive than Watson's.

Perhaps another researcher could benefit from a design that combines these two studies. One that maintains a controlled topic in each aim (and which should control mode as well), and one which analyzes exhaustively a relatively large sample like that in the Watson research.

A final suggestion I would like to make concerns not a research but a teaching strategy. The implication that I've derived from my work here, with regard to the difference in performance across aim, leads me to suggest that English teachers adopt a new approach to teaching writing, one which

covers all three aims of discourse throughout the semester or the year.

The reason that I propose such an approach is that the first part of my study, the correlational analysis of performance across aim, appears to counter the traditional assumption (held by the Educational Testing Service and others) that one sample of writing predicts all other samples.

Thus, if we are to assess our students' writing abilities fairly and accurately, we must not continue to focus on just "academic prose" or expository writing. Rather, we should concern ourselves and our students with all the aims and modes of discourse.

Perhaps such an approach may, for those of us who teach writing, free us from the "current-traditional" paradigm, and, for many of our students, free them from lives as "failed" writers in a single type of discourse.

> The limits of my language
> are the limits of my world.

The greater those limits, the larger that world.

APPENDIX A

SYLLABUS FOR ENGLISH 101 AT BLACK HAWK COLLEGE

I. Course Objectives:

A. To develop the student's ability to organize and
develop a clearly stated purpose

1. To teach the student how to write a good
thesis statement

2. To teach the student how to write outlines as
a guide to good organization and development

3. To teach the student how to organize and
develop paragraphs and themes using such
techniques as examples, comparison-contrast,
classification, cause-effect, definition,
and description

B. To develop the student's ability to write
specialized types of essays, such as the satire, the
book report, and the argumentative essay

C. To develop the student's ability to use correct,
appropriate and effective words and sentences

1. To build vocabulary as an aid to communication

2. To teach the significance of levels of word
    usage in all types of communication

3. To teach methods of achieving sentence variety

4. To teach students how to recognize and avoid
    such problems of structure as choppy sentences
    and sentences with excessive subordination or
    coordination

D. To develop the student's ability to read expository
    prose with critical awareness

E. To develop the student's skill to apply in his or
    her own writing the effective techniques found in
    prose models

F. To foster the habit of thinking critically and
    logically

II. Students to be Served:

Students to be served by English 101 are mainly those
in the university parallel program as well as in
other college programs in which English 101 is a
requirement. The course is also geared to those
students who wish to approve their writing ability
for job enhancement or for personal enrichment.

III. Methods of Delivery:

English 101 uses the lecture-discussion format. Much
of the focus of the class will be on the students'
own writing; therefore, instructors may use any means,
such as the overhead projector, to allow students to
see strengths and weaknesses in the writing of others.

IV. English 101 instructors have a choice of textbooks.
Some possibilities include . . . [rhetoric and
writing handbooks, essay anthologies, and vocabulary
books.]

V. Grading System in English 101:

Students in English 101 receive grades of A, B, C, D,
or X (no credit). After consulting with the
instructor students earning a grade of D may elect to
take the X grade instead.

VI. Course Content:

A. Course Organization (Writing):
Because the focus of the course is writing clearly
and effectively, the instructor should relate all
assignments to the student's writing. In organ-
izing the course, the instructor may first want to
concentrate on writing good thesis statements.

Second, he may focus on the organization of the essay including the common patterns of organization and the outline. Third, he mat teach the qualities of good paragraphs (completeness, order, unity, and coherence). While some instructors prefer to have students write essays first, others may choose to have their students write paragraphs and then progress to the essay. As a further aid to improving writing, the instructor may concentrate on the use of effective sentences and appropriate words as well as on style. Since good writing and critical thinking are intertwined, the instructor may teach the basics of logic. Although the instructor may concentrate on one aspect of writing, the instructor and the student will, of course, be concerned with all of these aspects of writing simultaneously.

B. Writing Assignments:

1. Essay Topics:

   The essay anthology provides essays which may be studied as models in preparation for the student's writing assignments. The instructor may wish also to use these essays as sources for theme topics.

Some of the topics should allow students to use the common patterns of organization, such as comparison-contrast, classification, enumeration, and clausal analysis.

2. Number of Writing Assignments:

Because the purpose of the course can be achieved only by the students writing essays, it is suggested that the student should be required to write and revise or correct six to eight essays, or from 3200-4000 words.

3. Writing Requirements:

A sheet entitled "Black Hawk College Theme Requirements," which includes form requirements, may be distributed to the students. Because the student needs to understand the errors and weaknesses in his or her writing, the instructor must require that all essays be revised or corrected. The instructor should either keep all essays after they have been revised or collect them at the end of the semester.

C. Reading:

1. Critical reading is included in the course

chiefly as a means of helping the student
improve his own writing techniques and his
ability to think critically. The essay
reader contains essays on a wide variety
of topics. The discussion questions
following the essays should provide
direction for the student´s reading and
analysis.

2.   The instructor may wish to assign a book
report. This assignment should give
students an opportunity to analyze the
purpose of an author and to evaluate his
book.

D.   Grammar and Usage:

The instructor must decide whether to present
a review of grammar, usage, and punctuation as
a unit or as a continuing perspective. How-
ever, the instructor should never present
grammar and usage in isolation from the
student´s writing. The instructor should be-
come aware of the materials available in the
Independent Learning Center so that he may
refer students there for work in specific
areas of weakness.

E. Spelling:

Students should be encouraged to keep a list
of words they misspelled in their essays and
to learn the correct spelling of these words.
Also, the Black Hawk College Spelling List, a
list of words most frequently misspelled by
college freshmen, may be used for improvement
of spelling.

F. Vocabulary:

The instructor may use the essays from the
essay anthology as a means for improving
vocabulary. For this purpose, students should
be encouraged to look up all unfamiliar words.
Some instructors may wish to use a vocabulary
book . . . and give weekly tests.

VII. Method of Evaluating Student Performance:

A. The grades the student earns on his essays and
paragraphs are the greatest determiners of his
or her final grade. Not simply averaging grades
on essays, the instructor instead derives the
final grade from the improvement the student
makes on each succeeding composition.

B. The instructor also gives a final examination

which should reflect the objectives of the
course and which should consist of two parts:
an objective test and an essay of at least
three hundred words.

C. Quizzes over grammar and usage, spelling,
vocabulary, etc., also should play a part in
determining the student's final grade.

Revised 10-78

SOURCE: Carol Anne Boyd, "Field-Dependence-Independence and
Writing and Revision in the Referential, Expressive, and
Persuasive Aims." Diss. University of Iowa, 1979, pp.
100-104.

APPENDIX B

TESTING SCHEDULE

Date	Section	Teacher	Writing Task
23 March	9301	A	REF
	9302	B	PER
	9303	A	EXP
	9304	B	REF
19 March	9309	C	PER
20 March	9306	B	EXP
	9307	A	REF
26 March	9301	A	PER/EXP
	9302	B	EXP/REF
	9303	A	REF/PER
	9304	B	PER/EXP
21 March	9309	C	EXP/REF
22 March	9306	B	REF/PER
	9307	A	PER/EXP

Source: Carol Anne Boyd, "Field-Dependence-Independence and Writing and Revision in the Referential, Expressive, and Persuasive Aims," Diss. University of Iowa 1979, p. 121.

APPENDIX C

RESULTS OF REFERENTIAL SCORING

Of 119, 16 papers' scores between Readers A and B were not contiguous. Of these I agreed with Reader A on 6, Reader B on 4, and 6 remained non-contiguous, which we arbitrated.

Of the remaining 103 papers, 57 had contiguous scores from readers A and B, while 46 had identical scores. Of these 57, I agreed with Reader A on 15, with Reader B on 25, and I disagreed with both on 17, which were subjected to arbitration.

Therefore, with 3 readers, two at least agreed on 96 of the 119 papers, or 81%.

APPENDIX D

RESULTS OF EXPRESSIVE SCORING

Of 119, 17 papers' scores between Readers A and B were not contiguous. Of these, I agreed with Reader A on 6, Reader B on 6, and 5 remained non-contiguous, which we arbitrated.

Of the remaining 102, 41 papers had contiguous scores from Readers A and B, and 61 had identical scores. Of these 41, I agreed with Reader A on 12, with Reader B on 20, and I disagreed with both on 9, which were arbitrated.

Therefore, with 3 readers, two at least agreed upon 105 of the 119 papers, or 88%.

APPENDIX E

RESULTS OF PERSUASIVE SCORING

Of 119, 5 papers' scores between Readers A and B were not contiguous. Of these, I agreed with Reader A on 1, Reader B on 3, and 1 remained non-contiguous and was arbitrated.

Of the remaining 114, 39 papers had contiguous scores from Readers A and B, while 75 had identical scores. Of these 39, I agreed with Reader A on 14, with Reader B on 19, and I disagreed with both on 6, which were arbitrated.

Therefore, with 3 readers, two at least agreed upon 112 of the 119 papers, or 94%.

APPENDIX F

COMPARISON OF THREE STUDENT AND THREE

ADULT WRITERS IN THREE AIMS OF DISCOURSE

In this appendix, I examine <u>successful</u> discourse by six writers, comparing one student and one adult writer in each aim of discourse. My purpose here, a comparison across ages, is ancillary to the main thrust of this study, but I believe the results, as limited as they will be due to the small sample size, may add a bit more light to our knowledge of writing performance in the referential, expressive, and persuasive aims.

I've already described the student writers in Chapter III, community college freshmen, approximately 18-19 years old. I also obtained writing samples from three adults, all of whom are experienced teachers and directors of freshman English programs at American colleges, and all of whom were attending the Institute on Writing at the University of Iowa during the first half of 1980. The testing procedures for these adults duplicated those used with the students at Black Hawk Community College, and the adults responded to the same writing tasks as the freshmen (see Chapter III). The adult papers were scored for primary trait by two of the

same readers as had scored the student papers.

The three student writers in this appendix were selected from the pool of 24 I've already discussed and were selected based on their performance within aim, performances which most nearly matched their adult counterparts in primary trait score. Table 10 below lists the primary trait scores for both student and adult writers in each aim of discourse:

Table 10

Primary Trait Scores for Student and
Adult Writers Across Three Aims of Discourse

| Writer | Primary Trait Score by Aim of Discourse | | |
	REF	EXP	PER
Student 1	3	2	3
Adult A	2	2	3
Student 2	3	3	2
Adult B	3	3	1
Student 3	4	3	3
Adult C	4	3	4

In the remainder of this appendix, I'll examine a student's and an adult's successful writing performance in each of the three aims of discourse, looking at the same features I discussed in Chapter VI. Specifically, I'll analyze the writing of Student 2 and Adult B in the referential aim, Student 3 and Adult C in the expressive aim, and

Student 1 and Adult A in the persuasive aim.

Writing Samples

Before I present my specific findings for these six writers, in the tables to follow, I include their actual responses to the three primary trait exercises:

Expressive Task:

Gift for a Special Occasion

Someone you care about very much is celebrating a special occasion. Think of something you now own that you want to give to your friend or relative. Write a message to that person, describing the gift, telling what it means to you, and why you're giving it to that person.

Student Writer 3

Dear Marlo,

Congratulations on your graduation. I wish you the best of luck in all your future endeavors. I am sending you a book of poems and sayings so that you too can share them.

This book has a special meaning to me because it was given to me by a special friend, like you. I want you to have the book because it has given me very special inspirations in both a spiritual and feeling way.

The book was given to me on my installation as Worthy Advisor of Rainbow, and you know how much that day meant to

me, as I have told you before. I have always believed that the best gifts are those from the heart and can improve a person. I´m not saying you need improvement, but I am saying that you will improve by the good feeling you get when you read the poems.

Well, you are now on your way, practically there, to being a veterinarian, and I hope everything goes well for you. I hope this book will give you good inspirations like it has given me. I also hope this book will come to mean as much to you as it does to me. I couldn´t have picked a better person to give it to.

<div style="text-align: right">Love,

Brenda</div>

Adult Writer C

Dear Chris—

It´s that time again. You have chalked up another year and a big one: 40. Over the hill and all that. To commemorate, I´m sending you something that´s very spec·al to me, something I´ve had for only six months but a prized possession. Guess what? Head, body, and tail. Four feet—really paws—golden fur. Bright eyes, they´re brown, crowned on top with two pointy ears. Jason is learning to bark and should turn into a fine replica of his mother. You

remember Lania. Also he is a specialist in wagging and wig-
gling.

And why? I love you and Jason will too. He's already
part of my life, nipped his way into the heart, and I want
him to be part of yours. To make you happy as he has me. To
liven up the long "forty-ish" road ahead. To love you too.

Happy Birthday, Christina

Here's Jason.

Persuasive Task:

Speech for Hearing on Rec Center

Some high school students have proposed converting an
old house into a recreation center where young people might
drop in evenings for talk and relaxation. Some local
residents oppose the plan on the grounds that the center
would depress property values in the neighborhood and
attract undesirable types. A public hearing has been
called. Write a brief speech that you would make supporting
or opposing the plan. Remember to take only ONE point of
view. Organize your arguments carefully and be as convinc-
ing as possible.

Student Writer 1

I feel that converting the house into a recreation
center would be a good idea. Young people need places where

they can gather to talk and just "mess around." Most of the areas available to young people now are bars serving liquor causing the necessity for fake I.D.'s. They then drink because it's the social thing to do. This can cause problems, especially when driving. If there were a place available to them where they could talk & relax and drink Pepsi or such, less problems would occur. They need a place to spend evenings with their peers.

As soon as young people are mentioned, everyone immediately thinks of the "undesirables." If people would investigate, they would discover there is a much greater percentage of "desirable" teenagers who go to school, work, and are not on drugs. But because the activities of a few are so publisized, all teenagers are typed and given a bad name. If given a chance, these young people will probably prove that they can gather together without causing undue problems for the neighboring residents. Many times teenagers knowing they have been given a responsibilty will police themselves, either by keeping the "undesirables" away or by requiring them to conform to the rules.

Money, of course, is always an important topic among adults especially. If someone mentions loss of property value they immediately sit up and take notice. But sometimes, there are more important issues than money. As adults and parents we are responsible for our young people and

should provide places where they can meet to enjoy their peers. This is a part of growth and development and is very important.

Adult Writer A

Ladies and Gentlemen--

I speak as a realtor--one who knows real estate values--and as a mother. I can tell you without qualification that I support the conversion of this house into a recreation center--not only because I think my son and your sons and daughters need a place to keep themselves off the streets. But I have looked over plans for the remodeling, and I can say--without reservation--that it will be a first-class job. This old house will be repainted, the roof repaired, the porch and shutters fixed, the garage cleaned, and the yard weeded and mowed. Teenagers will do the work with the help of parents that I am organizing. The entire operation of this recreational center will be closely supervised by parents who live in this area. So you see, you have nothing to worry about as far as this center's adversely affecting property values. Your property will only be benefited by the addition of a well-run community enterprise that will attract to this neighborhood homeowners who care about their children.

Referential Task:

Order for a Chess Pawn

Here is an object that has come into your possession, and you would like to get another one exactly like it. A mail-order business that sells everything, called the Universal Store, has such an object. The problem is that the store can locate what it sells only by a written description. Write your order out below, giving whatever details you think the store will need to find the object. A messenger will be here in twenty minutes to take your order to the store.

Student Writer 2

Dear Universal Store,

I would like to purchase a small, white, hollow ceramic head. It looks like a part of a chess set. It is about 3 inches tall, and 1 inch across at the base. It is the bust of a man, with his eyes closed, and a moustache. He is wearing a helmet that comes down over his ears and down to his neck. Another part of the helmet comes down between his eyes and over his nose. Below his neck, the piece widens to form a ring, then widens more at the base. The helmet has a knob on top, somewhat like a doorknob.

Thank you

Joe

Adult Writer B

Dear Universal Store,

I would like to order an off-white ceramic chess pawn to replace one I recently broke.

The pawn can be identified by its size and shape as well as by the details of the design.

The general shape reminds me of a 3-inch tall bullet, roughly the size of a .50 caliber shell. It varies from the bullet shape in two ways. One, instead of tapering to a bullet point at the top, the pawn tapers then at the very top widens into a small nob. Two, about 1/2" from the base the pawn's 1" diameter flares out flangelike to about 1 1/8".

The distinguishing characteristic of the object, setting it apart from other small bullet-shaped objects, is that of design. The pawn is the miniature helmeted head of a medieval soldier. The helmet covers the head to the nape of the neck where a small fringe of chain mail extends below the helmet. The opening for the face is a rounded M-shape. The center lines of the M form a nose protector. On either side of this protector one can see the soldier's eyes. Below the nose protector one sees a heavy drooping mustache and a full, lower lip.

Please rush me the pawn as I have a chess match set up for next week. Bill me when you send the pawn.

Sincerely,

John

All of these writers succeeded (based on primary trait scoring) in completing their respective writing tasks. The specific results of an analysis of these performances are presented in Tables 11 and 12 below.

Discussion

Because the results presented in these tables represent such a small sample of writing, they cannot be extended beyond these six writers. Based on this sample alone, however, I can make the following statements about maturity differences in each aim of discourse.

Expressive Discourse

The student writing here is characterized by longer T-units and a considerably higher subordination ratio than the adult writing. The student also used a greater number of adverb phrases of time, imperatives, passive verbs, superlatives, and personal pronouns than did the adult. The adult writer's use of adjective clauses, noun phrases, questions, contractions, and expletive constructions is greater than the student's.

Table 11

A Comparison between Student and Adult
Writers of Selected Syntactic Features
in Successful Discourse Across Three Aims

| Feature | Writers | Aim of Discourse | | |
		EXP	PER	REF
MTUL	Student	15.60	16.50	13.50
MTUL	Adult	8.41	20.70	15.07
MCL	Student	8.07	8.75	12.00
MCL	Adult	7.53	13.30	11.89
CL/TU	Student	1.93	1.88	1.13
CL/TU	Adult	1.12	1.56	1.27
APT*	Student	7.14	5.88	-
APT	Adult	-	-	6.67
ACCO	Student	-	23.53	-
ACCO	Adult	-	-	-
AJCL	Student	7.14	23.53	12.50
AJCL	Adult	11.77	55.56	13.33
NP	Student	7.14	35.29	-
NP	Adult	29.41	11.11	-

*For the following, frequency of occurrence per 100 T-units.

Table 12

A Comparison between Student and Adult
Writers of Selected Stylistic Features
in Successful Discourse Across Three Aims

| Feature | Writers | Aim of Discourse | | |
		EXP	PER	REF
APPR*	Student	–	–	12.50
APPR	Adult	–	–	26.67
PV	Student	7.14	23.53	–
PV	Adult	–	66.67	6.67
Q	Student	–	–	–
Q	Adult	11.77	–	–
C	Student	14.28	5.88	–
C	Adult	41.18	–	–
E	Student	–	17.65	–
E	Adult	5.88	–	–
I	Student	7.14	–	–
I	Adult	–	–	–
S	Student	7.14	5.88	–
S	Adult	–	–	–
PP	Student	307.14	105.88	150.00
PP	Adult	123.59	177.78	66.67

*For the following, frequency of occurrence per 100 T-units.

Persuasive Discourse

The student wrote shorter T-units and clauses than the adult and used fewer adjectice clauses, passive verbs, and personal pronouns. The adult's use of adverb phrases of time, adverb clauses of condition and concession, noun phrases, contractions, expletive constructions, and superlatives was less than the student's.

Referential Discourse

In this aim, the frequency of adverb phrases of time, adjective clauses, adverb phrases which precede their referent, and passive verbs was lower in the student writing. The adult wrote longer T-units here, but used considerably fewer personal pronouns.

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