

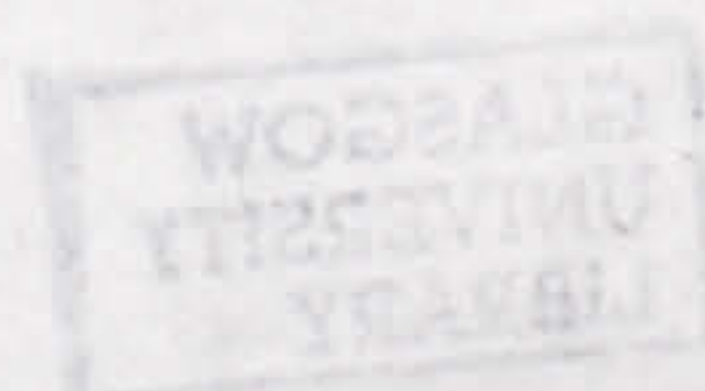
**THE EFFECTS OF THE PROCESS
APPROACH ON WRITING
APPREHENSION AND WRITING
QUALITY AMONG ESL STUDENTS AT
UNIVERSITY LEVEL IN MALAYSIA**

BY

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**A THESIS SUBMITTED FOR THE DEGREE OF PH.D IN THE
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ABSTRACT

This study was designed to investigate the effects of two methods of teaching written composition (i.e. traditional and process approach) on writing apprehension among ESL students, and also the effects of the process approach on the overall quality and length of their writing.

Students enrolled in Written Communication 1 course at the National University of Malaysia were chosen as the subjects of this study. The students had been placed in three groups based on the results of previous courses and for the purpose of this study the top and the bottom groups were selected as the experimental groups and the middle one as the control.

Before beginning their courses, the students were asked to complete apprehension questionnaires designed by Daly and Miller (1975). The scores were utilized to identify high and low apprehensive writers. Then, the treatment began. For this, students in the experimental groups used the syllabus based on the process approach while the students in the control used the original syllabus designed for the course. The process syllabus designed specially for this study involved large-group interaction exercises, paired-student and small-group language problem solving activities, free writing, practice responses to writing, structured peer response to writing and instructor-student conferences. The second method (traditional) involved teaching writing primarily through writing exercises, lectures, discussions and

question-answer sessions.

ii

After the treatment students were once again asked to answer the Daly-Miller Writing Apprehension Test to identify the effects of both methods in reducing writing apprehension. Writing samples of the students were collected at the end of the study and were analyzed to determine the effects of both methods on writing quality and length. The two-way analysis of variance was utilized to identify any significant difference between the effects of both methods.

From the findings, it was concluded that both methods were successful in reducing writing apprehension, but that the process approach was considerably more effective in achieving this than the traditional approach. Moreover, the subjects in the process/experimental group were found to write better and longer essays than the subjects in the control group taught in the usual way.

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Professor Nigel Grant and Mr. Alan Barr, my supervisors, served both as professional and personal role-models. Their never failing patience, encouragement and friendship were crucial to my completion of this degree. Other staff members at the Department of Education also shared their professional expertise and support.

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In addition, my family - my husband Wan Ramli and my son Wan Muhammad Amir Ashraf - provided much needed emotional support and technical assistance on the home front which enabled me to devote more time to my academic career.

A special note of thanks is also extended to a close group of friends at the department who provided understanding and room to grow. Their nurturing has been instrumental in my personal development.

LIST OF TABLES AND FIGURES

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

EAP - English for Academic Purposes	
EFL - English as a Foreign Language	
ESL - English as a Second Language	143
ESOL - English to Speakers of Other Languages	144
FMCE - Federation of Malaya Certificate of Education	173
HSC - Higher Certificate of Education	175
L1 - Native Language	189
L2 - Second Language	192
LCE - Lower Certificate of Education	209
MCA - Malaysian Chinese Association	
MCE - Malaysian Certificate of Education	216
NTPS(C) - National Type Primary School (Chinese)	
NTPS(E) - National Type Primary School (English)	216
NTPS(T) - National Type Primary School (Tamil)	218
PNWS - Personal Narrative Writing Scales	
SCRE - Scottish Council for Research in Education	219
SPM - Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia (Malaysian Certificate of Education)	219
SRP - Sijil Rendah Pelajaran (Lower Certificate of Education)	
UMNO - United Malay National Organisation	220
Table 8.8 Overall quality and length means for all high apprehensive writers in experimental and control groups	221
Table 8.9 One-way Analysis of Variance of post-test compositions length score between experimental and control groups	222

LIST OF TABLES AND FIGURES

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF TABLES

Figure 2.1 Producing a piece of writing	22
Table 6.1 Population of Malaysia 1989-1990	143
Table 6.2 Population of Malaya 1911-1914	144
Table 6.3 The use of English in family domain	173
Table 6.4 Speech variety used with friends in hometown	175
Table 7.1 The syllabus and timetable for the experimental group	189
Table 7.2 The syllabus and timetable for the control group	192
Table 8.1 Diederich's Analytic Scale	209
Table 8.2 The result of the Writing Apprehension (pre) for both control and Experimental groups	216
Table 8.3 Two-way Analysis of Variance of pre and post Writing Apprehension Test for both control and experimental groups	216
Table 8.4 Writing Apprehension (pre and post) mean scores for both groups	218
Table 8.5 Writing Apprehension Test (pre and post) mean scores on high apprehensives in both groups	219
Table 8.6 The result of the Writing Apprehension Test (post)	219
Table 8.7 Overall quality and length means for all writers in experimental and control groups	220
Table 8.8 Overall quality and length means for all high apprehensive writers in experimental and control groups	221
Table 8.9 One-way Analysis of Variance of post-test compositions length score between experimental and control groups	222

LIST OF FIGURES**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

Figure 1.1 Sample percentage according to race	iv	9
Figure 2.1 Producing a piece of writing	v	22
Figure 2.2 Model-based approach		28
Figure 2.3 The concept of "schemata" in the process writing		32
Figure 2.4 The development of methods for teaching writing		36
Figure 4.1 A model of the writing process	i	61
Figure 4.2 Writing process sequence	3	87
Figure 5.1 Average amounts of writing in various categories	5	132
Figure 7.1 Experimental and control group	5	182
Figure 9.1 The features of the process writing	6	228

1.6 Hypotheses**1.7 Location****1.8 Subjects****1.9 Class Distribution****1.10 Limitations of the study****CHAPTER 2 THE TEACHING OF WRITING TO ESL STUDENTS****2.1 Introduction****2.2 The functions of writing****2.3 The difference between writing and speaking****2.4 Approaches of teaching writing to ESL students****2.4.1 The controlled-to-free approach****2.4.2 The Free-writing approach**

TABLE OF CONTENTS	23
2.4.4 The Communicative approach	24
ABSTRACT	i
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	iii
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	iv
LIST OF TABLES AND FIGURES	v

**CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND
OF THE RESEARCH**

1.1	Introduction	1
1.2	Background of the study	3
1.3	Statement of the problems	5
1.4	Objectives of the study	5
1.5	Research Questions	6
1.6	Hypotheses	6
1.7	Location	8
1.8	Subjects	8
1.9	Class Distribution	10
1.10	Limitations of the study	10

CHAPTER 2 THE TEACHING OF WRITING TO ESL STUDENTS

2.1	Introduction	12
2.2	The functions of writing	13
2.3	The difference between writing and speaking	16
2.4	Approaches of teaching writing to ESL students	21
2.4.1	The controlled-to-free approach	21
2.4.2	The Free-writing approach	22

2.4.3	The Grammar-Syntax-Organization approach	23
2.4.4	The Communicative approach	24
2.4.5	The Pattern-centred approach	26
2.4.6	The Process-centred approach.	28
2.5	Research of teaching writing to ESL students	33
2.5.1	Second language writing process studies	37
2.5.2	The development of second language writing process studies	38

CHAPTER 3 WRITING APPREHENSION

3.1	Introduction	45
3.2	Writing Apprehension and Second language learning	47
3.3	Relationship between writing apprehension and individual personality	50
3.3.1	Sex difference in writing apprehension	50
3.3.2	Traits and Test Anxiety	51
3.3.3	Subject-specific attitudes	51
3.3.4	Self-esteem	51
3.4	The causes of Writing Apprehension	52
3.5	The effects of Writing Apprehension	55
3.6	Measuring Writing Apprehension	56
3.7	Writer's Block	58
3.7.1	Differences between writer's block and writing apprehension	59

CHAPTER 4 THE STAGES OF PROCESS WRITING

4.1	Introduction	60
4.2	Prewriting	62
4.3	Writing	66

4.4	Rewriting	67
4.4.1	Functions of rewriting/revision	70
4.4.1.1	Revision as repair	71
4.4.1.2	Revision as reading	73
4.5	Methods of facilitating revision	74
4.6	The features of the writing process	77
4.6.1	Interaction	77
4.6.1.1	Peer Criticism/Peer Tutoring	80
4.6.1.2	Peer Evaluation	82
4.6.2	Feedback	86
4.6.2.1	Peer Feedback	86
4.6.2.2	Feedback from the teacher	87
4.6.2.3	The Writing Conference as Feedback	93
CHAPTER 5 THE TEACHING OF WRITING :		
PRODUCT VS PROCESS		
5.1	Introduction	97
5.2	The teaching of writing : the product-based model	99
5.2.1	Writing as form	99
5.2.2	Sentence combining and syntactic maturity	102
5.2.3	Text models and the teaching of writing	105
5.2.4	Product-based textbooks and the teaching of writing	106
5.2.5	Topics for writing : a product-based view	108
5.2.6	The product-based model and the evaluation of writing	110
5.2.7	Product-based feedback and the teaching of composition	111
5.2.8	Product-based model and the attitudes of teachers and students	113
5.3	The teaching of writing : the process oriented-approach	117

6.8	5.3.1 Writing as meaning	117
6.9	5.3.2 The process-oriented approach and teaching materials	119
6.10	5.3.3 The process-oriented approach and the writing topics	122
	5.3.4 Feedback, evaluation and the process approach	125
CHAPTER 5	5.3.5 The process oriented approach and the role of the teacher	128
5.4	The teaching of composition in Britain	130
	5.4.1 Introduction	130
7.2	5.4.2 Product and process approach in teaching writing	137
7.3	in Britain	135
7.4	Instruction	194
	CHAPTER 6 THE MALAYSIAN EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM	195
6.1	Introduction	141
6.2	Geography and history in brief	141
6.3	The Malaysian School System	144
8.1	6.3.1 Primary Education	145
8.2	6.3.2 Lower Secondary Education	145
	6.3.3 Upper Secondary Education	146
	6.3.4 Form Six Education	147
6.4	The pre-British period	148
6.5	The pre-World War II period	148
6.6	The pre-independence period	151
6.7	Crisis in Malayan Education	153
	6.7.1 In search of a new policy	153
	6.7.2 The demands of the Malay	155
2.1	6.7.3 The reaction of the Chinese	157
8.3	6.7.4 The decision of the government	158
8.4	6.7.5 The Alliance Education programme	160
	6.7.5.1 The Razak Plan	160

6.8	The post-independence period	162
6.9	The functions of English in Malaysia	167
6.10	Language situation at tertiary level	180

8.5.2	Post-test results	217
-------	-------------------	-----

CHAPTER 7 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY	217
--	-----

7.1	Methodology	181
7.1.1	Design of Experimental and Control Classes	181
7.2	Procedures	187
7.3	Syllabus for the experimental and control	188
7.4	Instrumentation	194
7.5	Collection and Treatment of Data	195
7.6	Research Problems	196

9.1.3	Writing instruction : the product perspective	227
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CHAPTER 8 ANALYSIS OF TESTS	228
------------------------------------	-----

8.1	Introduction	199
8.2	Procedures for describing written tests : a general survey	200
8.2.1	Atomistic measures	200
8.2.2	T-unit Analysis	201
8.2.3	Cohesion Analysis	203
8.2.4	Holistic Tests	207
8.2.4.1	Essay Scale	208
8.2.4.2	Analytic Scale	208
8.2.4.3	Primary Trait Scoring	211
8.2.4.4	General Impression Marking	211
8.3	Reliability of holistic evaluation	212
8.4	The Grading of Tests used in the Study	214
8.4.1	The Daly-Miller Writing Apprehension Test	214

BIBLIO	8.4.2 The two-hour post-test	214
8.5	The results of the pre-and post-tests	215
APPEND	8.5.1 Pre-test results	215
	8.5.2 Post-test results	217
	8.5.2.1 Daly-Miller Writing Apprehension Test	217
	8.5.2.2 Two-hour writing test	220
8.6	Discussion of the post-test results.	222

CHAPTER 9 IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

9.1	Summary of the study	226
	9.1.1 The starting point	226
	9.1.2 The purpose and design of the study	227
	9.1.3 Writing instruction : the product perspective	227
	9.1.4 Writing instruction : the process perspective	228
9.2	Discussion of the findings	229
9.3	Pedagogical Implication	231
	9.3.1 The writing process and the written product	231
	9.3.2 Writing as a meaning-creating activity	232
	9.3.3 Social interaction in the writing classroom	233
	9.3.4 The importance of attitudes	235
	9.3.5 Toleration of errors	236
	9.3.6 The writing topics	237
	9.3.7 Revising/rewriting	237
	9.3.8 Evaluation and feedback	236
	9.3.9 Writing as a thinking process	239
9.4	Implications for the teaching of writing in Malaysia	240
9.5	Directions for future research	246

APPENDICES

1.1 Introduction to the research

This study looked into the importance of the process approach to teaching writing in reducing writing apprehension among ESL students at university level in Malaysia. In the study two teaching methods were employed, the traditional (product) approach and the process approach, and the effects of both methods on writing apprehension and writing quality were compared.

Before proceeding with this section, it may well be worth reminding ourselves of what these words mean. A product is the end result of our labours and has about it an air of finality and completeness. Process is the means by which we reach such a product. (For more information see Chapter Two - 2.3.6).

There are several reasons for focusing on reducing writing apprehension. Firstly, it is claimed that a certain amount of apprehension or anxiety is present and probably necessary in all successful writers. However, the apprehension level of some student writers is so high that it becomes counter-productive to the successful completion of composition assignments. Consider the situation of Diederich's remedial students, "...they hate and fear writing more than anything else they have had to do in school. If they see a blank sheet of paper on which they are expected to write something, they look as though they want to scream" (Diederich 1974 : 21). This fear of writing and its associated symptoms are related to poor writing performance and may impede the development of writing skills.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND OF THE RESEARCH

1.1 Introduction to the research

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Secondly, research in the U.S.A has also shown that undue apprehension can be the student writers' worst enemy. Students learn better and teachers teach better in classrooms where this stress is minimized. These are conditions under which student writers can best develop their skills, and encourage the positive and direct motivation to learn which comes from the desire to write well, whereas motivation caused by fear and characterized by high levels of apprehension, is the least effective in helping students succeed at writing.

Thirdly, when students recognize pressures upon them to perform and doubt their ability to do so, the anxiety which results can increase the likelihood of failure. Under this condition, not only are students unable to write well, but they compensate often by denying the value of succeeding, and as a result of this, it is possible that the victims of a high level of writing apprehension come to hate writing.

Finally, the method of teaching writing used contributes to the problem of writing apprehension. According to Gungl and Taylor (1988) :

And now we have yet another bit of mud to sling at the old paradigm : that a focus on form - on grammar, punctuation and generally prescriptive writing - most likely raises the level of ESL students' writing apprehension.

(1988 : 236)

Based on the reasons listed above, then, it is felt necessary to focus on treating the negative attitudes toward writing especially among ESL students.

1.2 Background of the study

The teaching of writing has always placed emphasis on the final written product - a product in which focus is on the aspects of usage and correct form. Many instructors believe writers should know what they are going to write; that the composing process is linear; that teaching grammar, then the sentence, then the paragraph, and finally the essay - the building block approach- is an effective method of writing instruction. But grammatically perfect sentences have little power if they do not clearly and forcefully express intelligent ideas. The history of research into the effects of L1 grammar instruction on writing quality has shown that :

[there is] no reason to expect the study of grammar or mechanics to have any substantial effect on the writing process or on writing ability as reflected in the quality of written products. Experimental studies have shown that they have little or none. These findings have been consistent for many years.

(Hillocks 1986 : 227)

And surely even novice writing instructors can intuit, as Robert Pirsig does in *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance*, that :

the old slap-on-the-fingers-if-your-modifiers-were-caught-dangling stuff. Correct spelling, correct punctuation, correct grammar ... [The] hundreds of itsy-bitsy rules ... No one [can] remember all that stuff and concentrate on what he [is] trying to write about.

(1974 : 162)

As a result of dissatisfaction with the product approach, researchers began to wonder what actually happens when the writer writes. Many of the difficulties of research into the writing process (much of which comes from the United States) are related to how far the researcher can get inside the writer's mind during the process of composing. There are three standard methods, each of which has its own advantages :

Introspection - the researchers observe themselves at work writing, and afterwards note down what went on their own minds during writing.

Observation - the researcher observes and notes down all the outward signs of another writer at work - the stops and starts, the emendations, the blockages, as well as examining the completed draft.

Protocol technique - the experimental technique in which writers talk through what is going on in their minds as they make decisions about writing. This commentary is picked up by a tape-recorder, and then the researchers study this afterwards to ascertain as much as they can about what was going on in the mind of the writer.

These techniques have been used with both native and non-native writers (Perl 1978, 1979). Although each technique has limitations, in combination they offer a good deal of insight into what actually goes on as the writer composes. By using such techniques the researchers found that the writers have to go through certain stages in the process of completing the product. These stages are prewriting, writing and rewriting (see Chapter Four - section 4.2, 4.3 and 4.4).

Translated into the classroom context, the combination of these techniques call for providing a positive, encouraging and collaborative workshop environment within which students, with ample time and minimal interference, can work through their composing

processes. The teachers' role is to help students develop viable strategies for getting started (finding topics, generating ideas and information, focussing and planning structure and procedure), for drafting (encouraging multiple drafts), for revising (adding, deleting, modifying and rearranging ideas); and for editing (attending to vocabulary, sentence structure, grammar and mechanics).

From a process perspective, then, writing is a complex, recursive and creative process or set of behaviours that is very similar in its broad outlines for both first and second language writers. Learning to write entails developing an efficient and effective composing process. The writer is the centre of attention - someone engaged in the discovering and expression of meaning; the reader, focusing on content, ideas and the negotiating of meaning, is not preoccupied with form. The text is a product - a secondary, derivative concern, whose form is a function of its content and purpose. Finally, there is no particular context for writing implicit in this approach; it is the responsibility of individual writers to identify and appropriately address the particular task, situation, discourse community and sociocultural setting in which they involve themselves.

1.3 Statement of the problem

Once the importance of reducing apprehension among ESL student writers has been realised, it is then considered necessary to find ways of achieving this. The main concern of this study is to use the process approach which includes a lot of writing activities such as large-group interaction exercises, small group language problem-solving activities and paired-student, free writing, practice responses to writing, structural peer responses (which graduate from exclusively positive comments to positive-negative comments) and also instructor-student conferences to reduce writing apprehension.

that all students involved in the control group would retain their original levels of writing apprehension as measured by pre and post Writing Apprehension Test scores.

1.4 Objectives of the study

Hypothesis 3 :

The two objectives of this study are to investigate the effects of the process approach of teaching writing on writing apprehension among ESL university students in Malaysia, and to investigate the effects the process approach had on overall quality and length of student writing.

Hypothesis 4 :

1.5 Research Questions

The study attempts to answer the following questions :

1. Does the process approach to teaching writing measurably reduce the writing apprehension among the ESL students in Malaysia more than the conventional methods?
2. If it does, how does this reduction affect students' written product?

1.6 Hypotheses

Hypothesis 5 :

The following hypotheses will be tested :

Hypothesis 1 :

that all students involved in the experimental groups would report a significant reduction in writing apprehension as measured by pre and post Writing Apprehension Test scores.

that all students (not just the highly apprehensive writers) in the experimental groups

Hypothesis 2 :

significantly higher quality post-test compositions than would all students in

that all students involved in the control group would retain their original levels of writing apprehension as measured by pre and post Writing Apprehension Test scores.

Hypothesis 3 :

that all students (not only the highly apprehensive writers) in the experimental groups would report significantly lower levels of writing apprehension at the end of the study than would all students in the control group.

Hypothesis 4 :

that students ranked highest in writing apprehension at the beginning of the study in the experimental group would report significantly lower levels of writing apprehension at the end of the study than would similarly ranked students in the control group.

Hypothesis 5 :

that students ranked highest in writing apprehension at the beginning of the study in the experimental group would write post-test compositions significantly higher in overall quality than the post-test compositions completed by similarly ranked students in the control group (as evaluated by two independent judges).

Hypothesis 6 :

that all students (not just the highly apprehensive writers) in the experimental groups would write post-test compositions significantly higher in overall quality than would post-test compositions completed by all students in the control group.

Hypothesis 7 :

that all students (not just the highly apprehensive writers) in the experimental groups would write significantly higher quality post-test compositions than would all students in

the control group.

An important criterion for selecting these students for the study is because they are majoring in English Language Studies and therefore have a degree of fluency in

1.7 Location

The location of the study is the National University of Malaysia, situated in Bangi which is about fourteen kilometres from the capital, Kuala Lumpur. The researcher's teaching experience at the university between 1986 - 1990, her familiarity with the education system and her awareness of the students' writing problems made the university an appropriate location for this study. Furthermore, since the university draws students from all parts of the country, and all races in the country, it provides a representative sample of the population of students in higher learning institutions.

Figure 1.1 Sample percentage according to race

1.8 Subjects

The subjects of this research were the first year students in Written Communication course (the total sum of three classes) during the second semester of 1991/1992 session. 70 percent of the subjects were female and 30 percent were male.

Written Communication 1, the first part of the the series of two writing courses (which is followed by Written Communication 11), is a compulsory subject which all students majoring in English Language Studies at the university take in the second semester. The purpose of this course was to prepare students in writing skills. While doing this course the students learn such writing techniques as writing paragraphs, how to relate facts and ideas , how to summarize and etc. The students would also be taught the prewriting techniques of how to choose suitable topics and how to write and correct drafts.

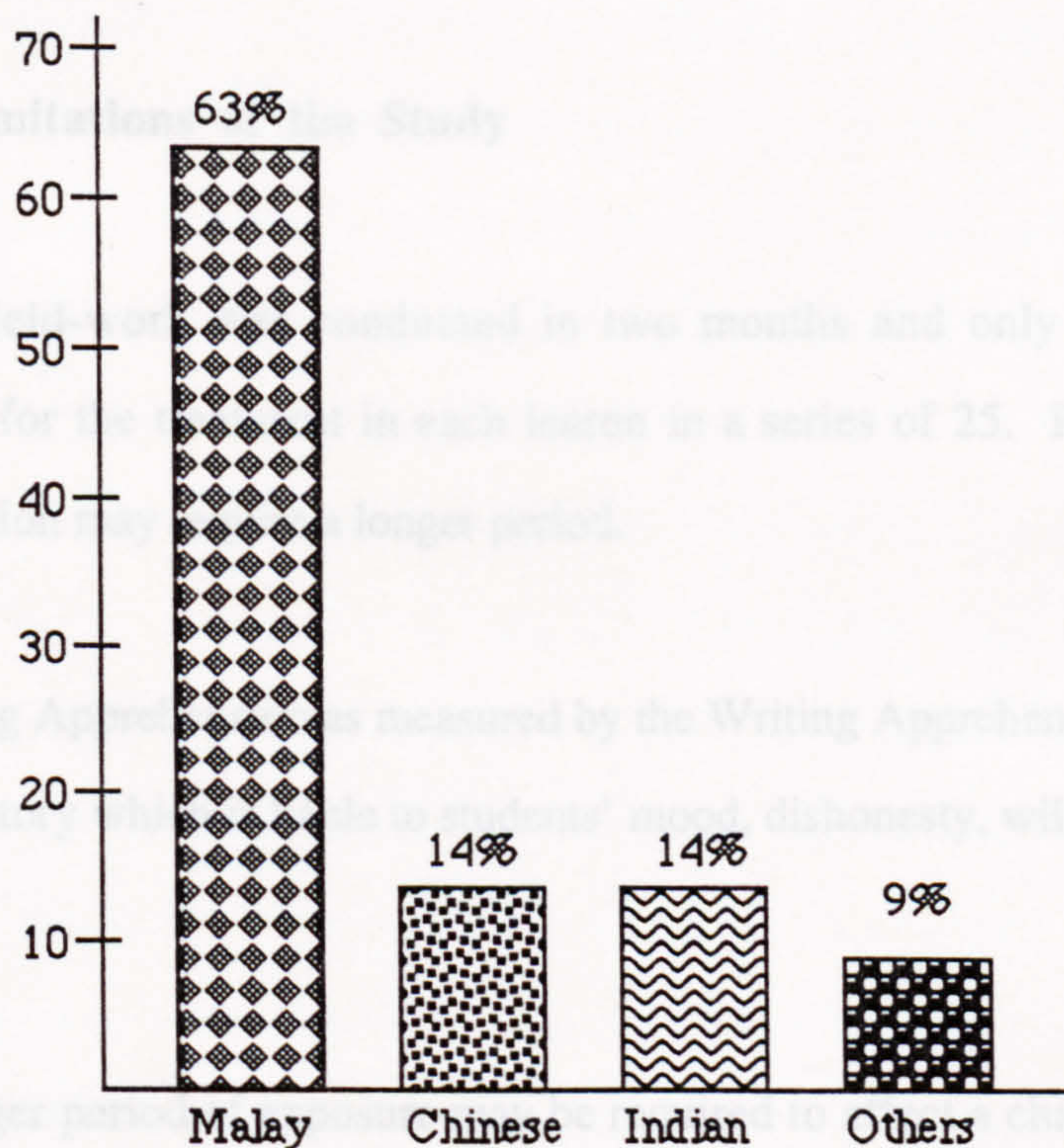
An important criterion for selecting these students for the study is because they are majoring in English Language Studies and therefore have a degree of fluency in written English.

The subjects had all passed the English language tests taken in the Malaysian Certificate of Education examination when they were in Form Five.

1.3 Class distribution

The racial origin of the subjects is Malay (63%), Chinese (14%), Indian (14%) and others (Kadazan, Iban and Siamese) (9%) (see Figure 1.1).

Figure 1.1 Sample percentage according to race



The mother tongue of the subjects is either Malay, Chinese (Mandarin, Hokkien, Cantonese, Hakka) an Indian language (Tamil, Malayalam, Punjabi), Siamese, or an East Malaysian language (Iban and Kadazan). All have studied English as a second language throughout their school years. They come from different parts of the country, such as Selangor, Melaka, Kelantan, Johor, Sabah and Sarawak. The majority of the students are 20 - 21 years of age.

1.9 Class distribution

The students who registered for the Written Communication 1 course, were as usual placed in groups according to their academic achievement on previous courses taken by them. Group 1 consists of students ranging from excellent to good, group 2 good to satisfactory and group 3 satisfactory to poor.

1.10 Limitations of the Study

1. This field-work was conducted in two months and only thirty minutes was available for the treatment in each lesson in a series of 25. Reduction of writing apprehension may require a longer period.
2. Writing Apprehension as measured by the Writing Apprehension Test is a student self-inventory which is liable to students' mood, dishonesty, willingness to cooperate etc.
3. A longer period of exposure may be required to affect a change in the quality of some students' writing
4. The sample was limited to ESL students majoring in English Language Studies in

a university setting.

CHAPTER TWO

5. The sample was limited to one institution.

THE TEACHING OF WRITING TO ESL STUDENTS

2.1 Introduction

Writing can and should be a stimulating, challenging activity central to all learning and development because as Irmischer (1979) says, "Once we move students beyond those basic levels of proficiency [grammatical structure and basic punctuation], we can see new dimensions of expressiveness, imaginativeness, and intellectual growth that are accessible only to someone engaged in composing, whether that performance is acting, dancing, painting or writing" (p. 241). Every sentence written is a composition. Each time a series of sentences is successful in gratifying some need, an effective composition has been created. Composing is thus inherent in using language and every individual has the capability to compose (Perry 1978).

Many learners see writing only as a classroom exercise, something done to satisfy the English teacher and then tossed aside. They view it as a series of "themes" or essay responses to teacher-created questions. Thus, for most student writers, writing becomes an isolated act, for an audience of one, with the sole purpose of being graded, returned and then forgotten. Indeed, much of the writing produced as a result of this attitude is tossed aside and forgotten because, all too often, it expresses not the author's view but the teacher's views as perceived by the student-writer. The writing that results is artificial, projecting a "supposed" point of view rather than one developed by exploration of the self - of the writer's own ideas, values and perceptions.

CHAPTER TWO

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Writing can and should be a stimulating, challenging activity central to all learning and development because as Irmscher (1979) says, "Once we move students beyond those basic levels of proficiency [grammatical structure and basic punctuation], we can see new dimensions of expressiveness, imaginativeness, and intellectual growth that are accessible only to someone engaged in composing, whether that performance is acting, dancing, painting or writing" (p. 241). Every sentence written is a composition. Each time a series of sentences is successful in gratifying some need, an effective composition has been created. Composing is thus inherent in using language and every individual has the capability to compose (Petty 1978).

Many learners see writing only as a classroom exercise, something done to satisfy the English teacher and then tossed aside. They view it as a series of "themes" or essay responses to teacher-created questions. Thus, for most student writers, writing becomes an isolated act, for an audience of one, with the sole purpose of being graded, returned and then forgotten. Indeed, much of the writing produced as a result of this attitude is tossed aside and forgotten because, all too often, it expresses not the author's view but the teacher's views as perceived by the student-writer. The writing that results is artificial, projecting a "supposed" point of view rather than one developed by exploration of the self - of the writer's own ideas, values and perceptions.

For the student-writers, writing will be much more rewarding if they come to view writing as an essential lifetime skill - a skill which, because of its multiple uses and functions, will enable them to continually expand their personal horizons. Student-writers need to recognise that mastering the complexities of the writing process will not only help them attain their immediate goals - well written essays, reports and research papers - but will also serve them far beyond the confines of the English classroom.

2.2 The functions of writing

As a lifetime skill, writing serves four crucial, enduring purposes for the learner : communication, critical thinking and problem solving, and self-actualization.

1. *Writing is an essential form of communication*

As a form of communication writing is used to express ideas - plans, recommendations, values and commitment. For students, writing is a primary medium through which they demonstrate their understanding and interpretation of concepts and theories studied for many weeks or months. For the lawyer, writing is the briefs and position papers prepared for clients. Almost all these tasks, though disparate in purpose, invariably require use of the composing skills learned in the composition class.

2. *Writing is for critical thinking and problem solving*

Words are the vehicle to express our thoughts, which we then measure against our experience and that of others. Used as such, writing helps us think critically, a crucial ability in our complex, media-oriented society which constantly bombards us with

information (Hughey et al 1983). This information can be entertaining, sometimes depressing, some useful, some useless and so on. Some information evokes response or action ; some does not. The mind is forced to sift through a kaleidoscope of perceptions and thoughts to establish a pattern of what is meaningful and to help us make some sense of our lives and the world around us.

Writing helps us sort through this kaleidoscope of thoughts, as Irmischer notes, to bring “thought into consciousness, making it available both for us and for others to see” (1979 : 243). Through writing we can explore our deepest thoughts and feelings, discover and explore our biases and confront our values. Writing can help us discover gaps in our understanding and flaws in our thinking. It can tell us when we need to gather additional information or insights, when we need to rethink a question, or when we need to discard a belief or idea. Writing becomes a way of defining ourselves and our problems, of clarifying our knowledge and our ideas, of understanding and solving our problems.

Writing, then, is a means to sifting and refining our perceptions of the world around us. It requires us to measure our thoughts on a continuum outside of the self. Once we have written an idea down, we become a reader, the evaluator of that idea, moving outside ourselves and putting distance between the idea and ourselves. From this point we are able to look at and examine the thought, concept or experience from a new perspective, within a larger framework than existed within us before the idea took shape on paper. By arranging and sorting perceptions and knowledge “under a relevant and more inclusive conceptual system” (Ausubel 1965 : 105), we gain new insights, discover different perspectives and in the process, are led to the discovery of meaning.

3. *Writing is for self-actualization*

Edward Albee is quoted by Murray (1968) as saying, "Writing has got to be an act of discovery. I write to discover what I am thinking about" Writing, as a way of discovering and developing ourselves, is a means for self-actualization. What we learn about ourselves and develop within ourselves through writing can help us to realise our individual potential and to achieve personal goals. Therefore, besides being external activity through which we communicate with others, writing also serves our inner selves. As an inner-directed activity, writing is, as Irmscher notes, "a way of connecting with ourselves, an internal communication. In writing, this externalizing and internalizing occur at one at the same time. Putting out is putting in" (1979 : 242). Thus, when we write we are also discovering something about who we are and what we believe.

As part of the basic human quest for self-actualization, one immediate goal frequently held by student-writers is success in the academic world. They need to demonstrate their knowledge, their understanding of subject matter and their ability to communicate that knowledge and understanding intelligently to another person. They are required to write reports, research papers, essays and examinations to show that they know and understand the thoughts of others and can synthesize the new knowledge into their own thinking (Hughey et. al. 1983). Their success is determined, at least in part, by how efficiently meaning is conveyed. The ability to produce well-written papers will enhance students' academic success because of what Hirsch calls the principle of "relative readability":

Increased communicative efficiency is a universal tendency in the history of all languages. The trend is to achieve the same effects with less and less reader effort ... The tendency to greater linguistic efficiency is a universal because for mankind it is a human universal to minimize time and effort in order to produce the same effect.

(Hirsch 1977 : 54)

Thus, student-writers need to have writing skills which enable them to address problems explicitly and concisely.

Research data from second language learning suggest that writing also serves to foster development in other modes of language. For second language learners, writing becomes a means to improve their language skills. As learners seek to present and explain their ideas in writing, they search for precise word choices and suitable structures in which to frame their ideas. Writing enables them to expand these other areas as they work to develop fluency in their language. As they search for evidence to support a point of view or position on an issue, their reading skills are enhanced. Through reading, their writing skills are reinforced. They begin to acquire a feel for the readers' expectations which in turn influence each student's composing process (Hughey et al 1983).

Writing fosters and reinforces vocabulary skills as ESL writers endeavour to make suitable word choices for their writing. In addition, the spelling system of English demands that the writers master a wealth of morphological information not required in the speech system (Byrne 1979). Recognition of these morphological structures enables learners to build their vocabularies more quickly as they visualise (picture in their minds) word development.

Grammar skills are enhanced as ESL writers make decisions about the form in which to present ideas (Hughey et al 1983). They must apply their knowledge of sentence patterns, frequently visualised as isolated rules, to shape their ideas into acceptable and effective sentences. They actively use knowledge of coordinating and subordinating

structures, for example, to emphasise or deemphasise ideas. In so doing, ESL writers put into practice the theoretical information they have been given.

2.3 Differences between writing and speaking

Some people might think that when the students are taught how to speak, then, obviously they will be able to write. But this is not necessarily so, for writing is not simply speech written down on paper. Learning to write is not just a 'natural' extension of learning to speak a language. Most of us learned to speak the first language at home without systematic instruction, whereas most of us had to be taught in school how to write that same language. In fact many adult native speakers of a language find writing difficult. Hughey et al (1983) have listed 3 major factors namely psychological, linguistic and cognitive factors that differentiate writing from speech.

1. *Psychological factors.*

Speaking, the first manifestation of language we master, as well as the most frequently occurring medium of discourse, is a social act. Because an audience or respondent is present, it elicits some form of action, interaction or reaction between individuals. Thus speech has a "situational context" (Hirsch, Jr. 1977). A speaker can see the audience and receives immediate feedback in the form of verbal and nonverbal cues. Likewise, the listener or the audience usually has the speaker in view and can respond to the speaker's verbal and nonverbal cues.

As a result, both the speaker and the audience have some immediate control over the direction the communication takes, and the two-way bond created provides a means for the response from the audience. The speaker's mode of dress, physical demeanour,

and use of hand gestures are all nonverbal signals to the audience. Tone, speech, inflection, and loudness, that is the manner of speaking, serve as verbal signals for the audience. Therefore, before the speaker has finished making the first point, some degree of rapport has been established with the audience. Furthermore, the audience acts as a teacher for the speaker. The speaker learns quickly from the immediate feedback of the audience by means of its verbal and nonverbal cues. Restless body movements, nodding heads, and angry expressions alert speakers that it is time to alter a sentence, delete a phrase, or completely change the direction of their remarks. Because speech is linear in form, it cannot be retracted, but it can be amended. Therefore, speaking can be improvisational, and the whole body speaks (Hughey et al 1983).

On the other hand, writing is largely a solitary act. It is communication formed in isolation. The audience is rarely presents and without audience feedback to assist in shaping the discourse and giving it meaning, the written work “must normally secure its meaning in some future time” (Ausubel 1965 : 105). Writing therefore lacks the clear situational context usually present in oral discourse, and to compensate, the writer has to create an audience in the mind’s eye and attempt to predict the responses. Writers may cast their readers into roles in which the *readers* must adjust because writers lack the immediate feedback provided by the audience which usually subtly or not so subtly pressures speakers to adjust their statements.

2. Linguistic factors

Speech allows use of informal and abbreviated forms and constructions which are uttered almost spontaneously, often tumbling out without careful editing or forethought. In speaking, we are not always concerned with precision in expression. We can make a statement, repeat it, expand it, and refine it according to the reactions and interjections of our listeners. Speech can also be telegraphic, with one word signalling an entire chain of impressions, or we can string numerous sentences or complex phrases together nonstop to clarify or obstruct meaning - whichever is to our advantage.

Furthermore, speech has a higher tolerance for repetition of a phrase or sentence than writing. We can repeat ourselves more frequently to emphasise our point when we speak because the word is ephemeral - we hear it and it is gone.

However, how we develop our sentences and the ways we organise them carry the reader from one idea to another are our primary means to convey our intended message. Without immediate audience feedback, we do not usually refine or elaborate our statements as we go. As a result, written statements must be constructed more carefully, concisely, and coherently to ensure that our meaning is clear. Writers must be certain that statements are cohesive; they cannot repeat points for emphasis indefinitely without being redundant, thereby losing their audience. Writing employs longer structures which serve to elaborate meaning more fully because meaning can be lost if abbreviated structures are written without careful thought.

3. Cognitive factor

Speech develops naturally and early in our first language. Writing, on the other hand, is usually learned through formal instruction rather than through the natural acquisition processes. Writing requires extensive previous learning. A writer must know and use orthographic forms, lexis, syntax, and morphemes. Thus writing requires much more complex mental effort. Writers are forced to concentrate on both the *meaning* of ideas, that is, ensuring that what they write conveys their intended message, and on the *production* of ideas, that is, producing the linear form in which ideas actually take shape on the page.

In contrast to speech, competence in writing usually develops much more slowly in first language acquisition. One usually learns to write after having essentially completed the acquisition of the “speaking” grammar. Not only does writing competency develop more slowly, but during the act of writing, ideas take shape on the page much more slowly than during speaking. The mind serves as a monitor for the writer. As writers mentally formulate sentences, they may alter them as their acquired and learned experiences about language appropriateness and structure monitor their statements. There may be “false starts” before an utterance appears in written form. Thus writers must deal with the additional frustration of the slowness with which their thoughts appear on the page.

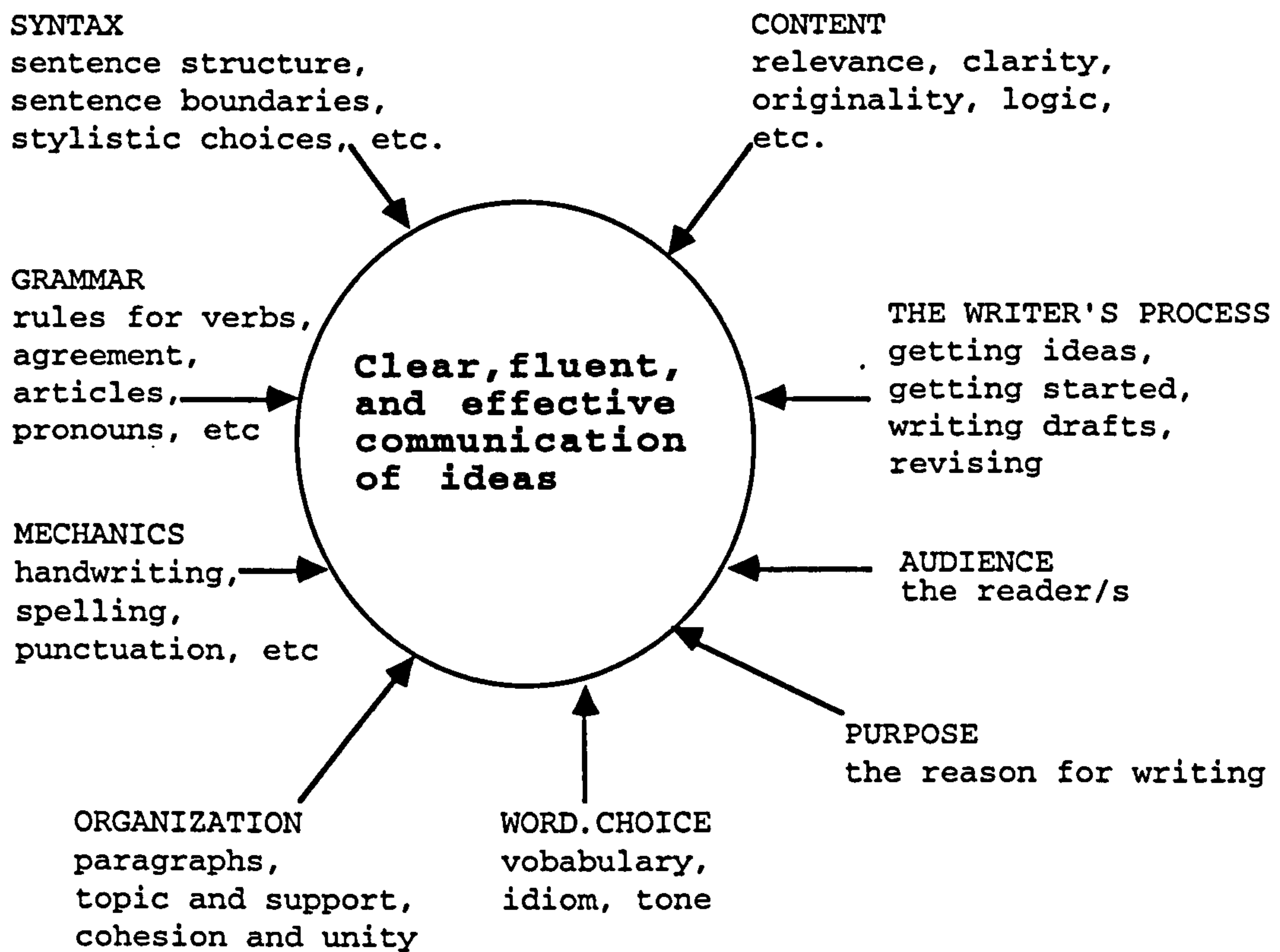
It is very clear from these differences that students will not “pick up” writing as other skills in ESL classes. Writing has to be taught; it cannot be acquired automatically when the learners speak.

2.4 Approaches of teaching writing to ESL students

There is no one answer to the question of how to teach writing in ESL classes. There are as many answers as there are teachers and teaching styles, or learners and learning styles. The following diagram (Figure 2.1) shows *what* writers have to deal with as they produce a piece of writing. As teachers have stressed different features of the diagram, combining them with *how* they think writing is learned, they have developed a variety of approaches to the teaching of writing.

2.4.1 The Controlled-to-Free Approach

Controlled composition (sometimes referred to as guided composition) seems to have its roots in Charles Fries's oral approach, the precursor of the audiolingual method of second language learning. Typically a controlled composition consists of a written model with directions for conversions or specific language manipulations in rewriting the model. The degree of control lies both within the model and within the type of manipulation the student is asked to execute on the model (Paulston and Bruder, 1976). According to Raimes (1983) the controlled-to-free approach in writing is sequential : students are first given sentence exercises, then paragraphs to copy or manipulate grammatically by, for instance, changing questions to statements, present to past. With the nature of this type of composition with strictly prescribed operation, it is relatively easy for students to write a great deal yet avoid errors. The text produced by the students becomes a collection of sentence patterns and vocabulary items - a linguistic artifact, a vehicle for language practice.

Figure 2.1**Producing a Piece of Writing**

Source : Ann Raimes 1983, p.6.

2.4.2 The Free -Writing Approach

Some teachers and researchers have stressed the importance of the quantity of writing rather than the quality. They have, that is, approached the teaching of writing by assigning vast amounts of free writing on a given topic with only minimal correction of error.

Students need to give vent to their feelings, put across their own ideas and get a feeling of independent achievement in the new language. The major guidelines, then, to procedures dealing with free compositions on this level should be to preserve this sense of achievement by minimising the possibility for and emphasis on errors. Students on the intermediate and advanced levels need much practice in writing free compositions. Our students write a composition a week, but a more useful guideline is probably to have the students write as many free compositions as the teacher can reasonably correct.

(Paulston and Bruder 1976)

To emphasise fluency even more, some ESL teachers begin many of their classes by asking students to write freely on any topic without worrying about grammar and spelling for five or ten minutes. At first, students find this very difficult and end up writing, "I can't think of anything to write". As they do this kind of writing more and more often however, some find that they write more fluently and that putting words down on paper is not frightening after all.

2.4.3 The Grammar-Syntax-Organization Approach

Some teachers have stressed the need to work simultaneously on more than one feature of the composition skills (grammar, mechanics, organisation, syntax, content, the writer's process, audience, purpose and word choice). Writing, they say, cannot be seen as composed of separate skills which are learned one by one (Raimes 1983). Writing have been devised in order for the students to pay attention to organisation while they also work on the necessary grammar and syntax. For instance, to write a clear set of instructions on how to operate a calculator, the writer needs more than the appropriate vocabulary. He needs the simple forms of verbs; an organisational plan

based on chronology; sequence words like *first, then, finally*, and perhaps even sentence structures like "When...then..." (Raimes 1983). In this way, students will see the connection between what they are trying to write and what they need to write. This approach, then, links the purpose of a piece of writing to the forms that are needed to convey it.

2.4.4 The Communicative Approach (The Functional Approach)

The communicative approach stresses the purpose of a piece of writing and the audience for it. Student writers are encouraged to behave like writers in real life and to ask themselves the crucial questions about purpose and audience.

Why am I writing this?

Who will read it?

In the traditional sense, only the teacher has been the audience for student writing. It has been proved that writers do their best when writing is truly a communicative act, with a writer writing for a real reader (Johnson and Morrow 1981). Teachers using this approach, therefore, have extended the audience to other students in the class, who do not only read the piece but actually do something with it, such as respond, rewrite in another form, summarise, or make comment but do not correct. Or the teachers specify readers outside the classroom, thus providing student writers with a context in which to select appropriate content, language, and levels of formality (Raimes 1983). For example the topic "Describe your room at home" is not merely an exercise in the use of the present tense and in prepositions but in this approach the task takes on new dimensions when the assignment reads:

You are writing to a pen-pal (in an English-speaking country) and telling him or her about your room. You like your room, so you want to make it sound as attractive as possible.

or

You are writing to your pen-pal's mother telling her about your room. You do not like your room very much at the moment and you want to make changes, so, you want your pen-pal's mother to 'see' what is wrong with your room.

or

You are participating in a student exchange programme with another school. Students will exchange schools and homes for three months. A blind student whom you have never written to before will be coming to your home and occupying your room. Describe the room in detail so that that student will be able to picture it, imagining that your description will then be read onto tape that the student will listen to.

(Raimes 1983 : 9)

Typically, in a functionally oriented writing programme, writers assume a variety of roles; academic writing is only one context and usually not the sole focus. Contexts for writing tasks are carefully defined; purpose and audience are always specified. If a writer is placed in unfamiliar roles in which background knowledge about the topic may be lacking, data may be supplied in form of facts, notes, tables or figures, quotations, documents and so on (Shih 1986).

2.4.5 The Pattern-centred approach (The model-based approach)

This approach asks students to analyse and practice a variety of rhetorical or organisational patterns commonly found in academic discourse : process analysis, partition and classification, comparison/contrast, cause-and-effect analysis, pro-and-con argument and so on (Shih 1986). Kaplan (1967) and others point out that rhetorical patterns vary among cultures and suggest that non-native students need to learn certain principles for developing and organising ideas in American academic discourse, such as supporting generalisation by presenting evidence in inductive and deductive patterns of arrangement.

Escholz (1980) and C.B.Watson (1982) recommended using models after students have started writing - as examples of how writers solve organisational problems - rather than as ideas to be imitated. Writing assignments require students to employ the specific patterns under study. Traditionally, the source of content for these essays has been students' prior personal experience (how to make something, to practice process analysis; moving from one city to another city, to practice contrast/comparison). The assumption has been that once student writers assimilate the rhetorical framework, they will be able to use the same patterns appropriately in future writing for university courses (Shih 1986).

Although Escholz (1980) and Watson (1982) recommended this approach they also criticise it. They point out that the model-based approach tends to be too long and too remote from the students' own writing problems, while the traditional sequence of activities - Read - Analyse - Write - involves the questionable assumption that advance diagnosis of writing problems promotes learning. Furthermore, such detailed analytical work encourages students to see form as a mold into which content is somehow poured resulting in mindless copies of a particular organisational plan or style. In general,

Escholz (1980) views the imitation of models as being stultifying and inhibiting writers rather than empowering them or liberating them.

Flower and Hayes (1977) have also criticised this model-based approach to teaching writing :

In the midst of composition renaissance, an odd fact stands out : our basic methods of teaching writing are the same ones English academicians were using in the 17th century. We still undertake to teach people to write primarily by dissecting and describing a complete piece of writing. The student is (a) exposed to the formal descriptive categories of rhetoric (modes and argument - definition, cause and effect, etc and modes of discourse - description, persuasion, etc) (b) offered good examples (usually his/her own) and (c) encouraged to absorb the features of a socially approved style, with emphasis on grammar and usage. We help our students analyse the product, but we leave the process of writing up to inspiration.

(Flower and Hayes 1977):

According to White (1988) this model-based approach was transferred to the more recent interest in rhetorical rather than language structure in written discourse. With such interest, there evolved materials with a focus on the organisation of rhetorical acts and the manipulation of cohesive features. This explains the plethora of exercises in which the student is required either to add logical connectors to existing sentences or to join sentences with them. In both the language -based and rhetorically focused approaches to the teaching of writing, the same basic procedural model is followed (see Figure 2. 2).

Figure 2.2

Source : Ronald V. White, *Academic Writing : Process and Product*, in Pauline C. Robinson (ed.) *Academic Writing : Process and Product*, ELT Documents :129, 1988, p. 5.

2.4.6 The Process-centred Approach

The introduction of the process approach to ESL composition seems to have been motivated by dissatisfaction with approaches mentioned before. Many felt that the approaches did not adequately foster thought and its expression - that controlled composition was largely irrelevant to this goal and the linearity and prescriptivism of current-traditional rhetoric discouraged creative thinking and writing. Those who, like Taylor (1981), felt that "writing is not the straightforward plan - outline - write process that many believe it to be" (pp. 5-6) looked to first language composing process research for new ideas, assuming with Zamel (1982) that "ESL writers who are ready to compose and express ideas use strategies similar to those of native speakers of English" (p. 203). The assumptions and principles of this approach were soon enunciated. The composing process was seen as "a non-linear, exploratory, and generative process whereby writers discover and reformulate their ideas as they attempt to approximate meaning" (Zamel 1983a : 165). Guidance through and intervention in the process were seen as preferable to control - that is the early and perhaps premature imposition of organizational patterns or syntactic or lexical constraints. Content, ideas, and the need to communicate would determine form. In essence "composing means expressing ideas, conveying meaning. Composing means thinking" (Raimes 1983a : 261).

This approach helps student writers to understand their own composing process and to build their repertoires of strategies for prewriting (gathering, exploring and organising raw material), drafting (structuring ideas into a piece of linear discourse) and rewriting (revising, editing and proofreading). Tasks may be defined around rhetorical patterns or rhetorical problems (purpose), but the central focus of instruction is the 'process' leading to the final written product. Students are given sufficient time to write and rewrite, to discover what they want to say, and to consider intervening feedback from instructor and peers as they attempt to bring expression closer and closer to intention in successive drafts (Flower 1981).

A process approach which is student centred takes student writing (rather than textbook models) as the central course material and requires no strict, predetermined syllabus; rather, problems are treated as they emerge. "By studying what it is our students do in their writing, we can learn from them what they still need to be taught" (Zamel 1983). Revision becomes central and the instructor intervenes throughout the composing process, rather than reacting only to the final product. Individual conferences and/or class workshops dealing with problems arising from writing in progress are regular features of the process-centred approach.

At least in the early stages, the focus is on personal writing - students explore their personal "data banks" (Hartfield et al 1985). As Murray (1984) puts it:

Most students begin to write in personal papers about subjects that are important to them. Once they have successfully gone through the writing process, taking a subject that is not clear to them and developing and clarifying it so that it is clear to others, they are able to write about increasingly objective subjects, and they can see how to apply the process to a variety of writing tasks, academic and professional as well as personal.

(Murray 1984, p. 240)

Later in the course, students may move to academically oriented topics. They may continue to write primarily from personal experience and beliefs, or they may move to writing from sources, practising new prewriting, drafting and rewriting strategies as they tackle academic tasks like a library research paper.

So in the process approach, the students do not write on a given topic in a restricted time and hand in the composition for the teacher to "correct" - which usually means to find errors. Rather, they explore a topic through writing, showing the teacher and each other their drafts, and using what they write to read over, think about and move them to new ideas.

The growing dissatisfaction with traditional approaches to teaching composition coincided with a growing interest in discovering how writers actually write. What, in short, are the processes which go on when a writer is composing? Unfortunately, "process cannot be inferred from product any more than a pig can be inferred from a sausage" (Murray 1980 : 3), so resource has had to be made to other ways of finding out what is going on.

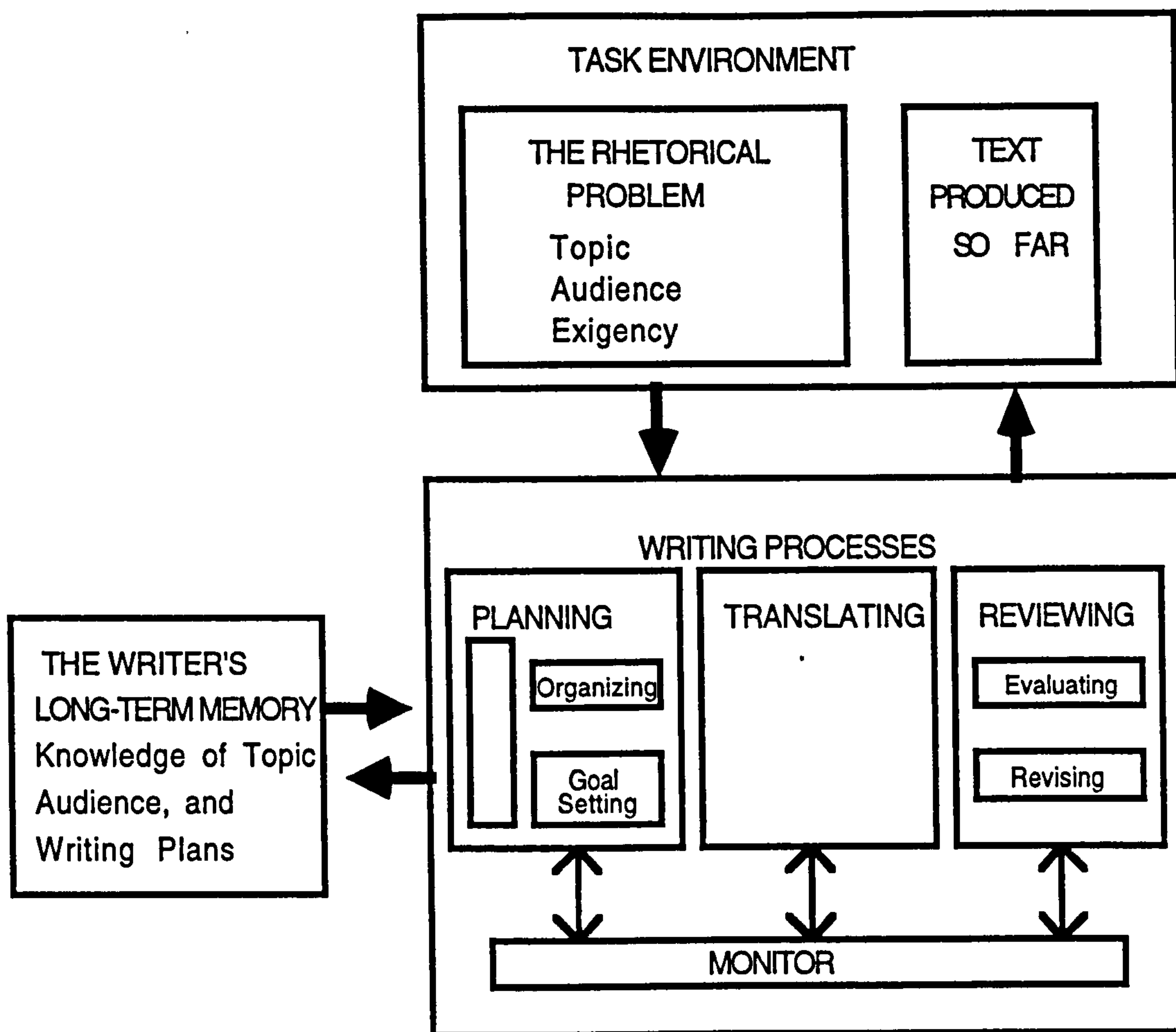
This has led to to a number of studies based on protocol analysis as well as observation of how good and bad writers actually write. Apart from the work of Emig (1971) and Britton (1975) on children, much of this work has been done with university students producing academic writing.

One of the first conclusions to be reached in protocol-based research is that "a linear model of writing is both inappropriate and unhelpful, since writing appears to be a highly recursive process" (White 1988 : 7). Furthermore as writing is essentially a

thinking process, reference to cognitive theories holds out some hope of providing a richer account of the writing process than a view which explains it in terms of habit reinforcement.

Of particular interest is the concept of "schemata", originally proposed by Bartlett (1985) in his accounts of memory. Schemata are essentially expectations which enable us to understand and interpret the world. When new information is gained, it is either related to existing schemata and assimilated by them or the schemata themselves expand to accommodate the new data. The schemata are stored by - or are one component of - long term memory, upon which the writer draws during the writing process. In their writing process, (see Figure 2.3) Flower and Hayes (1977) incorporate long term memory as one of the three elements. The other two are the task environment and the writing process.

Figure 2.3



In explaining their model, Flower and Hayes say:

The arrows indicate that *information* flows from one box or process to another; that is, knowledge about the writing assignment or knowledge from memory can be transferred or used in the *planning* process, and information from *planning* can flow back the other way. What the arrows *do not mean* is that such information flows in a predictable left to right circuit. This distinction is crucial because such a flow chart implies the very kind of stage model against which we wish to argue. One of the central premises of the cognitive process theory presented here is that writers are constantly, instant by instant, orchestrating a battery of cognitive processes as they integrate

planning, remembering, writing and rereading. The multiple arrows, which are conventions in diagramming of this sort of model, are unfortunately only weak indications of the complex and active organisation of thinking processes which our work attempts to model.

(Flower and Hayes 1977 : 387)

2.5 Research on Teaching Writing to ESL Students

If one looks through the literature on the teaching of composition in second language classrooms, one finds a multitude of suggestions as to how to teach it. The various approaches are generally based on the personal experiences of the authors and their ideas of what teaching of writing entails. While much can certainly be learned from these experts and methodologies, it is disappointing to find that except for one pilot study (Bie`re 1960) almost no research has been done in the teaching of composition to learners of a second language. Thus, the success of a particular method or approach may have been due to a number of factors that are only partially or minimally related to a particular technique, such as the level of intelligence, motivation or affective considerations (Zamel 1976). The point is that without research and some of the answers it can provide, a teacher is faced with the practically impossible task of deciding which approach (and/or textbook) to adopt.

The literature on the teaching of composition in the second language seems to indicate that there is a consensus as to how writing should be taught : while grammatical exercises are rejected as having little to do with the act of writing, there is, at the same time, a great concern with control and guidance. Despite the agreement that learning to write entails actual practice in writing, this practice is often no more than the orthographic translation of oral pattern practice or substitution drills. There are those

that are critical of these pseudo-writing exercises, encouraging the elimination of total control, thus coming closer to identifying what composing is really all about. These, however, are the exception. The majority of approaches emphasise and focus on practices that have very little to do with the creative process of writing.

Traditionally, instruction in (and theory about) second language composing has assumed that the most important variable, is grammatical accuracy. As Vivian Zamel (1976) has described it:

Methodologists have devised particular exercises which, while not based on learning grammar *qua* grammar, are in fact based on the grammatical manipulations of models, sentences or passages. For them, writing seems to be synonymous with skill in usage and structure, and the assumption is that these exercises will improve the students' ability to compose. Influenced by audio-lingual methodology, writing is seen as a habit formed skill, error is to be avoided and correction and revision to be provided continuously.

(Zamel 1976 : 69)

According to Peter Elbow, "It's no accident that so much attention is paid to grammar in teaching of writing. Grammar is the one part of writing that can be straightforwardly taught" (1973 : 138). Because of the attention given to the mastery over grammar, syntax and mechanics, little time is left for attention to the ideas and the meaning of a piece of writing.

Paulston (1972) suggests the use of models and the manipulation of their patterns upon which to base one's writing. Dykstra (1964) likewise provides a series of model passages which students are to manipulate according to a series of steps, Spencer's (1965) manipulations entail the recasting of whole sentences following a single pattern

and Rojas' (1968) drill type exercises of copying, completion and substitution clearly reflect concern with the prevention of error. Ross's (1968) combinations and rearrangements of patterns are based on a transformational grammar approach and both Pincas (1962) and Moody (1965) emphasise the need for tight control by endorsing the habitual manipulation of patterns. Thus, while the teaching of grammar is expressly rejected by these methodologists as having little to do with writing, the kinds of exercises they suggest are based on the conception that writing entails grammatical proficiency. Implicitly, grammatical facility means writing ability.

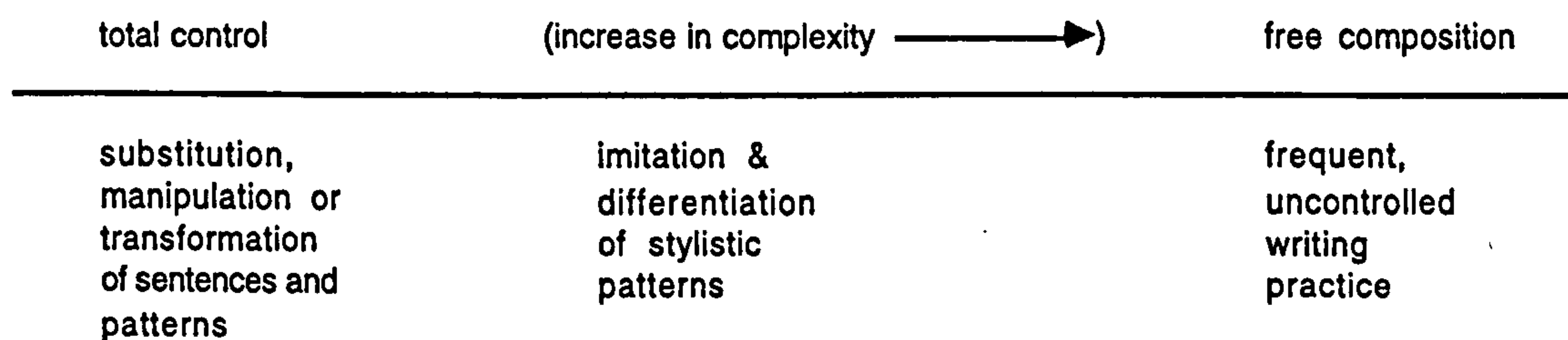
Organisation, style and rhetoric become the crucial aspects of skill in writing, but, here again, control and guidance are essential; drill predominates, but on the rhetorical level. Rather than sentences to manipulate, whole reading passages become the models that students are to differentiate and imitate. Kaplan (1967), pointing out the effect that cultural differences have upon the nature of rhetoric, suggests the study and imitation of paragraphs, Pincas (1964) creates a multiple substitution technique that involves habituation in the use of certain styles. Arapoff (1969) concentrates on the importance of discovering, comparing and imitating stylistic differences. Carr (1967) stresses the importance of reading, studying and analysing the organisation and logical arrangement of passages and Green (1967) reiterates the practice needed in specific varieties of written language. While this group of methodologists approaches more closely what writing, in the sense of creating, truly entails, they still, like the first group, insist upon control. Rejecting the notion that writing is the mastery of sentence patterns, they nevertheless put restraints on the composing process. Writing for the ESL students is still seen essentially as the formation of a habit.

It is obvious that there is a predominant concern with the quality of the students' output; because the students are attempting to compose in a language other than their own, control and guidance are paramount. Opposed to this position are those who believe

that the composing process necessitates a lack of control; rather than emphasise the need to write correctly, the proponents of this approach stress the need to write a lot and often. In other words, it is quantity, not quality, that is crucial. Erazmus (1960) claims that the greater the frequency, the greater the improvement and Bi`ere's (1966) pilot study seems to indicate that, when the emphasis is upon writing often rather than error correction, students write more and with fewer errors. Povey (1969) reiterates this theme, underlining the importance of providing opportunities to say something vitally relevant.

It is no wonder, in the light of the foregoing discussion, that ESL teachers are confused and still searching for answers. They face the decision of having to choose one of the several approaches. These approaches can be seen as points along a spectrum ranging from total control to total freedom:

Figure 2.4



Source : Zamel, Teaching Composition in the ESL Classroom : What We Can Learn from Research in the Teaching of English, TESOL Quarterly, 10(1), 1976, p. 70.

2.5.1 Second language writing process studies

Influenced by developments in native language composition, researchers have turned their attention to looking not just at the writing on the page but at writers as they write, observing them, interviewing them, videotaping them, measuring the length of pauses, asking them to compose aloud and coding all their activities, all this in order to discover how the words get onto the page. The picture shown by this third type of research, with its emphasis on processes, is *not* similar to the picture produced by the product-oriented research. It does not depict second language writers fighting against the rhetorical and linguistic patterns of the first language and fighting against errors. Rather, it shows ESL writers using strategies similar to the ones native speakers use. It shows them exploring and discovering content - their own ideas - through prewriting, writing and revising, in a recursive way, just as native speakers do. Their planning skills are similar, and planning skills in first language *transfer* to second language (Jones and Tetroe 1987). They will not necessarily know what they are going to say before they start to write and the act of writing itself can help them discover content. They think as they write and writing aids thinking, they interact and negotiate with the emerging text, their own intentions and their sense of the reader (Raimes 1985). Knowledge of the first language writing helps writers form hypotheses in second language writing (Edelsky 1982) and sometimes writers use first language to help when composing in second language (Lay 1982). In short, researchers have found that, in this complex cognitive task of writing, the difficulties of ESL writers stem less from the linguistic features of new language and the contrasts with second language than from the constraints of the act of composing itself.

This new emphasis on what writers do as they compose has led to classroom approaches that emphasise strategies : the invention and revision of ideas, with feedback from readers. ESL literature thus is similar to the literature on the first language in that

it recommends journals, freewriting, brainstorming, students' choice of topics, teaching heuristics (devices for invention), multiple drafts, revisions, group work, peer conferencing and supportive feedback. All these appear to be a radical departure from the paragraph patterns, guided writing, controlled compositions and grammar exercises that characterise a more traditional approach to teaching ESL writing.

2.5.2 The development of second language writing process studies

On the whole, early L2 studies attempt to describe all aspects of L2 composing processes. Early L2 researchers are apparently trying to grasp whatever they can about the nature of L2 composing, especially concerning which behaviours seem to be successful or unsuccessful in producing effective L2 compositions. Later L2 researchers focus on specific composing behaviours, specific types of L2 writers, or features unique to L2 composing.

Chelala (1981) conducted one of the first second language writing process studies, using a case study approach to investigate composing and coherence. Her two Spanish-speaking subjects, both "professional" women, composed aloud four times and were interviewed twice. Using Perl's coding scheme to analyze the subjects' tapes of composing aloud and several previously developed methods to analyze coherence of their written products, Chelala identified effective behaviours and ineffective behaviours. Included among the latter were using the first language for prewriting and switching back and forth between the first and second language, findings that contradict those of later studies (Lay 1982; Cumming 1987).

In another early L2 writing process study on rhetorical concerns and composing, Jones (1982) also investigated the written products and writing processes of two L2 writers,

designating one "poor" and the other "good", thus distinguishing between effectiveness and ineffectiveness in writing, as Chelala (1981) had done. Unlike Chelala's subjects, Jones's students had different profiles : The poor writer, a Turkish speaker, was a graduate-level student, whereas the good writer, a German speaker, was a freshman-level writer. Also, the poor writer demonstrated somewhat less L2 grammar proficiency than the good writer. The subjects "composed aloud" as they produced a self-generated narrative and revised a paragraph of kernel sentences. Jones analyzed the composing strategies by noting two composing behaviours : writing or generating text and reading the text already generated. His findings indicated that writing strategies affected writers' rhetorical structures. According to Jones, the poor writer was bound to the text at the expense of ideas, whereas the good writer allowed her ideas to generate the text. Jones concluded that the poor writer had never learned how to compose, and this general lack of competence in composing, rather than a specific lack in L2 linguistic competence, was a source of her difficulty in L2 writing.

Jacobs (1982) also made the point that factors beyond linguistic competence determine the quality of students' writing in her study of the writing of eleven graduate students - six native and five non-native speakers of English. The students' written works, thirteen essays each, and interviews with them about arranging information comprised Jacobs' data. Jacobs functioned as writing teacher for all the students who were taking a premedical course. Although Jacobs' study was primarily based on product analysis, her findings relate to process- oriented research, particularly to the notion that linguistic competence does not affect composing competence among second language writers. She observed that the "high prediction load" of academic writing tasks resulted in two writing problems : "integrative thinking" and "phrasing for correctness and readability"(p. 63). She found that there was an apparent inverse relationship between integrative thinking and grammatical accuracy among her subjects, and she conjectured

that this relationship related to a student's development as a writer. Finally, her study revealed no significant differences between L1 and L2 subjects.

Zamel (1982) also found that competence in the composing process was more important than linguistic competence in the ability to write proficiently in English, as Jones (1982) and Jacobs (1982) had indicated. Her subjects were eight university-level "proficient" L2 writers (p. 199), one of whom was a graduate student. Her data consisted of interviews about her subjects' "writing experiences and behaviours" (p. 199), which were retrospective accounts of writing processes, and the students' multiple drafts for the production of one essay each. Zamel found that the writing processes of her L2 subjects were like those of the subjects described in L1 studies. She concluded that L2 composing processes indicated that L1 process-oriented writing instruction might also be effective for teaching L2 writing. Zamel maintained that when students understood and experienced composing as a process, their written products would improve.

Zamel's (1983) study of six advanced L2 students provided more support to a theme that was developing among L2 writing process studies - that L2 compose like L1 writers. For this study, Zamel again used a case study approach, observing her subjects while they composed, interviewing them upon conclusion of their writing, and collecting all of their written materials for the production of one essay each, which they had unlimited time to complete. Direct observation differentiated the research method of this study from that of Zamel's (1982) earlier study. Her subjects were her own university-level students, designated as skilled and unskilled as a result of evaluations of their essays by other L2 composition instructors. The skilled L2 writers in her study revised more and spent more time on their essays than the unskilled writers. In general they concerned themselves with ideas first, revised at the discourse level, exhibited recursiveness in their writing process, and saved editing until the end of the process - all writing strategies similar to those of skilled L1 writers, as described in L1 writing

process studies (e.g., Pianko 1979; Sommers 1980). Zamel's (1983) unskilled L2 writers revised less and spent less time writing than the skilled writers. They focused on small bits of the essay and edited from the beginning to the end of the process, very like the unskilled writers in Sommers's (1980) report of her L1 writing process study, which investigated revising strategies. Zamel (1983) also investigated how writing in second language influenced the composing process. Her subjects "did not view composing in a second language in and of itself [as] problematical" (p. 179), thereby indicating that writing in a second language did not have a major impact on the composing process in general. She maintained that the skilled writers in her study "clearly understand what writing entails", whereas the unskilled writers did not ; a conclusion similar to that of Jones (1982).

Trying to gain insight into her students' composing process, Pfingstag (1984) investigated the composing-aloud protocol of one of her undergraduate students - a native speaker of Spanish. According to Pfingstag, the student's subsequent composing-aloud protocol exhibited improved composing strategies, which she attributed to her using the protocol as a pedagogical as well as a research tool.

Hildenbrand's (1985) case study also offered suggestions on how teachers might help their L2 students improve their writing. Hildenbrand daily observed her Spanish-speaking subjects write in two community college courses. Findings indicated that the subjects preferred writing mode - creative, personal writing - conflicted with the academic mode expected of her, thereby hindering her writing process. Once again , factors beyond the L2 writer's linguistic competence were found to impede the student's composing process.

Jones (1985) set out to investigate further the factors that might constrain second language writers. In the study he applied Krashen's monitor theory to analyze the

writing behaviours of his two subjects. He reported that "monitoring does not lead to improve writing" (1985 : 112), and he maintained that monitoring was, then, a factor constraining the L2 writing process. He speculated that monitor use among L2 learners might result from instructional methods. Jones's study, like Zamel's (1982, 1983) studies, provided for the use of process-oriented composition pedagogy in L2 classes, especially in the light of the call for L2 classrooms to be places enabling the acquisition of English rather than just the learning of English, an emerging "paradigm shift" discussed by Raimes (1983).

Another study providing support for process-oriented teaching of second language writing was by Rorschach (1986). Findings of this study indicated that reader awareness led the writers to focus on correctness rather than content. Rorschach concluded that her study calls into question composition teaching that concentrates on form, a conclusion that agrees with Jones's speculation about the relationship between instruction and overusing the monitor.

The studies of Hildenbrand (1985), Jones (1985), and Rorschach (1986), then, implied that certain L2 instructional approaches might not develop the composing competence that was intended. Furthermore Jones (1985) commented, "It is worth noting that many of the proposals for improving first language composing are also effective in helping second language learners develop acquired linguistic competence" (p. 114).

Providing support for Jones's comment, the studies of Diaz (1985) and Urzua (1987) articulated the benefits of process-oriented composition teaching for L2 learners. Diaz's (1985) first task was to establish a process-oriented classroom environment; then she observed what happened to the students and their writing. Based on hypotheses that grew out of her classroom-based ethnographic study, Diaz concluded "that not only are process strategies and techniques strongly indicated and recommended for ESL

students, but also when used in secure, student-centred contexts, the benefits to these students can go beyond their development as writers" (1986 : 41), thus recalling Jones's (1985) remark. Urzua (1987) came to the same conclusion about the benefits of process-oriented teaching with L2 writers when she reported the progress of four children, two fourth graders and two sixth graders. She observed that the children acquired three significant composing skills: "(a) a sense of audience, (b) a sense of voice, and (c) a sense of power in language" (p. 279). Diaz's and Urzua's studies strongly indicated that what had proved effective in L1 classrooms was also effective in L2 classrooms.

Additional research provided specific information on L2 college-level basic writers, one type of writer often targeted in L1 composition research (e.g., Perl 1978). Zamel (1983) found that unskilled L2 writers wrote like unskilled L1 writers and that the lack of composing competence in L1 was reflected in L2 students' writing ability. Raimes (1985) offered even more information on unskilled L2 writers. The eight subjects in her study were deemed "unskilled" by their performances on a holistically scored university-wide writing test, a measure similar to that used to assess the writing proficiency of Zamel's (1983) subjects. With most of her subjects, she observed very little planning before or during writing, a behaviour previously observed among unskilled L1 and L2 writers (e.g., Perl 1978; Zamel 1983). However, she also observed that her subjects, unlike the unskilled writers in previous studies, paid less attention to revising and editing than she had expected and that they seemed to reread their work to let an idea germinate. Raimes conjectured that L2 writers might not be "as concerned with accuracy as we thought they were, that their primary concern is to get down on paper their ideas on a topic" (p. 246).

Furthermore, whereas Zamel (1982, 1983) pointed out similarities in the writing behaviours of L2 and L1 writers, Raimes (1985, 1987) found differences when she

compared her subjects to the L1 subjects of Pianko (1979) and especially Perl (1978). Raimes (1985) reported that her subjects wrote more, exhibited more commitment to the writing task, produced more content, and paid less attention to errors than Perl's subjects. Raimes (1987) concluded that L2 writers were different from L1 writers in that L2 writers "did not appear inhibited by attempts to edit and correct their work" (p. 458). Before Raimes, L2 researchers had underscored the likeness between L1 and L2 writers, both skilled and unskilled. Raimes agreed that likenessess certainly existed, but differences between L1 and L2 writers existed as well, and for this reason, Raimes suggested the adaptation rather than the wholesale adoption of L1 instruction.

Although much has already been learned about language writing processes, so much more lies undiscovered. Early L2 studies pointed out similarities between L1 and L2 composing. More recent studies have questioned these similarities and have presented differences to be considered in future research. The details remain unclear. Even so, each study provides new knowledge; each study offers new question to ask and new areas to explore. As a field of research, then, the second language composing process is rich and full of vitality.

Yet, if we look at the development of the composing process studies presented above, there is a domination of research done in the U.S.A. As to why researchers in other parts of the world are not interested in this area is unknown. Because of this, then it was felt necessary to work in this area to show that the research on composing process should not be neglected outside the U.S.A. The results of the research could be interesting as ESL students in the U.S.A are in some ways different from ESL students in other countries because most of them (ESL students in the U.S.A) are immigrants who learn English in the English-speaking country unlike those in Malaysia, India, Nigeria etc.

CHAPTER THREE

WRITING APPREHENSION

3.1 Introduction

It is widely known that how a student feels about the task of learning greatly affects the learning the student may or may not do. Until recently, however, teachers of writing have simply blamed students' poor performances upon students' poor attitude toward writing. At the same time, these teachers have noted that students with positive attitudes toward writing often write very well. Some of these teachers accepted this simplistic analysis and chose to do nothing about improving the attitude of poor writers. Other teachers, on the other hand, have noted the importance of positive writing experiences and positive feedback and have tried to introduce in their writing classes large doses of encouragement. Kroll (1979) claims that 'positive attitudes lead to more willing writing, and it is only by practising writing that one can learn to write well' (p. 6). Research supporting Kroll's claims reveals that 'attitudes definitely influence growth in writing, that a writer's degree of apprehension toward writing can be measured and that certain teaching strategies can lessen student's writing anxiety' (Holladay 1979 : 2).

As early as 1930, Federn found that "frightened" writers may produce two kinds of poor writing. First, if the writer has not clearly identified what the subject is in a writing assignment, the writing itself may be described as containing impersonal wording, syntax which delays or blurs the main idea, overgeneralization, absolutes and expletives. Second, this "communication neurosis" is characterized as being impersonal and self-hiding. Federn felt that the writing phobia which he observed might have been

caused by a fear of revealing oneself on the written page which, in effect, amounts to what the anxious actor feels before stepping upon the stage.

Don Eulart (1967) found that the two most significant factors affecting learning in college composition are motivation and student attitudes. Since learning to write depends so much upon a student's self image, personal attitudes and motivation, Eulart urged that teachers of writing focus their instruction methods on changing students attitudes (cited in Elkhatib 1985).

Some people enjoy, even savour, the experience of putting pen to paper. Others find it a troublesome, uncomfortable, and even fearful experience. The idea that people differ in their enjoyment and propensity to writing is related to writing apprehension. Phillips (1968) perhaps offers the best definition of this anxiety. To him the highly apprehensive individual is the 'person for whom anxiety about communication outweighs his projection of gain from the situation'. In other words, the highly apprehensive individual will avoid communication situations or react in some anxious manner if forced into them because he foresees primarily negative consequences from such engagements. Daly and Miller (1975) seem to agree with Phillips (1968) in giving the definition of writing apprehension as 'to describe an individual difference characterised by a general avoidance of writing situations perceived by the individual to potentially require some amount of writing accompanied by the potential for evaluation of that writing'. Composition is not the only discipline to recognize such anxiety and its possible detrimental effects on students (Daly and Miller 1975). During the last few years a number of investigators in the field of speech communication have examined the role that anxiety about or apprehension of interpersonal communication plays in human interactions (e.g., Clevenger 1959; Heston and Paterline 1978; Phillips and Metzger 1973; Wheelless 1974). The conclusion of this research is that communication

apprehension is a pervasive anxiety trait that seriously affects a large proportion of the population.

3.2 Writing Apprehension and Second Language Learning

Numerous investigations have been conducted linking writing apprehension and various characteristics and behaviours of individuals. However, most of the research efforts have been focused on native English speakers. Little research has been devoted to writing apprehension among second language learners. Yet this area is indeed a crucial one as second language learners have more problems in learning writing compared to the native speakers. In higher education, second language learners must cope with varying demands for written work. At the graduate level, they have not only coursework demands but also an eventual thesis or dissertation with which to contend.

Additionally, Daly (1988 : 44) argued that individuals have “dispositional feeling” toward composing. In other words, people have “relatively enduring tendencies to like or dislike, approach or avoid, enjoy or fear writing”. Thus, if an individual feels negatively toward writing in the native language, the tendency would be to transfer these attitudes to any writing task in any language. From Daly’s standpoint, “people are assumed to behave in a more or less consistent manner when it comes to writing”. Therefore, an examination of ESL students’ attitudes toward L1 and L2 writing would be tremendously insightful.

Elkhatib (1985) attempted to describe the apprehension levels and writing behaviours of Egyptian college freshmen majoring in English. He found writing apprehension related to syntactic maturity, as measured by “t-units” (t-unit - one main clause plus any subordinate clause or non-clausal structure that is attached or embedded in it. Any

simple or complex sentence is one t-unit; any compound or compound-complex sentence will consist of two or more t-units)., and various specific lexical problems. Another study focusing on apprehension of L2 writers was that of Jones (1985). His research has highlighted non-linguistic factors which may prove to limit second language writing. Jones (p. 96) explored a non-linguistic source of difficulty in L2 writing; “a difficulty that can result either from the instructional setting or from the cognitive style of the writer, though the former is more frequently the source”.

In a case study of two ESL students, Jones examined the implications of the monitor (Krashen 1981; Krashen and Terrel 1983) or editor function on writing. Second language learners use learned knowledge of language as a monitor only if they have the time, know the rule, and are focused on form. Jones’ study compared the ESL writers from different instructional backgrounds; one was a monitor overuser and the other monitor underuser. The result of the study was that the ESL student with an L2 background based on grammar and translation had a high focus on form and correctness and exhibited behaviours characteristic of apprehensive writers. The second language learner whose L2 background reflected a philosophy of communicative competence was less likely to fixate on surface concerns and instead was able to turn their attention to the process of writing, and discovering meaning.

Gungle and Taylor (1985) examined writing apprehension in an L2 setting. In the pilot study, using the Daly-Miller Writing Apprehension Test (see Appendix 1), they found a significant negative correlation between ESL writing apprehension and an expressed desire to enroll in an advanced writing class. This finding corroborated those of Daly and Shamo (1978), and Daly and Miller (1975c). However, no significant relationships were found between ESL writing apprehension and perceived writing demand in the students’ majors, nor between ESL writing apprehension and concern with how one writes (attention to form) as opposed to what one writes.

Zamel (1982) notes that inordinate attention to form leads to continual disruptions of the writer's discovery process, which often leads to writer's block and, finally, high writing apprehension. According to Rose (1980, 1984), one behaviour associated with blocking is anxiety, which can lead to confusion, frustration or anger. Some blockers can only produce a few sentences; others may produce more, but only through repeated false starts, repetitions or fragments. Students finally come to distrust their writing abilities and develop an aversion to the composing process in general (Rose 1980) or, in our terms, become highly apprehensive writers.

Raines (1985) believes that "we have trapped our students within ... the prison of the word and sentence" (p. 83) and that we must now "emphasize composing and not just ESL. When we do, much of the necessary work on grammar, sentence structure and rhetoric begins to take care of itself" (p. 91).

Interviews with ESL writers generally confirm the views of the above. Zamel (1983) found that one student (the least skilled of six she interviewed) was anxious about writing in English because she was overly concerned about grammar and "getting it correct because [ESL writing] teachers care about that" (1983 : 178). Gungl and Taylor (1985) interviewed four ESL high writing apprehensives as part of their pilot study. Three of the four felt that teachers are more concerned with students' grammar and "being correct" than they are with content. They are concerned that they can't "say what they think", and the teacher will "point out mistakes".

Before the students in the Gungl and Taylor study attended the University of Arizona, most of their English writing experience was limited to summaries and short, descriptive essays written in English classes at schools or language institutes in their native country. According to the students, the major emphasis in these schools and

institutes is on grammar, vocabulary and reading. There is very little written or oral communication. High writing apprehension for these students may come from a lack of experience with English communication as much as from a classroom emphasis on prescriptive forms and mechanics.

3.3 Relationship between writing apprehension and individual personality

Since writing apprehension is conceived of as a relatively enduring disposition, it is important to specify its relationship with other dispositions. Research has related writing apprehension to sex difference, trait and test anxiety, various subject-specific attitudes, self-esteem and other personality variables.

3.2.1 Sex Difference in Writing Apprehension

In the early research with the apprehension measure, Daly and Miller (1975c) noted the potential for a sex difference in responses to their instrument. Males were found, as hypothesized, to be significantly higher in apprehension than females. This finding fits with other research which suggested that males were generally less successful than females in elementary and secondary school writing attempts and that there is a particular bias in favour of females in those grades on the part of teachers (Daly 1978).

3.3.2 Traits and Test Anxiety

M.D. Miller and Daly (1975) correlated the apprehension questionnaire to trait-anxiety measure and found nonsignificant correlation. On the other hand, Thompson (1981) and Salovey and Haar (1983) found positive and significant correlations between writing anxiety and general anxiety. Dickson (1978) related the writing-apprehension instrument to a test-anxiety measure and found a positive and significant relationship.

3.3.3 Subject-Specific Attitudes

In an extensive study of personality correlates of writing apprehension, Daly and Wilson (1983) related the writing-apprehension questionnaire to measures of attitudes toward reading anxiety, math anxiety, oral communication anxiety and attitudes toward science. They found consistently inverse and significant relationships between apprehension and math anxiety, no significant association with attitudes toward science, positive and significant correlations with attitudes toward reading and positive and significant correlations with oral communication apprehension.

3.3.4 Self-esteem

Daly and Wilson (1983) conducted a series of studies exploring the relationship between writing apprehension and self-esteem. The results of these studies suggest that general self-esteem is only moderately associated with writing apprehension while esteem specific to writing is more strongly associated. Daly and Wilson also related writing apprehension to multidimensional measure of esteem specific to writing. The

result of the study suggests that writing apprehension is modestly related to general self-esteem and more strongly related to writing-specific self-esteem.

3.4 The causes of Writing Apprehension

An early history of aversive conditioning, poor skill development and inadequate role models have been suggested as contributing to the development of the apprehension (Daly 1977). Developmentally, a deficit in skills training and poor or negative teacher responses to early writing attempts are apparently related to the apprehension (Harvey-Felder 1978). People receiving positive responses from others for their writing should be less apprehensive about the act than their counterparts who typically receive negative reactions (Daly and Wilson 1983). Findings from Daly and Wilson (1983) suggest an inverse relationship between writing apprehension and self-esteem. Comments from teachers of writing often include the suggestion that the way a student feels about him or herself affects, and is affected by, how he or she writes.

Attempts continue to be made to identify the causes of writing apprehension. Daly (1977) found that wholly negative comments which teachers wrote on students essays produced lower scores in confidence, reinforcement and satisfaction. Daly and Wilson (1983) noted that students who are praised in their writing attempts have positive attitudes toward writing. These two authors give support to Gee (1972) who worked with 300 college freshmen and found a positive relationship between a writer's confidence and the ability to write.

In an early explication of the idea of writing apprehension Weil and Lane (1956) described something they labeled "stagefright in writers". This psychological barrier to writing was hypothesized to be caused by (a) overestimation on the part of the writer of

his or her deficiencies as writer; (b) inadequate time to complete writing assignments; (c) an inability in the writer to see the purpose of his or her reports, leading to a belief that writing is a waste of time; and (d) excessive criticism and repeated, arbitrary revision of the writer's work by editors and supervisors. Aldrich (1979) suggested that writing anxiety arose because of a lack of knowledge about the value of preparation and a lack of methods to adequately cope with one's occupational writing demands.

In an informal survey done by Daly (1978) he derived nine interrelated explanations for writing apprehension : (a) lack of appropriate skills, (b) teachers' reactions to mechanical problems, (c) the nature of writing assignments, (d) the tendency to associate writing with aversive consequences, (e) perceptions by the apprehensive writer that teachers are a source of punishments, (f) public comparisons of students' work that lead to ridicule and cause the writer embarrassment, (g) negative reactions by teachers to the content of compositions, (h) poor self-perceptions on the part of writers, and (i) inadequate role models.

3.5 The Effects of Writing Apprehension

Specific research findings have indicated that highly apprehensive individuals tend to be less motivated to achieve (Giffin and Gilham 1971), and generally engage in less disclosure (Hamilton 1972). High communication apprehensives seldom engage in small group interaction (Daly 1974) and when forced to, offer mainly irrelevancies (Wells and Lashbrook 1972).

The high apprehensive individuals find writing unrewarding, indeed punishing (Daly and Wilson 1983). Consequently, they avoid, if possible, situations where writing is required. When placed in such situations they experience more than normal amounts of

anxiety and this anxiety is often reflected in their written products and in their behaviours in, and attitude about the writing situation (Daly and Wilson 1983).

Writing apprehension has been linked to both academic and occupational decisions (Daly and Shamo 1978; Miller and Daly 1975). Highly apprehensive individuals prefer and choose occupations they perceive to not require much writing. Similarly, in the decision of which the academic majors to select, highly apprehensive students prefer majors which require less writing. Daly and Shamo (1978) in their study about 'Academic Decisions as a Function of Writing Apprehension', found that a 'significant interaction between apprehension level and writing requirements was observed in terms of the perceived desirability of the various majors'. Additionally, actual decisions on majors reflected the tendency for apprehensive students to select majors perceived as having less writing required than those chosen by non-apprehensives (Daly and Shamo 1978). Clearly, people seem to seek a 'fit' between the academic major they select or find desirable and their general predisposition towards writing.

Other effects of writing apprehension on individuals are : individuals with high writing apprehension encode messages differing in diversity, length, quality and language intensity (Daly and Miller 1975a, Daly 1977). In addition, high apprehensives perform poorly on standardised tests of writing competency (Daly 1978b). They are unlikely to enrol in advanced composition courses, and report significantly less success in previous coursework which requires writing (Daly and Miller 1975b). Furthermore, they are regarded by teachers as less likely to experience success in future academic work (Daly 1978a). Messages written by high apprehensives are also less effective in counter-attitudinal attempts than those written by low apprehensives (Toth 1975). And furthermore, the high apprehensive has problems dealing with speaking, punctuation,

case, adjectives and adverbs, recognition of sentence fragments, agreement, recognition of faulty references and pronouns, diction, and parallelism.

Writing apprehension was found to have an effect on writing performance. Powell (1980), for example, found that highly apprehensive writers were more likely than less apprehensive students to receive low grades in composition courses. High-apprehensive students were found to write three times less words when compared to the low-apprehensive students (Book 1976). Additionally, messages written by high-apprehensives had significantly less paragraphs, less words per paragraph; less sentences, less nouns, pronouns, adjectives and prepositional phrases. Her high-apprehensives also made more spelling errors than did low-apprehensives. Finally, using an index she created to measure the amount of information conveyed by the written messages, Book noted that essays written by high-apprehensives conveyed significantly less information than did those written by low-apprehensives.

In a study of composing business letters, Stacks, Boozer, and Lally (1983) found that writing apprehension was positively related to the use of the passive voice, less conditionality, and negative audience perceptions by the writers. Faigley, Daly, and Witte (1981) examined writing samples composed by undergraduates who were either high or low in writing apprehension. High apprehensive writers versus low apprehensives wrote essays with significantly fewer words per T-units; fewer words per clause; fewer T-units with final restrictive modifiers; and fewer words in what final non restrictive modifiers there were. Furthermore, the essays written by high apprehensives were shorter overall than those written by low apprehensives.

The effects of writing apprehension on writing quality has also been a focus of research. Daly (1977) found a significant relationship between apprehension and quality evaluations : essays written by low-apprehensives were evaluated as

significantly better than those composed by highly apprehensive writers. Richmond and Dickson (1980) had 135 undergraduate students complete the writing-apprehension instrument and a measure of test anxiety as well as compose a brief essay. Dividing the students into three groups on the basis of their writing apprehension, Richmond and Dickson found a significant relationship between apprehension and writing quality. Highly apprehension writers wrote essays that were rated significantly lower in quality than those written by writers in the middle range of apprehension. In turn, low-apprehension writers wrote essays that were significantly higher in quality than those written by moderate-apprehensives. An analysis of covariance controlling for test anxiety yielded the same results. Garcia (1977) also found an effect for apprehension on writing quality. The difference was in favour of the essays written by low-apprehensives.

3.6 Measuring Writing Apprehension

When assessing any dispositional characteristic, a number of measurement procedures are available. However, in the case of writing apprehension, a self-report procedure is the predominant assessment mode, where respondents indicate their apprehension by responding to a series of statements about writing. Other techniques sometimes encountered in the assessment of individual differences, such as observational indices, projective techniques, and psychological procedures, have not been extensively used in writing apprehension research.

The first systematic attempt to assess writing apprehension was completed by Daly and M.D. Miller (1975b). They entered the field with a background in research on oral communication apprehension (i.e., reticence, shyness), interested in exploring their observation that people differ in the amount of writing they produce as they compose.

They devised 63 statements about writing that focused on respondents' perceptions of their anxiety about the act of writing; their likes and dislikes about writing; the responses they had to peer, teacher, and professional evaluations of their writing; and their self-evaluations of writing. Respondents were asked to read each statement by circling one of the five responses ranging from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree".

A group of undergraduates students ($n = 164$) completed the initial 63-item measure. The respondents represented a diverse sample of students drawn from a variety of academic majors, backgrounds, and locations. Their responses to the items were correlated. Daly and Miller revised the measurement and reduced the items from 63 to 26. The instrument is presented in Appendix 1.

An important characteristic of any measures is its reliability, which indicates the degree to which people respond consistently to the items of the instrument. The Daly-Miller Writing-Apprehension Scale, is highly reliable. In the first group of studies, the internal consistency of the measure was quite high (.94). Later research with the instrument has always found values close to that figure. Test-retest reliability is also high : in one investigation over a one-week period, the correlation was .92 (Daly and M.D Miller 1975b). Later studies that extended over more than three months found test-retest coefficients greater than .80. The Daly-Miller measure has been used with college students (e.g., Daly 1977, 1978; National Assessment of Educational Progress 1980), grade schoolers (National Assessment of Educational Progress 1980; Zimmerman and Silverman 1982), adults (Calypool 1980; Daly and Witte 1982; Gere, Schuessler, and Abbot 1984), and ESL students (Hadaway 1985, Elkhatib 1985)

There are some other, more recent measures of writing apprehension reported in the literature. They include the Jeroski and Conry (1981) Attitude Toward Writing Scale; the questionnaire devised by Kroll (1979), Thompson (1978, 1979b) and Blake (1976);

as well as multidimensional measures reported by Stacks, Boozer and Lally (1983) and Daly and T. Miller (1983a). While all appear to have good internal consistency, none have validity checks such as those available for the earlier Daly-Miller measure.

Daly-Miller measure has also been used for research outside the United States. Elkhatab (1985) used this measure successfully for college freshmen in Egypt. This shows that although the measure was designed for Daly and Miller's (1975) study in the U.S.A, it is not culturally biased.

3.7 Writer's block

According to Rose (1984) writer's block can be defined as inability to begin or continue writing for reasons other than a lack of basic skill or commitment. Blocking is not simply measured by the passage of time (for writers often spend productive time toying with ideas without putting pen to paper), but by the passage of time with limited productive involvement in the writing task. Certain behaviours (i.e., missing deadlines) are associated with blocking. Feelings of anxiety, frustration, anger or confusion often characterise this unproductive work. Blocking can be manifested in a variety of ways : some high-blockers produce only a few sentences; others produce many more, but these sentences will be false starts, repetitions, blind alleys or disconnected fragments of discourse; still others produce a certain amount of satisfactory prose only to stop in mid-essay (Rose 1984).

3.7.1 Differences between Writer's Block and Writing Apprehension

From the definition given by Rose, writer's block is broader and subsumes writing apprehension as a possible cause of or reaction to blocking. Rose (1984) continues that from his preliminary case-study investigations suggest that not all high-blockers are apprehensive about writing (although they might get momentarily anxious when deadlines loom). As a matter of fact, high-blockers do not necessarily share the characteristics attributed by John Daly and his associates to writing-apprehensive students : avoidance of courses and majors involving writing and lower skills as measured by objective and essay tests. In addition, not all low-blockers fit Lynn Bloom's analysis (1979, 1980a, 1980b) that non-anxious writers find writing enjoyable and seek out opportunities to practice it. Apprehensiveness, then, can lead to blocking (the anxiety being caused by prior negative evaluations (Daly 1978) or by more complex psychodynamics (Kubie 1973 and Federn 1957) or can result from a fix blockers find themselves in. But blocking and apprehensiveness (and non-blocking and non-apprehensiveness) are not synonymous, not necessarily coexistent and not necessarily causally linked.

From the discussion presented in this chapter, it is clear that writing apprehension contributes serious problems to student-writers especially for the non-native students. Realizing these problems, then, it is felt necessary to find ways of dealing with them. One of the ways is using the process approach in treating the writing apprehension.

CHAPTER FOUR

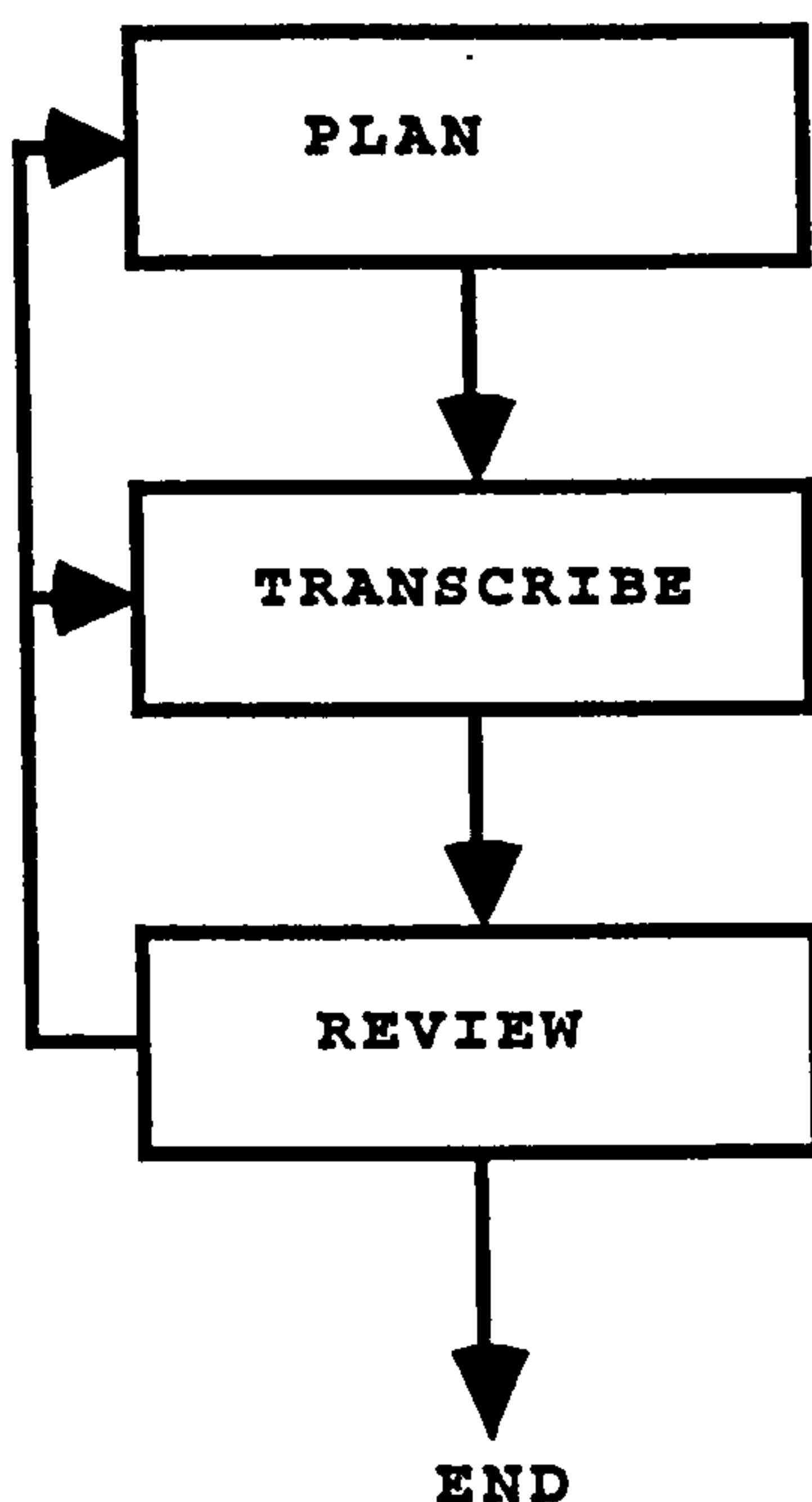
THE STAGES OF THE WRITING PROCESS

4.1 Introduction

Writing may usefully be viewed as a solution to a complex communication problem. Writers formulate discourse, often extended, for an audience to achieve their own and their readers' goals. Writers' communication problems are often ill-defined : there are many optimal solutions. Feedback from the audience is often delayed and difficult to assess.

When psychologists study the formulation of other solutions to complex problems, they typically identify three activities : planning the solution, carrying out the plan and reviewing the results to judge if they meet the criteria for a good solution (Nold 1981). For writing we can schematize the process as in Figure 4.1.

Figure 4.1 A model of the writing process



Source : Ellen Nold, *Revising in Writing : The Nature, Development and Teaching of Written Communication*, ed. by Frederiksen and Dominic 1981, p. 68.

The recursive arrows on the left of the diagram in Figure 4.1 remind us that planning transcribing and reviewing (pre-writing, writing and rewriting) are not one-time processes. As their texts grow and change, writers plan, transcribe and review in irregular patterns. Perl (1979) seems to agree with this when she says :

Composing does not occur in a straightforward, linear fashion. The process is one of accumulating discrete words or phrases down on the paper and then working from these bits to reflect upon structure, and then further develop what reasons to say. It can be thought of as a kind of "retrospective structuring"; movement forward occurs only after one has reached back, which in turn occurs only after one has some sense of where one wants to go. Both aspects, the reading back and the sensing forward, have a clarifying effect... Rereading or backward

movement becomes a way of assessing whether or not the words on the page adequately capture the original sense intended. But constructing simultaneously involves discovery. Writers know more fully what they mean only after having written it. In this way the explicit written form serves as a window on the implicit sense with which one began.

(Perl 1979: 18)

From Perl's explanation above, the instantaneous moving back and forth during the writing process is clear. Minute by minute, perhaps second by second - or less at certain stages of the process - the writer may be doing the prewriting, writing and rewriting, looking back and looking forward and acting upon what is seen and heard during the backward sensing and forward sensing.

4.2 Prewriting

Prewriting has been defined as all the activities (such as reading the topic, rehearsing, planning, trying out beginnings, making notes) that students engaged in before they wrote what was the first sentence of their first draft (Raimes 1985). According to Haynes, "... prewriting or pre-composition is used to mean specifically any of the structured experiences which take place either before or during the writing process and which influence active participation on the part of the student in thinking, writing in groups etc" (Haynes 1978 : 86). While Murray (1982) prefers to call this stage of writing process rehearsing instead of prewriting :

The term rehearsing, first used by my colleague Donald Graves (1978) after observation of children writing, is far more accurate than prewriting to describe activities which precede a completed draft.

(Murray 1982 : 4)

During this stage of the writing process the writer in the mind and on the page prepares himself or herself for writing before knowing for sure that there will be writing. There is a special awareness, a taking in of the writer's new material of information, before it is clear how it will be used. When it seems there will be writing, this absorption continues, but now there is time for experiments in meaning and form, for trying out voices, for beginning the process of play which is vital to making effective meaning. The writer welcomes the unexpected relationship between pieces of information from voices never before heard in the writer's head.

Rohman's (1965) pre-writing strategies serve "to introduce students to the dynamics of creation" (p. 107) by teaching them to experience a subject in a new way and to see writing as one important form of self-actualization. Rohman's method, based on the premise that the pre-writing stage is hidden in the mind, employs three approaches : the keeping of a daily journal, the practice of principles derived from religious meditation, and the use of the analogy as a mechanism for looking at an event in several different ways.

Prewriting usually takes about 85% of the writer's time (Murray 1980). It includes awareness of his world from which his subject is born. In prewriting, the writer focuses on that subject, spots an audience, chooses a form which may carry his subject to his audience. Prewriting may include research and daydreaming, note-making and outlining, little-writing and lead writing (Murray 1980).

The most effective way of using prewriting is to guide students through each activity in the classroom rather than just lecturing or telling them about the activities. Writing is basically a process of communicating something (content) on paper to an audience. If the writer has nothing to say, writing will not occur. Prewriting activities therefore

provide students with something to say. According to D'Aoust :

Prewriting activities generate ideas; they encourage a free flow of thoughts and help students to discover both what they want to say and how to say it on paper. In other words, prewriting activities facilitate the planning for both the product and the process.

(D'Aoust 1986 : 7)

Spack (1984 : 656) also asserts that prewriting techniques teach students to write down their ideas quickly in new form, without undue concern about surface errors and form. This helps their fluency, as they are able to think and write at the same time, rather than think and then write.

According to Shaughnessy (1977), inexperienced or incompetent student-writers tend to slow down their pace of writing by insisting on a perfect essay from the outset. They try to "put down exactly the right word, to put the right word into the right phrase, and to put the right phrase in the right sentence and so on". Such students tend to hinder their own fluency and give themselves what Flower (1981 : 30) calls "writer's block" - that is, they get stuck at a point in the writing process and cannot go on. Most students who suffer from this problem can benefit from a prewriting therapy where they are required to generate materials, ideas, bits of texts, etc. to use in their writing later.

Rehearsing is an activity in prewriting according to Raimes (1985). "One of the common activities, both while writing sentences and between writing sentences was rehearsing (voicing ideas on context and trying out possible ideas)" (p. 243). Rehearsing appears to serve two different purposes, not indicated by the coding. Some writers rehearse to search for grammatically acceptable forms as evidenced by one of Raimes' students, Jose :

They asked me, they ask me that I, no, they want, they asked me that they want to go, no, they asked that, that if they can, they ask me that if, that if, I can, I could, if I could take them to 115 Street.

(Raimes 1985 : 243)

Others talked out ideas, tried things out and tested on an audience words and phrases that were never put on paper. Another student of Raimes', Bo Wen, seemed to be regarding her (Raimes) as the listener/audience, if not as the reader, as he talked out his ideas when he was asked to compose aloud. He said, "I just want to tell you about Chinese culture revolution". Then he wrote part of a sentence, "When it was in the Chinese culture revolution ..." and stopped for a kind of aside to the listener, a rehearsal of what was in his mind : "In Chinese, the culture revolution, I went to countryside, because at that time there was no school, but not really ...". He laughed and went on, "I just wanted to say that they didn't learn anything in school". This rehearsal of text, which explained fully what he meant, then somehow got reduced as it was translated into written composition. Bo Wen now left himself and many of the details. After his opening of "When it was the Chinese cultural revolution," he continued by adding rather dryly : "schools were closed and factories didn't product". It was as if he saw the audience for the tape (he was asked to compose aloud on the tape) as having different requirements from the audience for the writing (Raimes 1985 : 243).

The thinking, brainstorming and note-taking that is believed to precede actual composing took place even after the writing began, illustrating that "planning is not a unitary stage, but a distinctive thinking process which writers use over and over again during composing "(Flower and Hayes 1981 : 375). Then, students who started out by creating an informal list of ideas or questions to consider may have found themselves totally discarding it once they undertook the writing itself. It seems that while some

planning was necessary to help them think through the topic, they were quite willing to shift directions once they discovered an alternative, and more satisfying, solution (Zamel 1983).

4.3 Writing

Writing is the act of producing the first draft. Murray (1980) calls this stage of the writing process as drafting. For him drafting "is the most accurate term for the central stage of the writing process, since it implies the tentative nature of our written experiments in meaning" (1980 : 5). The writer drafts a piece of writing to find out what it may have to say. The writing physically removes itself from the writer. Thus, it can be examined as something which may eventually stand on its own before a reader. This distancing is significant, for each draft must be an exercise in independence as well as discovery.

This stage is the fastest part of the process, and the most frightening, for it is the commitment. And the writing of this first draft - rough, unfinished- may take as little as one percent of the writer's time. According to White (1988), the students usually deal with writing the first draft with a sense of urgency and momentum, with little or no concern with accuracy and expression. The important thing seems to be to get the ideas on paper, with questions of organization and correction coming later. In contrast Zamel says that "generally, students devoted the greatest proportion of time to the creation of their first drafts, during which they dealt with the substantial content Subsequent drafts reflected a greater number of changes in vocabulary, syntax and spelling and there fore required less composing time" (1983 : 174).

For this stage of the writing process, the students should not take a lot of time writing the first draft as what is important here is to write down the ideas on paper. Time should be devoted to the final draft because it is this draft that will be evaluated.

4.4 Rewriting

Rewriting or revision, in Rohman's view (1965) is simply the repetition of writing; and according to Britton (1975) revision is simply the further growth of what is already there, the "preconceived" product. However, Sommers (1980) has redefined the term revision as a sequence of changes in a composition - changes which are initiated by cues and occur continually throughout the writing of a work.

Revising is not a subprocess in the same way as planning, transcribing and reviewing are; rather it is the retranscribing of the text already produced (Nold 1981). Writers retranscribe because they have decided, after reviewing text or their plans, that portions of the text are not what they had intended or not what their readers need. But in order to retranscribe, writers must be able to generate a more acceptable solution. If they cannot, they will not change their text. This analysis of revising shows that revising strategies cannot be inferred from the text alone : writers indeed may want to revise, but not be able to because they lack promising solutions (Nold 1981).

In revising, writers add or delete elements of the text - letters, punctuation, words, phrases, clauses, sentences, paragraphs - because they have evaluated them as faulty and can think of a good way to change them (Nold 1981).

Evidence shows that writers usually deal with the first draft with a sense of urgency and momentum, with little or no concern with accuracy of expression (White 1988). If this

is the case, then, writers must rewrite. In fact, Murray (1968) says that "writing is rewriting" while Maimon et. al.(1982) make it clear that "successful papers are not written, they are rewritten". Murray (1978), Perl (1980) and others have noted, writing and rewriting is a process of discovery. This means that writers often start writing without knowing exactly what to say, and, as they write their preliminary drafts, they discover what it is they want to say. Then they go over their drafts and rewrite and edit them into words that more adequately express their ideas (Chenoweth 1987). This is a natural and even inevitable part of the writing process. Although, rewriting is very important in the process of writing, student writers usually do not make good use of it. Often, poor writers write one draft with many good ideas poorly developed (Shaughnessy 1977) and then they are not shown how to explore these ideas further or given the opportunity to do it.

In addition, students often fail to understand that good writing does not flow out completely and polished. Smith (1984) calls this "one of the best kept secrets at school" (1982 : 196). Professional writers may write and rewrite hundreds of times, yet students feel they are failures because they cannot produce perfect copy effortlessly at the first sitting. However, if instead of a paper on a new topic, a rewrite (which takes as much or more effort) is assigned, students can work on and improve a particular piece of writing which in turn boosts their confidence as writers by showing them that rewriting is not failure. They learn that they need to rewrite in order to develop and improve their writing (Chenoweth 1978).

Rewriting is an important step in composing, but some students do not know how to do it. For instance, Sommers (1980) found out that student writers saw revision as word-based - as cleaning up vocabulary. She observed that students lacked strategies for handling the larger elements in revision, or reordering lines of reasoning or asking questions about their purposes and readers. They tended to view their compositions in

a linear way as a series of parts to be assembled. Other studies have also highlighted differences in ways in which writers revise their compositions.

Unskilled writers tend to correct only surface errors in grammar and punctuation, or change their choice of words (Bridwell 1980, Faigley and Witte 1981) - some, such as Smith (1982), would call this "editing" and not "rewriting". More proficient writers do edit their papers, of course, but they also spend considerable time and effort working on the overall content to see what they want to say is said, and is said in a way their readers can understand (Faigley and Witte 1981). The unskilled writers generally assume that what they have written makes sense and that there is really no need to add more explanation and detail, or rearrange ideas to make their paper better (Perl 1980, Beach 1976). In other words, they fail to consider the problems that readers might experience in understanding their text (Flower 1981).

Composition teachers who correct just those surface-level mistakes, without commenting on content as well, are reinforcing the students' tendency to focus on sentence-level problems. Recent research indicates that it is not necessary to correct the mistakes of grammar, spelling and punctuation if the intention of the teacher is to help students to write better. Studies such as Perl (1980), Pianko (1979) and Zamel (1983) suggest that one reason for this may be that correction of those errors does not directly address the writer's main problems which are more related to the way in which he or she accomplishes a given writing task.

Revising, like prewriting, occurs throughout the process and generally means composing anew (Zamel 1983). While exploring their ideas and the form with which to express them, changes were most often global : sentences were deleted and added to clarify and make them more concrete; sentences were rewritten until they expressed the writer's intention more accurately; paragraphs or parts of paragraphs were shifted

around when writers realized that they were related to ideas presented elsewhere in their texts; new paragraphs were formed as thoughts were developed and expanded. In the case of one writer, after writing several pages, he discovered that one of the paragraphs on the third page would make a good introduction. In the case of another, entire pages of writing were eliminated once the student discovered what she really wanted to say (Zamel 1983). Revisions of this sort often took place during writing sessions that inevitably began with rereading what had been written during a previous session. It seems that the intervention of time had given students the ability to distance themselves from their ideas and thus re-view their written work as if with the eyes of another reader.

While all of the writers attended to surface-level features and changes, the skilled writers seemed to be much less concerned with the features at the outset and addressed them primarily toward the end of the process. The least skilled writers, on the other hand, were distracted by local problems from the very beginning, changing words or phrases but rarely making changes that affected meaning.

4.4.1 Functions of rewriting/revision

The functions of rewriting or revision which is the last stage in the composing process, can be divided into two : revision as repair and revision as reading.

4.4.1.1 *Revision as repair*

Elsa Bartlett (1985) studied revision as repair for the purpose of examining the cognitive strategies of young writers. She found that the young writers were capable of correcting errors of referential ambiguity in others' texts but when these writers reviewed their own texts, they were "blind" to errors of correctness because they read with a focus on meaning.

Ellen Nold (1981) makes the distinction between revising to fit conventions - matching the text against accepted rules of correctness - revising to fit intentions - matching the texts against goals defined in terms of meaning, audience and purpose. When writers attend too frequently to rule-governed revisions (revising to fit conventions), their behaviour might be characterized as premature editing (Rose 1984). In observation of blocked writers and unblocked writers, Mike Rose noted that the unblocked writers often avoided premature editing by, for example, circling a word with questionable spelling and returning to the larger writing task.

Cazden, Michaels and Tabor (1985) studied the spontaneous repairs of first-and second-grade children in oral narratives produced during classroom "sharing time". Unlike earlier studies, which only characterized these spontaneous repairs as lexical replacements, Cazden's study classified a special type of repair called bracketing - insertion of a chunk of material into otherwise syntactically intact sentences. This additional, bracketed material demonstrated a rather sophisticated use of syntactic resources. Beyond this, however, the additional material was taken as evidence of the children's ability to make "repairs for the listener at the level of organization of thematic content of the narrative as a whole" (p. 7).

In a carefully designed study, one which focused on the nature, extent and quality of

revisions made by 100 randomly selected seniors in high school, Bridwell (1980b) found that, given the opportunity, students make fairly extensive revisions. Overall, the students in Bridwell's study made 6,129 revisions, or an average of about 60 per student, almost half of which were made on the first draft. Although the design of the study suggests revisions, it commands nothing other than recopying. The large number of revisions, then, stands in marked contrast to Emig's conclusion that "students do not voluntarily revise school-sponsored writing" (1971 : 3).

Most of the revisions (56 percent) were at the surface or lexical levels. Surface-level revisions included changes in mechanics such as spelling, punctuation and capitalization. Word-level changes included the addition, deletion or substitution of single words. Another 18 percent of the revisions had to do with changes at the phrase-level. The remaining 19.61 percent of the revisions were at the sentence-level or the multi-sentence level, which includes additions, deletions and reordering of two or more consecutive sentences. However, no revisions appeared at the text level. The relative proportions of these revisions might be expected. The high incidence of lower-level revisions does not necessarily demonstrate a preoccupation with the trivial; there are simply many more opportunities for revision at those levels than at the sentence or multi-sentence levels.

Sommers (1980) studied the revising strategies of eight college freshmen and seven experienced adult writers. She examined four levels of change (word, phrase, sentence and theme) and four operations (deletion, substitution, edition and reordering). The greatest number number of revisions by college students were at the word and phrase levels, with lexical deletions and substitutions being the most frequent operations. For the adult writers, however, the concentration of revisions was at the sentence level and addition was the major operation. Their revisions were distributed over all levels, suggesting that experienced writers perceive more alternatives than do younger writers.

Addition appears as the major strategy in a number of studies. Kamler (1980) presents five drafts of a composition by seven-year-old pupil. The composition grows over two weeks from 57 words to 169, with 88 of the words coming in the third draft following a 30-minute individual conference with the teacher. In this piece of writing, all revisions are additions.

4.4.1.2 *Revision as Reading*

Continual rereading and rescanning in basic writers seems to inhibit evaluations of anything but the current grammatical, mechanical or lexical problems (Perl 1980), and yet when the text was removed during the "invisible writing" (information collected during the "think aloud protocol") experiences of Blau's (1983) graduate students, they claimed that the "absence of visual feedback from the text they were producing actually sharpened their concentration ... enhanced their fluency, and yielded texts that were more rather than less cohesive" (p. 298). In Blau's "invisible writing" experience students could not and did not revise. In a study conducted by Matsushashi and Gordon (1985), students who planned their revisions after rereading and listed ideas for revision on the blank pages of their papers were able to produce substantial revisions in the argument structure of the text, whereas those who revised while looking at their texts made an overwhelming percentage of surface corrections.

If the role of reading during the process of writing has been oversimplified, current reading theorists may be of some help. Matsushashi and Gordon (1985) suggest that reading during the writing process and writing itself may involve similar mental processes. In both reading and writing, revisions occur if one has lost sight of "the meaning of the potential under construction" and if one "wants to confirm or disconfirm

the meaning network already created" (p. 12).

The emphasis on a mental representation of a text is reiterated by Teun Van Dijk and Walter Kintsch (1987) in their definition of discourse processing (comprehension), "a strategic process in which mental representation is constructed of the discourse in memory, using both external and internal types of information, with the goal of interpreting (understanding) the discourse" (p. 6). For discourse production, the task is the construction of a mental representation of a discourse plan which can, strategically, be executed with an end goal of a syntactically formatted, coherent text. Although comprehension and production are not simply inverse processes, they are related.

4.5 Methods of facilitating revision

Simon (1981) states two limitations which apply to all sorts of cognitive activities, including writing and revising. First, it takes about five seconds to fix a chunk of information in short-term memory. Second, short-term memory can hold only a limited number of chunks. For inexperienced writers, it is these limitations coupled with inefficient and ineffective writing strategies that make success so difficult to achieve. Revision, for these writers, is a trap, not an opportunity (Shaughnessy 1977). In order to study cognitive processes during revision, writing researchers such as Marlene Scardamalia and Carl Bereiter (1983) and Matsushashi and Gordon (1985) have developed procedures to help the writer orchestrate his or her divided attention.

Although these studies diverge in many ways, they share the assumption that young and inexperienced writers do not revise effectively because, under the pressure of real-time processing, their attention is consumed by the low-level problems of generating and inscribing the text :

Attention to one thing means neglect of another, and so one can never be sure that the child's failure to do something in writing indicates a lack of competence. It may merely reflect an inability to direct cognitive resources to that aspect of writing when it is needed.

(Scardamalia and Bereiter 1983 : 68)

Using a simplified model of the revision process called CDO (Compare, Diagnose and Operate), Scardamalia and Bereiter arrived at a procedure which, they believed, could lift the burden of scheduling and allow the child to shift his or her attention to the revision process at the end of each sentence. Children in grades 4, 6 and 8 after writing a sentence, engaged in the CDO process by first choosing an evaluation statement which suited that sentence (compare); secondly telling why that statement (diagnose) and thirdly, deciding what change to make in the existing sentence (operate).

This procedure, carried out often each sentence was written, was used for the "on line" group. Another group (the "evaluation" group) carried out the CDO process on each sentence only after the text had been completed. In both treatment groups, children in grades 4 and 6 produced compositions of the same length, although grade 8 compositions in the "on line" group were significantly shorter than in the "evaluation after" group. It may be that as the eighth-graders' ability to produce longer texts developed, the CDO process presented new scheduling difficulties by focusing evaluation to the exclusion of generation processes. In interviews following the study, students largely agreed that the CDO process helped them review their texts in ways they never could before. Although the students revised more than would normally be expected, the revision did not improve the quality of the texts. Further analyses, though, suggested that students were quite accurate in evaluating (compare) their sentences, that is, in "detecting mismatches between intended and actual text, when

prompted to look for them" (p. 92). They were unable, however, to correct the difficulty in the diagnose and operate stages.

Matsuhashi and Gordon (1985) designed a study to test the hypothesis that typically low-level revisions by college students resulted not so much from a lack of competence but from an inability to look beyond the local span of text to consider a mental representation of the text as a whole. Working with three groups of college students, Matsuhashi and Gordon asked the first group to reread and revise an essay they had written during the previous class. They asked the second group to "add five things" to an essay after rereading but while still looking at the text. The third group was asked, after rereading, to list five additions on the back of the essay and then to insert the additions into the text. This third group produced significantly more high-level additions to the text than did the second group, which, in turn, produced significantly more high-level additions to the text than did the "revise" group.

As the conclusion, Matsuhashi and Gordon state that:

When the writer adds to the text while looking at it, to some extent he or she has been freed by the instruction to add (only one or many possible revision strategies). The presence of the text, though, can still distract the writer and interfere with attempts to focus on high-level revisions. When the writer plans additions to an unseen text, as in the third group, the plans are based on a mental representation of the text. The opportunity to plan-free from both the presence of the text and from the efforts of prose production - offers an incentive to work exclusively with the idea structure of the text.

(Matsuhashi and Gordon 1985 : 23)

Both of these studies developed techniques to facilitate revision based on the

assumptions about cognitive processing during writing. Scardamalia and Bereiter's (1983) CDO procedure helped students focus attention, initially, on a wide range of possible problems in the text, while Matsushashi and Gordon (1985) shifted the writers' attention to only one revision strategy - addition.

4. 6 The features of the writing process

4.6.1. Interaction

Recent studies of interactive learning in the second language classroom have emphasized teacher-student and student-student discourse as a means of breaking the tradition of teacher-fronted one-way instruction.

Although it has not been definitively shown that this variation in instructional method leads to faster or better learning, such activity appears to be superior in terms of the amount of talk produced, the degree of "negotiation of meaning" that takes place and the amount of comprehensible input obtained (Long and Porter 1985; Gas and Varovis 1985; Kramsch 1985; Montgomery and Einstein 1985; Porter 1986). To the degree that these are accepted as valuable aspects of language learning, it would appear that group work, pair activities and less rigidly structured classroom procedures ought to be considered as basic features of ESL and other language instruction.

Many people think that group work does not benefit writing students because writing is basically an individual activity especially during examinations where the students write individually without any discussion with either peers or teachers. However, according to Raimes (1983), group work in the classroom has been shown valuable for native speakers who are learning to write. Inexperienced writers are less fearful when a few

of their peers read and comment on what they write, they like to see what their peers produce and they welcome the unthreatening exchange of ideas that happens in a small group. This group work is especially beneficial for the ESL learners, who need more time and opportunity to practice using the language with others. And according to Hawkins (1985) "working with groups is a mutual, enhancing environment for active, socially realistic learning" (p. 37).

Although group work has been proven to be advantageous to language learners, the teacher might justifiably feel that with groups of students talking to each other, away from the teacher's direct supervision, a little of the teacher's control of the class is sacrificed. To some extent, it probably is. But when control means that it is mostly the teacher who is speaking and asking questions, then, student participation and involvement will drop. The students, not the teacher, need the practice in language use.

Consider the following two situations :

1. The teacher assigns a topic, such as "My Favourite Sport" to the students, telling them how to go about doing it, explaining what the teacher wants in a piece of writing, and giving them thirty minutes to write the composition.
2. The teacher asks a question, such as "What is your favourite sport and why?" and asks the students to discuss this in the class in small groups of four or five students. During the discussion, the teacher walks around the room, contributing to the group discussions, helping students who are stuck for particular words or phrases and asking leading questions to draw more silent students into discussion. One student in each group takes notes and keeps an account of the discussion and later reports to the whole class so that other students can comment and ask questions. While each group is reporting to the whole class, a student writes a summary of the main points on the

board. Only then do the students write - for a student in another group as the reader.

(Raimes 1983 : 19)

In the first writing situation, students listen to the teacher and then plunge into writing. They are entirely dependent upon their own resources, for both content and grammar, with no access to any resources of information. In the second situation, students begin by actually using - before they write - the content, vocabulary, idioms, grammar and sentence structures that they will need when they do write. They rehearse the topic, they get ideas from hearing others, they make connections. When they finally sit down to write, the blank page is no longer quite so awesome.

Another group activity during the prewriting stage is brainstorming. Brainstorming lets students work together in the classroom in small groups to say as much as they can about a topic. The teacher does not have to monitor grammar or punctuation, except when the speaker cannot be understood, though the teacher will obviously be the resource person to whom students turn as they search for the right word or the right structure to express their ideas. Whatever the writing assignment is based on - a reading, picture, map, personal experience or an examination essay question - it can be preceded by student talk, specifically by a brainstorming activity, with students producing relevant vocabulary, making comments, asking questions and making associations as freely as they can in a short time. After brainstorming orally together, students can then do the same on paper, writing down as many ideas as they can without worrying about grammar, spelling, organization or the quality of the ideas. Then, they will have something to work with, instead of a blank page.

4.6.1.1 Peer Criticism / Peer Tutoring

Most teachers and administrators are now aware of the fact that peer-tutoring "is a promising 'new' way of applying principles of collaborative learning in organized programs of college instruction" (Bruffee 1978 : 432). Of course only the organization is new, since wise teachers have always known that students and pupils can often teach each other things which resist assimilation through the direct instruction of a teacher. However, one question should be considered : Do peer tutors replace teachers? According to Bruffee (1978), the answer to this question is an unequivocal no. In fact, peer tutoring tends to create more rewarding work - especially for teachers of introductory courses, and potentially for teachers of advanced courses as well. Peer tutoring supplements rather than replaces the formal classroom teaching that students unquestionably need. It is proven that "most students also need informal, unstructured relations with knowledgeable, interested peers in order to profit most from formal instruction" (Bruffee 1978 : 432-433).

Simply the presence of a sympathetic peer to talk over academic problems with seems to have some positive effect on students' work. According Hawkins (1985) :

Perhaps peers make good critics not so much because one may know something the other doesn't, but because it's more fun to work through problems together with students your own age than to work in isolation under the direction of someone from a different generation.

(Hawkins 1985 : 641)

Beck (1978) in her study at Nassau Community College, seems to agree with Hawkins when she states that :

On the whole less self-confident, less verbal, less skilled and less motivated than most four-year college students, community college students have the most to gain from exchanging ideas with someone who is a peer and with whom they can make the most of the informal environment that a writing workshop affords. If beginning writers are to see writing as a real means of communicating, it seems logical that they begin with those who will be most understanding of their words and ideas and most supportive of their attempts to put them together.

(Beck 1978 : 439)

The educational and financial advantages of peer tutoring are clear. But perhaps of equal importance are the valuable lessons in human relations that tutors and tutees learn from each other. In the interchanges of the workshop they have the opportunity to get to know and understand people whom they might otherwise not meet or talk to. They learn the ways in which people can help one another and the sorts of attitudes that are conducive to the constructive exchange of information and ideas. One student-tutor in Beck's (1978) study remarked to her that she had learned more about people in one semester of tutoring than she had in any of her psychology or sociology courses. Also tutors can improve their own writing by helping someone else improve his or hers.

Peer tutoring also benefit the tutees. In fact, Beck (1978) showed that the overwhelming majority preferred student-tutors to faculty-tutors. A poll of classroom teachers indicated as much improvement in the writing of students tutored by peers as those tutored by faculty; several instructors noticed increased enthusiasm about writing in general in students of peer tutors (Beck 1978). This is not surprising because peers provide tutees with accessible models. Tutees can hope to emulate the skills of their peers, while those of their teachers sometimes seem hopelessly beyond them. Furthermore, most students with writing problems have had little experience with writing as an authentic means of communicating their own thoughts and ideas. They

seldom see writing as a means to clarify and objectify. Peer tutoring gives them a chance to relax and test their written communications on a reader who will respond immediately. And, too, a peer is likely to find the ideas and experiences of a tutee familiar, even to share them, and to allow plenty of latitude in both language and ideas. This sympathetic response helps new writers get started and encourages them to explore new forms of expression for their ideas.

4.6.1.2 Peer Evaluation

Peer evaluation involves peers who meet in small support groups to respond to each other in writing. The interpersonal skills needed for peer evaluation can also be developed at this time. A suggested procedure follows :

1. First stage. Students work in pairs on tasks that take fifteen to twenty minutes to complete. (These tasks do not have to be related to writing or even English). "Work with someone you do not know" and "Work with someone you have not worked with before" are criteria for selection of partners.
2. Second stage. Students work in groups of four on tasks of fifteen to twenty minutes. Groups change with each task. A group of students working in front of the rest of the class can be used to model and shape desired group behaviour. Roles (recorder, discussion leader etc.) may be assigned. When all students seem accepted in these groups, the class progresses to the next stage.
3. Third stage. The teacher assigns students to groups for sustained projects. Evaluation procedures may be used to focus on group dynamics and interpersonal skills.

4. Fourth stage. Students select their groups for sustained projects or supports.

5. Whenever necessary or appropriate, a class may return to a prior form of group work.

(Beaven 1977 : 148)

During peer evaluation, teachers need to provide many opportunities for students to write immediately after the presentation of a stimulus like nonverbal movies, sensory awareness activities or interpersonal encounters.

Advantages of Peer Evaluation

Peer evaluation offers each student an opportunity to observe how his or her writing affects others. As trust and support grow in the small groups, students begin writing for peers, developing a sense of audience, becoming aware of their own voices and using their voices to produce certain effects in others (Beaven 1977). According to Silver (1978) "probably the single most important condition for teaching writing is the willingness on the part of the student writer to accept criticism and grow as a result of it. A consensus of peers is often more influential than a single opinion of a teacher" (p. 435).

Research studies dealing with peer groups and evaluation of writing (e.g., Lagana 1972, Ford 1973) indicate that improvement in theme-writing ability and grammar usage, when small groups of students engage in peer evaluation, may equal or even exceed the improvement that occurs under evaluation procedures carried out by the

teacher. Lagana, in particular, discovered that his experimental group improved more than the control group in organization, critical thinking and sentence revision; the control group showed greater improvement in conventions. Ford (1973) found that the college freshmen in the experimental group showed significantly higher gains in both grammar and composition ability.

Peer evaluation also strengthens the interpersonal skills needed for collaboration and cooperation as students identify strong and weak passages and revise ineffectiveness, as they set goals for each other and as they encourage risk-taking behaviours in writing. When peers have regular opportunities to share their writing and to take part in evaluation procedures, they exercise power or control over decisions that affect their work. Furthermore, as the dynamics of small groups evolve, peers develop a sense of group inclusion, acceptance, support, trust, reality, testing and collaboration (Beaven 1977).

The educational value of group work, the personal-growth potential and the development of interpersonal skills make peer evaluation highly desirable for classroom use. Students seem to learn how to handle written language more effectively as they read what peers have written; peer models seem to be more efficacious than models from established writers. As peers collaborate to revise passages, they engage in taxing work, motivating them to diagnose what is wrong, prescribe what is needed and then collectively struggle through revision procedures. Editing and revising become more palatable as group efforts and when everyone in the group is stuck, the "teachable comment" comes forth (Beaven 1977).

Another advantage is that the teacher is relieved of spending countless hours on grading papers. Interestingly, all the research studies on peer evaluation emphasize this point (Lagana 1972; Maize 1952; Sutton and Allen 1964; Ford 1973; Pierson 1967; Sager

1973). Through the use of peer evaluation procedures, students are able to write more frequently and to receive more immediate feedback and teachers have more time for individualized instruction and for conferences with students.

Yet there are disadvantages to peer evaluation. Group processes take time, groups that function tend to spend half their time on process and half on task (Beaven 1977). If a curriculum has vast amounts of material to cover and if the teacher feels compelled to cover everything, frustration is bound to set in unless teachers and students want to spend time on group processes. Interpersonal skills take time to develop and many teachers may need the security of an inservice course or a summer school course in group work before they will feel sufficiently competent to use group procedures (Beaven 1977).

Another problem that has emerged is that "some teachers do not trust group processes" (Beaven 1977 :152). In one school, teachers working with peer evaluation were first reading the papers, tallying the mistakes and developing class exercises to deal with errors. After the group work, teachers read the evaluations and papers (again!), discovering that some peers were correcting passages with no mistakes. So teachers were correcting the miscorrections, spending an inordinate amount of time and becoming frustrated. Because peers obviously lack the sophistication of the teacher, they will misperceive some passages, but these distortions can be looked at diagnostically, since they illuminate where the students are and what they think is good and bad, effective and ineffective, correct and incorrect. Students misperceptions can help the teacher determine where to begin instruction. Moreover, a teacher must allow students to have freedom to make mistakes and to develop confidence in their own perceptions and decisions. If a teacher is able to facilitate such group work, then, peer evaluation has untapped potential for the improvement of student writing. If this is the case, then, peer evaluation should be used much more extensively.

4.6.2 Feedback

Feedback is a fundamental element of a process approach to writing. It can be defined as input from a reader to a writer with the effect of providing information to the writer for revision (Keh 1990). In other words, it is the comments, questions and suggestions a reader gives a writer to produce "reader-base prose" (Flower 1979) as opposed to writer-base prose. Through feedback, the writer learns where he or she has misled or confused the reader by not supplying enough information, illogical organization, lack of development of ideas or something like inappropriate word-choice.

A review of literature on writing reveals three major areas of feedback as revision. These areas are : peer feedback, teachers' comments as feedback and conferences as feedback.

4.6.2.1 Peer Feedback

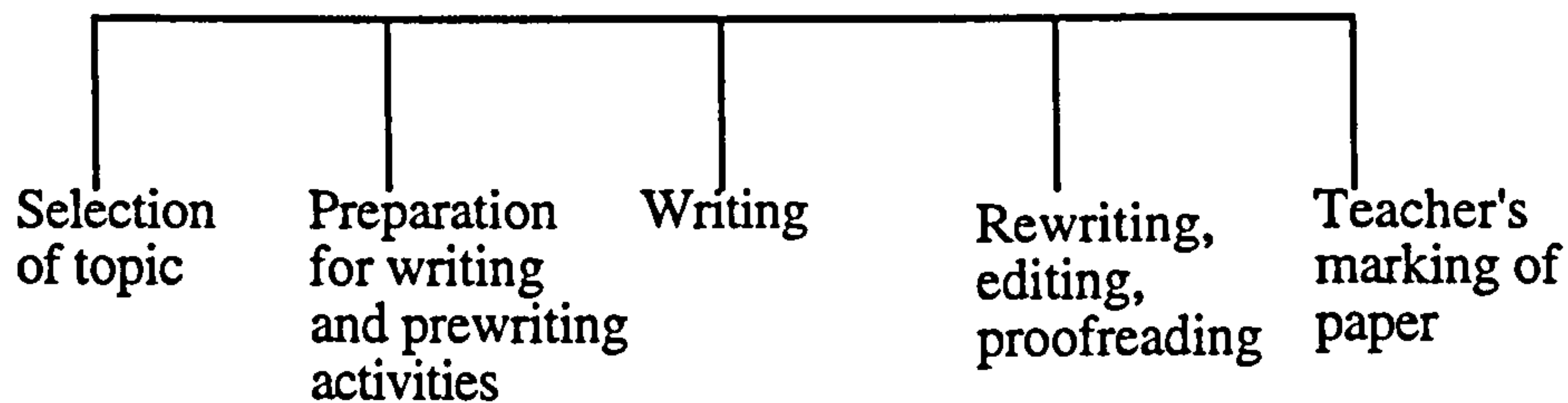
In literature on writing, peer feedback is referred to under many names for example peer response, peer editing, peer critiquing and peer evaluation (Refer to 1.1 and 1.1). Each name connotes a particular slant to the feedback, mainly in terms of where along the process this feedback is given and the focus of the feedback. For example peer response may come earlier on in the process with a focus on content (organization of ideas, development with examples) and peer editing nearing the final stages of drafting with a focus on grammar, punctuation, etc. (Keh 1990).

4.6.2.2 Feedback from the teacher

Written Comments

Responding to students' writing is very much part of the process of teaching writing. It is not just tacked onto the end of a teaching sequence, a last chore for teachers and a bore for the students. Rather, it is as important as devising materials and preparing lessons. More often than not, the sequence of classroom writing follows the pattern in Figure 4.2.

Figure 4.2 Writing process sequence



Source : Raimes 1983 : 139.

Most teachers of writing will agree that marking comments on students' papers causes the most frustration and usually takes the most time. Teachers worry whether the comments will be understood, produce the desired results or even be read. To avoid writing ineffective and inefficient comments, the first step is for the teacher to respond as a concerned reader to a writer - as a person, not a grammarian or grade-giver. Kehl, for example, urges the teacher to communicate "... in a distinctly human voice, with sincere respect for the writer as a person and s sincere interest in his improvement as a writer" (1970 : 976).

Comments on students' papers that take the form of a paraphrase of the ideas expressed, praise, questions or suggestions are more productive than an end comment like only "Fair", "Good", or "Needs more work". What has been said of writers writing in their first language - "Noticing and praising whatever a student does well improves writing more than any kind of amount of correction of what he does badly" (Diederich 1974 : 20) - applies to ESL students, too. So the teacher's first task should be to read the paper through once first before writing anything on it and then to note what the student has done well, from organizing ideas to using the apostrophe correctly (Raimes 1983).

Another recommendation is to limit comments according to fundamental problems, bearing in mind that students cannot pay attention to everything at once. This requires teacher to distinguish clearly between "higher order" (such as development of ideas, organization and overall focus of what they are writing) and "lower order" (surface, mechanical errors) concerns, not only when commenting on final draft, but also when giving written comments as part of the writing process (Keh 1990).

According to Zamel "teachers and students should be working on the problems of writing as they write" (1983 : 182). When students are incapable of generating lists or notes, which seemed to be the case for the least skilled writers classroom time needs to be devoted to brainstorming (either oral or written) and the development of prewriting activities. As students articulate their ideas, their teacher, rather than imposing some predetermined order on these ideas, should be helping them to find this order by raising questions about the writer's intention and focusing on the discrepancies that exist between what the writer wanted to communicate and what is in fact communicated. As students come to understand the importance of this dialogue, both through one-to-one conferences and through classroom discussion centring on student writing, they can begin to serve as "teachers" for each other, either in pairs or small group collaboration

and can then incorporate this teacher-reader voice into their very own interactions with their texts. It is in this way, and not through the post-hoc comments that appear on students papers, comments that tend to perpetuate the erroneous notion that writing is a matter of following a set of prescribed rules (Sommers 1982), that they are likely to develop a real sense of reader expectations.

Intervening throughout the process sets up a dynamic relationship which gives writers the opportunity to tell their readers what they mean to say before these writers are told what they ought to have done. Raimes (1983) seems to agree with this point when she mentions that "the teacher as sympathetic reader and editor can intervene at various points in the process" (p. 141). The stages of the writing process, then, will look like this :

1. Selection of topic by teacher and/or students.
2. Preparation for writing/prewriting activities.
3. Teacher read notes, lists, outlines, etc. and makes suggestions.
4. Student writes draft 1.
5. Student makes outline of draft 1.
6. Teacher and students read draft : add comments and suggestions about content.
7. Student writes draft 2.
8. Student reads draft 2 with guidelines or checklist : make changes.
9. Teacher reads draft 2 : indicates good points and areas for improvement.
10. Student writes draft 3.
11. Student edits and proofreads.
12. Teacher evaluates progress from draft 1 to draft 3.

13. Teacher assigns follow-up tasks to help in weak areas.

It is through such a relationship that readers (teachers) can gain insight into the writers' (students') thoughts and discover that, although the text may appear illogical, it was in fact produced quite rationally but "followed misunderstood instruction, inappropriate principles or logical processes that did not work" (Murray 1982 : 144). In the case of ESL writing instruction, for example, the outlines that students are asked to formulate or the models that they are asked to imitate in order to inhibit the transfer of certain cultural thought patterns, as is suggested by Kaplan (1967), may have little effect on writing since these approaches are based on predictions about students' performances, predictions that are hypothetical and consequently not necessarily accurate. It is much more sensible and productive, therefore, to adopt an approach more akin to error analysis and to create syllabi (rather than one single syllabus) which are student-centred; by studying what it is the students do in their writing, the teachers can learn from them what they still need to be taught (Zamel 1983). All of this, of course, applies no less to language-related concerns. Through the interaction that is shared by writers and their readers, it is possible to discover the individual problems students have with reference to syntax, vocabulary and spelling. It is possible to find out which errors are the result of incorrectly formed rules about the language (Bartholomae 1980). One can even discover that errors may be the result of an ineffective monitor (Krashen 1982). For example, one might be able to determine that spelling errors may be the result of not "seeing" the words in the dictionary rather than a failure to have looked them up. This of course makes the typical exhortation to the students to use the dictionary totally irrelevant and also makes the teachers aware of the need to teach specific strategies for dictionary use.

Responding to writing in this way is based on the assumptions that establishing the cause for error is necessary before prescribing corrective measures and that addressing individual needs, letting the students teach the teachers what they need to know, should

form the basis of further instruction. Corder made this point about language learning and teaching :

By examining the learner's own "built-in" syllabus, we may be able to allow the learner's innate strategies to dictate our practice and determine our syllabus; we may learn to adapt ourselves to his needs rather than impose upon him our preconceptions of how he ought to learn, what he ought to learn and when he ought to learn it.

(Corder 1967 :170)

Brumfit, too, critical of an "accuracy-based curriculum (which) is by definition a deficit curriculum for students, because it does not start from what the student does", has explained the importance of a "student-centred curriculum":

A course which was based on what the student could do himself most naturally would simultaneously indicate to the teacher what his next moves should be, and to the student where he needed to adjust his intuitions and where, therefore, he required help most.

(Brumfit 1979 : 188)

Such an approach is especially warranted when "we are dealing with ESL students who are seemingly quite advanced by virtue of their class placement and their oral language skills but whose writing may reflect a different situation entirely" (Zamel 1983 : 183).

As students work through a set of successive drafts, coming to appreciate the purposefulness of revision, they should learn from their teachers and fellow students that issues of content and meaning must be addressed first and that language is of

concern only when the ideas to be communicated have been delineated. This is no easy matter for either ESL teachers or students to accept, given the fact that these students are still developing linguistic competency and that their teachers feel responsible for advancing this development. However, it makes little sense to pinpoint errors in the first drafts, since these first papers may undergo substantial changes once they have been read and responded to (Sommers 1982). Furthermore, a premature focus on correctness and usage gives students the impression that language form, rather than how language functions, is what is important and may discourage them from making further serious attempts to communicate. As Brannon and Knoblauch say "if we preempt the writer's control by ignoring intended meanings in favour of formal and technical flaws, we also remove the incentive to write and the motivation to improve skills (1982 : 165).

The most recent approaches to language instruction have underlined the fact that language learning can best be promoted when language is used purposefully and communicatively, when language accuracy serves linguistic fluency and is subordinate to it. As one proponent of such approaches, Widdowson insists that language teaching allow for the "capacity for making sense, for negotiating meaning, for finding expression for new experience" that creative use of language is not "the sole prerogative of native speaker" (1978 : 212). The language learning process characterized in this way, as a process of making meaning, parallels exactly the process of composing. It is time for ESL teachers of composition to begin to see the relationship between these two processes and to recognize that meaning is created through language, even before the language is written down.

4.6.2.3 The Writing Conference as Feedback

The individual conference between student and teacher, which occurs over a draft of the paper (Graves 1975; Murray 1978), is a widely recommended technique for teaching during the writing process. Conferences are thought by directors of freshmen composition programmes across the U.S. to be the most successful of their teaching programmes. In a national survey of exemplary teachers of writing at the elementary and secondary levels, conferences proved to be the only type of feedback during the writing process that the teachers consistently agreed to be helpful. A survey of some of the students of these teachers at the secondary level showed that students found talking to their teacher during the writing process the best technique for helping them learn to write (Graves 1975). Carnicelli (1980) says that "conferences are especially effective in a process approach because they occur when the student needs and appreciates help" (1980 : 102). He continues :

If a student "can't think of anything to write about," a prewriting conference can help identify some promising subjects. If the student has found a decent subject but has written a dead-end draft, a conference can suggest new questions to ask, new possibilities to explore.

(1980 : 102-103)

The pages of journals for teachers published by the National Council of Teachers of English contain an extensive literature on the writing conference. Practitioners of this technique describe the conference as a "student-centred" learning situation where "a student discovers his own ideas", where "more 'real' teacher-student interaction" takes place (Murray 1978) These articles urge teachers to listen to students in order to teach them, to allow students to voice their own concerns about writing and to focus on the

problems they encounter when they sit down to form their ideas into coherent prose.

Strong evidence suggests that conferences "work" so effectively as part of a writing course because they allow more verbal interaction between teachers and individual students, more talk about each student's writing than is possible in the classroom where each teacher must manage a roomful of students. Graves (1983) singles out the student-teacher conference as a central interactive event in the development of young children's writing skills; writing conferences permit teachers to respond immediately to students' notions about what writing is and to help them adopt strategies to improve their skills.

The assumption in the literature on conferences, thus, is that teacher-student interaction contributes to student learning. Murray (1980) points out that when the teachers listen to students analyzing their own writing, students are learning to react to their own work. In essence, the conference is a training ground for self-evaluative response. In the learning situation of the writing conference, then, the students' "roles" include analyzing and thinking about their writing as well as putting their thoughts into words. The teachers' "roles" include listening to the student, identifying composing problems, helping the students solve those problems, not just for the moment but the future as well and deciding how much higher the student can be encouraged to reach.

Vygotsky (1968) provides a theoretical framework to account more specifically for why this type of teacher-student interaction during the writing conference has such great teaching potential. He points out that although traditional approaches define levels of development based on what children can do alone, such measures do not adequately describe children's mental capabilities to learn. He defines the "zone of proximal development" as "the distance between the actual development level as determined by independent problem solving under adult guidance or collaboration with more capable

peers (p. 86).

A Rationale for the Conference Method

There are many good reasons for using the conference method. Carnicelli (1980) has grouped them all together under five main headings :

1. Individualized instruction in writing is more effective than group instruction.

According to Carnicelli (1980) not one of the 1,800 students he studied found classes as useful as conferences. Some of the students put the matter bluntly. "Without conferences, the course would be meaningless". "Conferences are helpful, but class is a 'waste of time'". Most students found at least some value in their classes, but even those who liked their classes the most found them less useful than the conferences. "Although valuable information was disseminated during class, I learned about my writing in my biweekly conferences".

The strictly psychological value of individual writing conferences was also apparent in the student comments. According to Carnicelli (1980) a number of students expressed deep insecurity about themselves as writers and appreciated the privacy of the conference.

2. The teacher can make a more effective response to the paper in an oral conference than in written comments.

"A teacher who reads papers at home and relies on written comment is working in a vacuum" (Carnicelli 1980 : 106). If the task were simply to assign a grade, this practice

would be sufficient; but, if the task is to help the student revise the paper, the teacher can benefit greatly from the student's actual presence.

A conference is far more effective than written comments as a way of communicating with students. It is possible for a teacher to make more comments in a conference than in an equal amount time spent writing. It is easier and more efficient to talk about complex problems than it is to write about them. Written comments serve very well for correcting small points of grammar or style, but it is difficult to clarify a large problem of content or point of view without talking to the student.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE TEACHING OF WRITING : PRODUCT VS PROCESS

5.1 Introduction

As we have seen the teaching of writing either to ESOL students or native speakers has for long been mainly concerned with the final written product - a product in which focus is on aspects of usage and correct form. The emphasis on an error-free product has, on the one hand 'influenced classroom practices', and on the other 'led teachers to adopt methods and materials they assumed would positively influence their students [correct] writing' (Zamel 1982 : 196). Product-oriented practices, however, have been challenged by recent research on the composing process.

In view of the above, the teaching of writing should be described under two major headings. One is the product-based teaching model; the other is the process-oriented teaching approach. In attempting to discuss these approaches, the researcher does not draw a line between findings in research on L1 learners and L2 learners. The reason is that research in writing has revealed that there are a number of composing problems which act independent of the linguistic competence of writers and which 'are shared by both native and non-native speakers of English' (Jacobs 1982 : 10). A study done by Lay indicates that her five Chinese subjects 'used many of the strategies used by native language students in composing' (1983 : 19). Jones and Tetroe found that their five Venezuelan students provided 'strong, direct data for the transfer of first language skill to second language' in writing and concluded that 'second language composing is not a

different animal from first language composing' (cited in Raimes 1985 : 231). Similarities between unskilled L1 and L2 writers have been pointed out, too. Unskilled ESL writers were found not to revise efficiently, to focus on local concerns in their texts (Heuring 1984), and 'like inexperienced or basic native language writers ... to have a very limited and limiting notion of what composing involves' (Zamel 1984 : 198-199). The similarities between composing in L1 and L2 are also discussed by Raimes : 'ESL literature ... is similar to the literature on L1 writing in that it recommends journals, free-writing, brain storming, students' choice of topics, teaching heuristics (devices for invention), multiple drafts, revisions, group work, peer conferencing, and supportive feedback' (1986 : 155). Zamel (1982b), based on self-reports and written work of such students, revealed that 'proficient ESL writers, like their native counterparts, experience writing as a process of creating meaning. Rather than knowing from the outset what it is they will say, these students explore their ideas and thoughts on paper, discovering in the act of doing so not only what these ideas and thoughts are, but also the form with which best to express them. Moreover, they recognize the importance of being flexible, starting anew when necessary, and continuing to rework their papers over time as they take into account another reader's frame of reference. The difficulties faced while composing also show the similarities between L1 and L2 students. Jones (1982) found that ESL and native English-speakers may experience similar difficulties with the composing process. And in their study of academic writing of Chinese students, Mohan and Au-Yeung Lo (1985) have suggested that although native speakers of English are competent speakers, 'they are not necessarily competent writers; they, like L2 students, have difficulties with organization in writing' (Mohan and Au-Yeung Lo, 1985 : 528)

5.2 The teaching of writing : the product-based model.

5.2.1. Writing as form

The main concern of teachers of writing has been a written product free of any language errors and displaying the ability to produce well-formed, grammatically accurate sentences. Such concern is revealed in the work of Kirby and Kantor (1983) who, investigating the teaching practices in American schools, have noted that 'the teaching of writing has been dominated by a preoccupation with form' (cited in Zamel 1976 : 69). Zamel (1976) has argued that concern with grammatical accuracy, with form and syntax, has rendered the teaching of writing 'to be synonymous with skill in usage and structure' (Zamel 1976 : 69). It is no wonder then that the teaching of grammar, whether traditional, structural or transformational-generative, has been dominating the English classroom for such a long time. Flower and Hayes (1977) refer to these grammatical practices in the writing classroom as being 'the same ones English academics were using in the 17th century' (Flower and Hayes 1977 : 449).

The assumption behind the teaching of grammar in the writing classroom is clearly a product-oriented view. Teachers, trained to look at and for a series of formed sentences and detecting a number of language errors, would hope that grammatical drilling would help learners' increase their ability to create sentences that are not fragments or run-ons or incomprehensible (Destafano 1977, cited in Haynes 1978 : 81).

Haynes (1978) states that :

Historically if there has been any consistency in the teaching of writing in this country, it lies in the fact that most of the approaches used have been negative. Even from the early

grades, students are assigned a topic and told to write a composition. The paper is then corrected and sometimes revised, and this pattern continues throughout the high school years. For the most part, it is probably safe to say that most students have been given very little instruction in the matter of how to write and that writing is generally done with the prior knowledge that the correction of errors will follow.

(Haynes 1978 : 82)

It seems that a great many teachers still adhere to the belief that the learning of formal (traditional) grammar results in improved writing or to the idea that the only way to teach good writing is to make certain that all corrections are marked. The role and effectiveness of grammar exercises in the writing classroom have, however, been challenged by research on writing. This challenge goes back at least to the year 1935 when 'the Curriculum Commission of the National Council of Teachers of English (in the USA) reported that scientific studies had not shown that the study of grammar was effective in eliminating writing errors' (Haynes 1978 : 82). In a similar study on the effect of formal study of traditional grammar on writing, Storm (1960) came to the conclusion that 'a knowledge of traditional grammar has little effect' (Storm 1960 : 13). In a longitudinal study over a period of two years to examine the extent to which instruction in traditional grammar could improve the written composition of young learners, Harris (1962) has concluded that 'the study of English grammatical terminology had a negligible or even a relatively harmful effect upon the correctness of children's writing' (quoted in Braddock et al 1963 : 83). And in 1967, following a conference of the teaching of English at Dartmouth College in the United States, Muller (1967) states that 'the clearest agreement was that the study of traditional grammar had no effect (or even harmful effect) on the improvement of written composition' (cited in Braddock et al 1963 : 83).

Literature research on writing also revealed similar criticism to both structured and transformational grammars as means to improve writing. A revealing study is the one carried out by Sherwin in 1969. Sherwin reviewed a selected number of studies including those of Suggs (1961), Link-Shuster (1962), Miller (1962), Bateman and Zidonis (1966), and O' Donnel (1963), as well as others. She came to the conclusion that formal study of either structural or transformational grammar 'is about as effective as traditional grammar in improving writing' (Sherwin 1969, cited in Haynes 1978 : 82). A longitudinal study conducted by Elley et al (1976) 'to determine whether a study of transformational grammar had any positive effects on the growth of students' writing' had led the researchers to write 'that the transformational grammar had no effect on growth in writing' (Elley et al 1976 : 18).

It has, further, been argued that when the study of formal grammar proved fruitless, attention shifted to what Zamel calls 'a still newer grammar' (1976 : 72), generative transformational grammar. But despite claims that such study would lead to 'an increase in the number of grammatically correct sentences', further research has led to the conclusion that the 'study of grammar, whether formal or not, has ... no or even a harmful influence upon the students' writing ability' (Zamel 1976 : 73).

It is obvious from the above discussion that the shift from one grammar to another has been made in the hope that such study could help student writers 'clean' up their written products on the one hand, and could prepare them to produce future error-free stretches of sentences on the other. Obviously it is as well that such remedies totally ignore the nature of the process or processes which mix together in a variety of complex ways to create the 'desired' product.

However, teachers of writing as well as researchers, observing the recurrence of language errors in the student writers' writing and recognizing the inadequacy of the

formal study of grammar, have sought solutions in practices beyond the confines of the parts of the sentence. This has led to a familiar practice which rejects transformational rules, yet involves the manipulation of information, namely sentence combining practice.

5.2.2. Sentence combining and syntactic maturity

In an attempt to help learners in dealing with the complexity of sentences through subordination and embedment, which it has been hoped, may reflect positively in students' writing ability, teachers have implemented sentence-combining exercises enthusiastically. It is, in fact, evident in the literature on writing that 'sentence-combining practice has attracted a great deal of interest and prompted much research because of the positive effect it seems to have on syntactic maturity' (Zamel 1983 : 81).

In her study on basic writing students, Mina Shaughnessy (1977) writes:

The practice of consciously transforming sentences from simple to complex structures (and vice versa), of compounding the parts of sentences, of transforming independent clauses, of collapsing clauses into phrases or words helps students cope with complexity in much the same way as finger exercise in piano or bar exercises in ballet enable performers to work out specific kinds of co-ordination that must be virtually habitual before the performer is free to interpret or even execute a total composition.

(Shaughnessy 1977 : 77)

Although Shaughnessy warns of the above analogy because 'the writer cannot easily isolate technique from meaning' she goes on to say that 'sentence-combining offers

perhaps the closest thing to finger exercises for the inexperienced writer ... [helping him] generate complex sentences out of kernel sentences' (Shaughnessy 1977 : 78). Similarly O' Hare (1973) following Mellon (1967), Miller and Nay (1967, 1968), has come to conclude that 'sentence-combining, when it is not in any way dependent on instruction in traditional or transformational grammar, enhances syntactic growth and leads to greatly improved overall writing quality' (O' Hare 1973; quoted in Kameen 1978 : 395). Kameen (1978), quoting research that has favoured sentence-combining practice such as Crymes (1971), Combs (1975), Klassen (1978) and Daiker et al (1978), argues that sentence-combining exercises 'encourage the students to insert and delete items of their own choice and permit them to use a wider range of structural and stylistic variants ... during the writing process' (Kameen 1978 : 398). Other researchers, impressed with the game-like orientation of sentence-combining practice', have carried out studies the results of which 'point to the positive and significant relationship between sentence-combining practice and syntactic growth' (Zamel 1980 :81).

The studies reported above indicate how sentence-combining practice has been used as a means to enable students to produce a number of structurally complex sentences, and to lead them 'out of the shelter of the simple sentence and the compound sentence with AND and BUT' (Rivers and Temperley 1978, cited in Haynes 1978 : 86). This, in turn, implies that the product-based model views writing as synonymous to a collection of grammatically well-structured sentences. This practice, however, has recently been questioned.

Haynes (1978), expressing an awareness of the research which supports sentence-combining practice, suggests that 'further research on sentence-combining is needed and that teachers should be alert for further syntactic fluency over a long period of time' (Haynes 1978 : 84). Jacobs (1982), after observing her subjects during composing

tasks, recommends that 'for a teacher to advise subordinating - sentence-combining - would probably have little effect in the long run' (Jacobs 1982 : 29). In an attempt to find out whether syntactic gains are retained over a period of time or not, Combs (1976), a proponent of sentence-combining practice, has observed that 'the retention of syntactic gains on the part of the experimental group eight weeks after sentence-combining practice ... were considerably less than they were immediately following the period of instruction' (Combs 1976; quoted in Zamel 1980 : 82). Perkins et al, (1982) have supervised a study to test the effectiveness of sentence-combining practice and concluded that 'the research hypothesis that the experimental group who received sentence-combining exercises would write better compositions ... than the control group who didn't receive sentence-combining exercises was not fully confirmed' (Perkins et al 1982, cited in Jacobs 1982 : 29).

Further doubts about the effectiveness of sentence-combining practice have been expressed. Zamel (1980) argues that 'the claims made about the effect of sentence-combining practice on overall quality refer to improvement in an area of writing (i.e., syntax) that has little to do with the larger concerns of composing' (Zamel 1980 : 83). Besides, sentence-combining practice views the sentence as a self-contained unit of thought on the one hand and the text as a collection of well-formed, and preferably, long, complex sentences on the other. In response to both views, Shaughnessy (1977), writes that 'the mature writer is recognized not so much by the quality of his individual sentences as by his ability to relate a flow of sentences, a pattern of thought' (Shaughnessy 1977 : 226). This awareness of moving beyond the sentence has led to a new practice in the teaching of writing : the use of 'Model Passages', commonly called 'Models', longer units of written discourse.

5.2.3. Texts models and the teaching of writing

The use of Models in teaching writing is a very old practice. In the past, 'boys learned to write Latin by imitating ... Cicero or ... Seneca ...[and] English writers of the 16th and 17th centuries tried to reproduce in their vernacular the style of admired classical Latin writers' (Watson 1982 : 5). This practice has been exercised generation after generation. The better underlying assumption is that in order to better the written product, students need only to imitate the models - instances of perfect prose. Here again the practice is product-oriented and the concern is an error-free text. Recent research, however, has raised a number of questions.

To begin with, models, which are assumed to be representations of written discourse, 'are in fact based on grammatical manipulations ... [in which] writing seems to be synonymous with skill in usage and structure, and the assumption is that these exercises will improve the students' ability to compose' (Zamel 1976 : 69). Watson (1982), distinguishing between genuine prose models as 'a collection of sentences rather than text' - has argued that in both cases 'the focus is structural manipulation ... [and] that the communicative purpose of the model is ignored and perverted' (Watson 1982 : 9). Criticism to the use of models, however, has not been limited to the grammatical manipulation for which the models have been used.

Bloom (1979) describes the use of models as a 'traditional mode of teaching writing', and concludes that 'examinations of prose models ... rarely reveal the processes by which they were produced' (Bloom 1979 : 48). Taylor (1981) has argued that 'recent research designed to investigate the common pedagogical practice of teaching rhetorical patterns and organizational structure through the analysis of well-written models has raised some important questions' (Taylor 1981 : 7). Zamel (1983) argues that writing is

not simply analyzing and imitating models for such 'a pedagogy ... does not allow ... writers the freedom to explore their thoughts on paper' (Zamel 1983 : 167). Raimes (1983), criticizing product-based practices, argues that by giving students 'grammatical Band-Aids and doses of paragraph models ... we are teaching editing and imitating ... not composing' (Raimes 1983 : 262).

The use of models in teaching writing has received further criticism from varied perspectives. Watson (1982) argue that the model 'is the product of other people's writing, not the students' own product, and it is the product - not the process - of writing that is observed'. Taylor (1981), adopting a psycholinguistic view, points out that 'recent second language acquisition research ... suggests that in terms of the actual learning process teaching writing solely by analyzing and studying models may also be questionable' (Taylor 1981 : 7). Bloom (1979) warns that the teaching of models for imitation may have counter-productive results especially with 'high anxious writers [who] are forever comparing their [poor] work with Models of Great Literature, rather than with the writing of their peers' (Bloom 1979 :52).

5.2.4 Product-Based textbooks and the teaching of writing

So far the discussion on the teaching of writing has by and large, revealed an overwhelming dominance of what may be called a Grammar Approach whether this grammar is explicitly presented or implicitly manipulated. Furthermore, the writing act has been simply one which requires student writers to gather information, draw an outline, translate the outline into correct sentences, and edit what has been written. However, despite the scepticism research has been raising about such practices and views, they still seem to prevail. Why, one wonders, has this been so? The answer, or part of it at least, is seen in a recent article by Jack Richards (1984) who writes :

Some methods exist primarily in the form of materials - that is, as a TEXTBOOK (my emphasis) which embodies the principles of selection, organization and presentation of content that the method follows, together with a set of specifications as to how the materials are to be used . Consequently, methods that lead to TEXTS have a much higher adoption and survival rate. Audiolingual and communicative methods are widely known for this reason; they merely require a teacher buy a text and read the teacher's manual ...

(Richards 1984, cited in Spack : 13-14)

The literature of research on writing provides ample evidence for Richards' statement on the one hand and illustrates how composition textbooks have sustained the dominance of product-based approaches to the teaching of writing. On the other hand, Flower and Hayes (1980), expressing their views on the complex nature of the writing process, have criticized the textbooks which present writing as an act that 'proceeds in a series of discrete stages'. They add that 'when composition texts describe writing as a sequence of tidy sequential steps, the role of the writer is like that of a cook ... advised to follow certain steps : Select a topic, limit it, gather information, write it up and then remove errors and add commas' (Flower and Hayes 1980 : 33). Similar criticism is expressed by Spack (1984) who argues that despite research that reveals the complex nature of the composing process, 'most textbooks for the native English speakers and ESL students present a straightforward, mechanical view of writing' (Spack 1984 : 649). Raimes (1985), observing students engaged in the act of writing, suggests that 'contrary to what many textbooks advise, writers do not follow a neat sequence of planning, writing and then revising' (Raimes 1985 :229). Taylor (1981) rejects the assumption made by many college composition texts that 'writing is simply a process of filling in a prepared outline' (Taylor 1981 : 6). And Bloom (1979), recognizing a new trend in the approach to teaching writing, criticizes the 'how - to - do - it -books [which] ... make the process they're discussing deceptively easy - and uniform' (Bloom 1979 : 48).

Further criticism of product-based textbooks is also traced in the work of other researchers who look at these textbooks from other perspectives. Raimes (1983) argues against those 'textbooks that still divide and sequence the language into grammatical structure ... [and] stick firmly to the old tradition but ... add a component that includes new theory (Raimes 1983 : 541-542). Hairston (1982), arguing that textbooks have been 'product-centred for the past two decades', reports that 'when Donald Stewart made an analysis of rhetoric texts ... he found that only seven out of thirty four ... showed any awareness of current research in rhetoric' (Hairston 1982 : 80). In a similar study aimed at evaluating textbooks in view of research on the process of writing, Barbara Weaver (cited in Burhans, 1983) reviews 121 textbooks ... for development writing and freshman composition ... [and finds] only 31 [26 %] reflect any influence of the emerging knowledge (Burhans 1983 : 652). And when Sommers (1978) reviewed 15 textbooks to see how editing/revising is dealt with, she reported that all these books simply recommend 'clearing prose of all its linguistic litter' (Sommers 1978 : 96).

The role of textbooks, it should be noted, influences whether directly or indirectly, the selection of topics and the writing tasks, the attitudes of teachers and students towards the act of writing, the manner of evaluation of written work and other classroom practices.

5.2.5 Topics for writing : a product-based view

With a model in which writing is viewed simply as an act of what Taylor (1981 : 5) calls 'plan - outline - write' operation, the selection of a TOPIC for students to develop becomes of little, if not in fact, of no relevance whatsoever to the writing act.

However, teachers, interested in structure and form, have attempted to select topics they thought were easy to help students manipulate their linguistic knowledge. What constitutes an 'easy' topic has remained a matter of personal judgement. Raimes (1983), recognizing the creative function of writing, looks at the classroom practice retrospectively and writes :

Many of us, from the worthiest of motives, have assigned TOPICS we think will be easy enough so that our students will be able to concentrate on their grammar and sentence. We assign these because we feel that the students can wrestle with them unimpeded. But when we realize that what we are really saying there is that ideas are impediments to what we call 'good writing', its' time to re-examine what we are doing.

(Raimes 1983 : 265)

In such a situation one wonders whether what teachers decide is an 'easy' topic, is motivating enough for the student writer to invite his serious attention and genuine involvement. For if motivation is lacking and 'the writer has not made the task his own, he will probably turn to some linguistic 'package deal' : i.e., his preoccupation is with LANGUAGE' (Britton et al 1975 : 54). Spack (1983), evaluating her teaching practices in the writing classroom, writes 'Until 1980 ... we asked our students to fit a topic into a rhetorical form ... and to pay careful attention to the correctness of their grammar, punctuation and sentence structure' (Spack 1983 : 576).

In comparison to the writing task one fulfills in real-life situations and which 'is likely to give an EXPLORATORY aspect to the writing process' (Britton et al 1975 : 64), the writing task in the classroom situation 'is rarely compelling ... to give students an opportunity to immerse themselves totally in the topic to the extent that they really find that they have something important to say about it' (Taylor 1981 : 9).

It is worth noting, however, that according to the product-based model and the view this model adopts about writing, students are expected to write ONE draft and hand it in to the teacher for evaluation. In many cases the writing takes place in the classroom under the supervision of the teacher and has to be completed during the assigned session. And as mentioned earlier, very little time, if any, is assigned for genuine revision. Even when little time is available, students may check some surface errors such as punctuation, spelling and the like. Whether this activity occurs or not, it is done usually without feedback from the teacher.

5.2.6 The product-based model and the evaluation of writing

Obviously the assessment of a piece of written work is influenced by an attitude as to what constitutes good writing. In a product-based model, where obsession is with an error-free product, pointing out language errors becomes common practice in assessing students' written work. This is what Britton et al (1975 : 43) refer to as a 'tick and hand back' practice. Sommers (1982) brought to attention the common practice in responding to student writing where 'teachers identify errors in usage, diction and style ... and ask students to correct these errors' (Sommers 1982 : 150). Such practice, argues Sommers, becomes worse when 'we read [students' texts] with our preconceptions and preoccupations, expecting to find errors' (Sommers 1982 : 154).

The preoccupation with errors may, unfortunately, tempt teachers 'to read hastily, or to read only part [of student written text]' (Britton et al 1975 : 43). Zamel (1985) warns that an emphasis on 'mechanical errors' could create an impression among teachers 'that local errors are either as important, if not more important than meaning-related concerns' (Zamel 1985 : 82). The concern with eliminating errors could as well lead to the kind of writing that is 'vacuous and impersonal, polite and innocuous' (Collins

1981 : 201). Raimes (1983), observes 'most of us ... have praised a student for ... a piece of writing [with] no grammatical mistakes' (Raimes 1983 : 260). And Watson (1982), recognizing writing as a means to create meaning warns against assessment which limits itself to 'correcting spelling and stamping out mistakes of usage' (Watson 1982 : 140).

Implied in the above practice is the idea that pointing out errors has constituted feedback to learners to consider in their future writing. Also implied is that this feedback derives from and is intended to improve the written product, with very little consideration to the process or processes which created such a product.

5.2.7 Product-based feedback and the teaching of composition

As indicated above, feedback has almost always been limited to pointing out language errors. Further, feedback, by being based on what students have already written, has failed to provide substantial guidance to the student while composing, i.e., before the final draft is reached. It should be noted, however, that teachers usually write general comments on students' compositions in the hope that students make use of such comments in future.

In describing written comments on students' writing, Sommers (1983) describes this practice as 'the most widely used method ... [yet] the least understood' (Sommers 1983 : 148). Comparing computer-assisted comments and those given by teachers, Sommers (1983) describes teachers' comments as 'arbitrary and idiosyncratic', pointing out that those 'contradictory messages ... are worded in such a way that it is difficult for students to know what is the most important problem in the text and what problems are of lesser importance' (Sommers 1983 : 151). Ziv (1984) has indicated that responses to

student writing 'whether at the conceptual, structural or sentential level ... are often misunderstood, misinterpreted and unhelpful to students' (Ziv 1984 : 362). Daiker and Hayes (1984) asked university students how much they understood of the comments their teachers had written on their compositions - very few students had understood the teachers' remarks.

In addition to being confusing and misleading, feedback is at times, characterized by what Sommers (1983 : 149) calls 'hostility and mean-spiritedness'. Bloom (1979), describing the need to build up self-confidence in anxious writers and expressing an awareness of feedback similar to that described by Sommers, warns that such feedback entails an 'implicit threat' to students who fear that their essays 'will be the next devastating scrutiny' (Bloom 1979 : 52). Kameen (1983), arguing that comments of a 'desperate or dismissive kind' interfere with attempts to improve writing, has pointed out that a major finding in his work is that as many as 'eight percent of responses to year ten writing were predominantly negative ["unoriginal", "slapdash", "poorly presented"]' (Kameen 1978 : 202).

Another characteristic of product-based feedback is that it does not seem to address the actual problems in the particular text of writing. It rather becomes some kind of 'standardized' set of comments. This is better described by Sommers (1982) who writes :

Most teachers' comments are not text-specific, and could be interchanged, rubber stamped, from text to text. The comments are not anchored in the particulars of the students' texts, but rather are series of vague directives that are not text specific. Students are commanded to think more about audience, avoid prepositions at the end of sentences or conjunctions at the beginning of sentences, be clear, be specific, be precise, but, above all, think more about what [you] are thinking.

(Sommers 1982 : 152)

The kind of comments referred to in the above quotation are of little value because students may 'view them as EVALUATIONS of their work and not as RESPONSES of an interested adult' (Ziv 1984 : 362). Ziv, investigating the kind of responses made by teachers in different disciplines, arrives at the conclusion that 'we assume that our code words such as 'clear', 'wordy', and 'descriptive' have universally - accepted definitions that will transmit these values. They do not' (Ziv 1984 : 57-58). Besides, 'to tell students that they have done something wrong is not to tell them what to do about it' (Sommers 1982 : 153).

It seems in the light of the above discussion that by focusing on the product-based model, teachers' comments have failed to provide students with the constructive feedback necessary to activate the composing processes, and have, in consequence, stagnated in the form of ambiguous generalization.

5.2.8 The Product-based model and the attitudes of teachers and students

The product-based practices described above have been dominating the writing classroom for so long that they are referred to in the literature as traditional or current-traditional-practices. Their constant use, it is noted, seems to have been constitutionalized into what Thomas Kuhn (1963) calls 'traditional paradigm'. Hairston (1982), referring to the product-based model on the 'traditional paradigm' sums up Kuhn's theory as follows:

When a scientific field is going through a stable period, most of

the practitioners in the discipline hold a common body of beliefs and assumptions; they agree on the problems that need to be solved ... and on the standards by which performance is to be measured. They share a conceptual model that Kuhn calls paradigm, and that paradigm governs activity in their profession. Students who enter the discipline prepare for membership in its intellectual community by studying that paradigm.

(Hairston 1982 : 76)

What, one would ask, characterizes the product based or traditional paradigm of teaching writing? Hairston (1982), following Kuhn's theory, identifies three major qualities which she describes as follows :

FIRST, its adherents believe that competent writers know what they are going to say before they begin to write; thus their most important task [when they are preparing to write] is finding a form into which to organize their contents [SECOND], they ..believe that the composing process is linear, that it proceeds systematically from pre-writing to writing to rewriting FINALLY, they believe that teaching editing is teaching writing.

(Hairston 1982 : 78)

To begin with, teachers, by assuming that student writers know what they want to say before they actually begin to write, have constantly urged students to fit that 'assumed' knowledge into the most 'correct' form. By stressing form at the expense of meaning, teachers have created in students 'a rather limited notion of composing' and have, in consequence, reinforced 'the understanding that this concern must be dealt with at the outset' (Zamel 1985 : 81). Brannon and Knoblauch(1982) have argued that the continuous emphasis on form in students' 'writing may often lead to a diminishing of students' commitment to communicate ideas that they value and even a diminishing of

the incentive to write' (Brannon et al 1982 : 159). Collins (1981) argues that teachers' concern with form interferes with the students' intended message because 'by worrying about mistakes before we have helped students with the more important problem of adequately representing meaning in writing, we may be teaching students to do the same' (Collins 1981 : 202).

Implied in the above discussion is the idea that student writers with better linguistic competence are able to perform the act of writing more easily and to produce qualitatively better texts than students with lower linguistic ability. This misunderstanding, however, seems to have influenced teachers' judgement of student writing. The following quotes made by students on writing and teachers' expectations may illustrate the preceding statements :

1. "Teachers like to give us essays and assignments so that they can have a good laugh while reading some of the essays written ... they often give you the SAME mark ... no matter how good or bad your assignments are done. I hate that" (Year 10 student)
2. "I have come to a conclusion I don't like writing" (Year 11 student)
3. "Some teachers give us certain sets of writing to please their interests and not ours" (Year 10 student)

(cited in Collins 1981 : 221)

Research on writing, however, has indicated that 'poor' writers' writing is not in any way 'hit and miss' attempts, but rather 'evidence that they can conceive of and manipulate written language as a structured, systematic code' (Bartholomae 1980 : 257). Raimes (1985) has observed that 'my students' write range of language

proficiency test scores did not seem to correspond with demonstrated writing ability' and that 'even for students with a low level of proficiency, the act of writing ... served to generate language ... and produce some coherent ideas to communicate to the reader' (Raimes 1985 : 237 and 248). Such observations have led Bartholomae (1980) to recommend that teachers change their attitudes toward student writing in order to help them 'see themselves as language users, rather than as victims of a language that uses them' (Bartholomae 1980 : 267).

It has, furthermore, been argued that teachers' attitudes to student writing may also affect the revision strategies these students may wish to use. Sommers (1980) has observed that when students revise their writing, the changes they make are 'teacher-based directed toward a teacher-reader who expects compliance with (grammatical as well as rhetorical) rules' (Sommers 1980 : 383). As a result of such expectations 'the students see their writing passively through the eyes of their teachers ... [and] their attention dramatically shifts from "this is what I want to say" to "this is what you, the teacher, are asking me to do"' (Sommers 1982 : 149-150). And Hairston (1982) argues that when teachers limit revision to 'proof reading and editing', they 'won't realize that their students have no concept of what it means to make substantial revisions in a paper' (Hairston 1982 : 80).

The on-going research on writing, however, has led to challenging the beliefs and assumptions of the traditional paradigm on the one hand, and to shifting focus from the written product to the writing process on the other.

5.3 The teaching of writing : the process-oriented approach

5.3.1 Writing as meaning

It has been argued earlier that the product-based model, by emphasizing form and structure, has reduced writing to what Zamel (1982 : 199) calls 'a mechanical exercise'. In so doing, the traditional model has ignored 'a fundamental characteristic of the composition process ... [the ability] to shape and refine ideas' (Taylor 1981 : 6).

The process-oriented approach, on the other hand, recognizes writing as 'the process of using language to discover meaning ... and to communicate it' (Murray 1978 : 86). Britton et al (1975), placing priority on the production of thought in writing, warn that emphasis on form may seriously interfere with 'the production of ideas ... to a point where it dries up' (Britton et al 1975 : 37). Sommers (1980), comparing the composition strategies of inexperienced student writers with those of experienced writers, has observed that 'inexperienced student writers constantly struggle to bring their essays into congruence with a pre-defined meaning ... [whereas] experienced writers ... seek to discover [to create] meaning in the engagement with their writing' (Sommers 1980 : 386). Raimes (1983), evaluating traditional practices in writing where 'assembling not creating' has been stressed, admits that 'we have paid little attention to real communication and to language as making meaning' (Raimes 1983 : 539).

It should, however, be noted that emphasis on meaning does not ignore the importance of what Britton et al (1975 : 21) call 'technical skills such as calligraphy, spelling and punctuation'. Research on the process of writing has revealed that while engaged in the

act of writing, 'students explore their ideas and thoughts on paper, discovering ... not only what those ideas and thoughts are, but also the form with which best to express them' (Zamel 1983 : 173). Sommers (1980), describing how students 'modify their discourse [written and oral] as they attempt to get closer to their intended meaning', has noted that as students 'write and rewrite and approximate closely their intended meaning, the form with which to express the meaning suggests itself' (Sommers 1980 : 395). A similar observation is reported in a study by Zamel (1982b) who, observing her students while composing, has pointed out that 'as one writes and rewrites, thereby approximating more closely ... one's intended meaning, the form with which to express their meaning suggests itself' (Zamel 1982b : 197).

Research in second language learning supports the claim that the form is an integral part of meaning. Hatch (1978) argues that 'the acquisition of syntax may arise out of experiences in oral discourse or experiences in oral communication, and it is possible that the same might be true for written discourse or experiences in communicating in writing' (cited in Taylor 1981 : 8). Pica et al (1981), describing the favourable opportunities for acquiring competence has 'found that the individual students ... [who] have more opportunities to use the target language ... [and] produce more samples of their interlanguage' are likely to develop better 'linguistic and strategic competence' (cited in Taylor 1981 : 8).

The concern with form and structure has led, as indicated earlier, to implementing teaching materials in which grammatical structures are controlled and manipulated. What; one might ask, characterizes the teaching materials of a process-oriented approach? The answer to this question will be dealt in the following section.

5.3.2 The process-oriented approach and teaching materials

Teaching materials for the product-based model 'have paid little attention to the way sentences are used in combination to form stretches of connected discourse ... and have concentrated on the teaching of sentences as self-contained units' (Widdowson 1978 : 89). The underlying assumption is that 'once the [linguistic] competence is acquired, performance will take care of itself' (Widdowson 1978 : 89). Krashen (1985), criticizing grammatically-oriented materials and arguing that the claimed communicative based materials simply provide 'more conceptualized practice of grammatical rules', suggests that the teaching materials required are those in which 'the goal is to focus the student entirely on the message ... [and] the use of topics and activities in which real, not just realistic, communication takes place' (Krashen 1985 : 55-56).

The process-oriented approach by viewing form as an inseparable part of meaning, recommends that students be exposed to authentic materials in the writing classroom at the different levels of learning. Watson (1982) has suggested that 'exposure to authentic English is desirable and perfectly possible ... even at the elementary level ... [for] the aim should be to introduce students to the living language in a variety of styles, formats and genres' (Watson 1982 : 88). Raimes (1983) has argued that reading authentic materials urges 'an examination of what a writer says, of why and how she or he says it ... [of] determining the writer's intent, extricating and paraphrasing the meaning' (Raimes 1983 : 268). Interest in using authentic materials, it is worth noting, has emanated from research findings on reading and from the impact reading may have on writing.

Contrary to common belief that 'meanings can ... be fully recovered from texts, that texts will yield their total content if they are scrutinized in sufficient detail', recent

research indicates that reading is 'a reasoning activity whereby the reader creates meaning on the basis of textual clues ... [it is] an INTERACTION between writer and reader mediated through the text' (Widdowson 1979 : 174). It is further suggested that what the writer brings to the reading task is much more than has been thought before. Clarke and Silberstein (1977), arguing that reading 'depends on the efficient interaction between linguistic knowledge and knowledge of the world', have suggested that 'the reader brings to the task [of reading] a formidable amount of information and ideas, attitudes and beliefs' (Clarke and Silberstein 1977 : 136). Reading, before, is a joint, co-operative and inter-active activity in which writer and reader 'negotiate' the intended meaning suggested in the text. It is this co-operative interaction between writer and reader to uncover meaning that has been to draw the attention of researchers on writing. 'For is not the student-reader 'today', himself a student-writer the 'next-day'? And are not the skills engaged in decoding meaning while reading the same while engaged in encoding meaning while writing?' (Ali 1988 :81).

Lee Odell (1974), from whom answers to the above rhetorical questions are sought, has argued that reading as an act of 'comprehending, evaluating, analyzing and synthesizing ... requires one to engage in the same cognitive activities that can enable one to formulate the assertions he or she will develop in writing' (Odell 1974 : 147). Shaughnessy (1977) recognizes genuine reading as an 'encounter' between reader and writer and argues that when a student engages in finding out meaning and begins 'to raise questions about what he reads, to infer the author's intent and even to argue with him', he is likely to use 'these same critical skills ... when he himself writes' (Shaughnessy 1977 : 223). It is perhaps due to this interactive relation between reader and writer that has led Haynes (1978) to suggest that 'from a practical standpoint it would seem that all students regardless of ability would benefit [in writing] from greater success in reading' (Haynes 1978 : 87). Krashen (1985) has also suggested that 'writing competence comes only from large amounts of self-motivated reading for

pleasure and/or interest' (Krashen 1985 : 19).

The implementation of authentic materials in the writing classroom is exercised in a number of ways. Watson (1982), discrediting the traditional use of MODELS of expository prose, argues that such models can 'still contribute' to the teaching of composition when they 'involve students actively' and when 'shared discoveries ... will stimulate individual involvement' (Watson 1982 : 13). Raimes (1985), observing that her students produce enough 'materials for many discussions of ideas, context, culture, audience, organization, rhetorical form, syntax, vocabulary, grammar, spelling and mechanics' has suggested that 'student-generated material is more valuable - and more valued by students than textbook sentences about the tiresome Mr. Smith' (Raimes 1985 : 247).

Reading, as an activity to engage learners in exploring and discovering meaning has, furthermore, led to a renewed interest in the teaching of literature. Watson (1982) identifies the literary types appropriate for composition classroom discussion as follows

At every level an attempt should be made to introduce students to literature in the target language .not Shakespeare and Wordsworth but rather a careful choice of poems, and extracts from contemporary plays (including TV and film scripts), short stories, and novels which are thematically relevant and provocative, linguistically challenging, yet appropriate to the student level of competence.

(Watson 1982 : 8)

Spack (1985), recommending 'short fiction' as well as 'stories which have been made into films', argues that one of the advantages of such choices 'in an ESL classroom ...

is that class discussion can focus on the masterful use of language by writers whose every written word is carefully chosen' (Spack 1984 : 716). Preston (1982), expressing the need of the ESL/EFL writing teacher for 'ideas and materials that can stimulate and actively involve students in the actual process of writing; has argued that literature 'can provide a creative supplementary option ... and [is] an opportunity to use the second or foreign language to compose and communicate in an original and imaginative way' (cited in Spack 1984 : 715). Widdowson (1978) distinguishing between language USAGE (the knowledge of linguistic rules) and language USE (the knowledge of how linguistic rules could be used for effective communication), has argued that the teaching of literature to illustrate usage cannot develop 'an awareness of the way language is used in literary discourse for the conveying of unique messages (Widdowson 1978 :76). Widdowson recommends that literature be viewed as an instance of language use, 'an inquiry into the way a language is used to express a reality' (Widdowson 1978 : 80).

Guided by the above discussion on materials, proponents of the process-oriented approach to teaching writing assume that when student writers engage genuinely in reading, and participate effectively in discussing and sharing ideas and thoughts in classroom discussion, they are likely then to engage in writing topics which are generated by a collective effort during the classroom debates.

5.3.3 The process-oriented approach and the writing topics

Recognizing the complex nature of the composing process, researchers have drawn attention to the impact the writing topics may have on the writing task. Raimes (1983), pointed out that topics can turn a composition class 'into a grammar class or an imitation class ... or they can unite form and content, ideas and organization, syntax and meaning

... writing and thinking' (Raimes 1983 : 266). Zamel (1982b), realizing that students' attitude to topics is an important aspect of the writing process, has suggested that 'students' writing thus should be motivated by their feelings about and response to a topic with which they have had some experience' (Zamel 1982b : 204). Taylor (1981) failing to find a writing assignment 'compelling enough to give students an opportunity to immerse themselves in', has argued that it is time teachers take into consideration the complex nature of the writing process and 'provide writing assignments [which] provided an opportunity for students to communicate ideas of serious interest to them' (Taylor 1981 : 9-10). Scott (1980), comparing the writing of students on various topics, has observed that students write better when they write 'about a real subject they had struggled to understand', and write worse when they are looking up an essay on a topic unrelated to their serious subject' (cited in Taylor 1981 : 10).

It is, however, relevant to point out that choosing suitable topics generated during classroom discussion does not guarantee successful writing. It nevertheless remains a useful practice to write on a topic of interest so that 'students come to see that ... what they write down is meaningful, entertaining or instructive' (Spack 1984 : 656). Murray (1978) suggests that when topics are of no interest 'students find writing drudgery, something that has to be done after the thinking is over - the dishes that have to be washed after the guests have left ... [forgetting that] writing is a banquet itself' (Murray 1978 : 1).

The process-oriented model, unlike the product-based model, expects and allows students the opportunity to write more than one draft on a particular topic of interest. This has been so, due to the findings of research on the composing process. Observation of experienced writers as well as student writers has indicated that revision constitutes an essential part of writing. Murray (1978), criticizing the traditional practice in which rewriting 'is too often taught as punishment', has argued that revision

is 'an opportunity for discovery or even an inevitable part of the writing process' (Murray 1978 : 86). Sommers (1980) observing that experienced writers 'seek to discover [to create] meaning in the engagement in their writing, in revision', has noted that while they do so 'details are added, dropped, substituted or re-ordered according to their sense of what the essay needs for emphasis and proportion' (Sommers 1980 : 386). And Zamel (1983), observing her advanced ESL learners during the composing act, has noted that :

Revising occurred through out the process and generally meant composing anew; changes were most often global; sentences were deleted and added to clarify ideas and make them more concrete; sentences were rewritten until they expressed the writer's intention more accurately; paragraphs or parts of paragraphs were shifted around when writers realized that they were related to ideas presented elsewhere in their texts; new paragraphs were formed as thoughts were developed and expanded.

(Zamel 1983 : 174)

In the light of the above observations, teachers are advised to reconsider their one-draft practice and allow students opportunity to adapt what they attempt to say in their first try, for 'a good piece of writing does not always result from one's first efforts ... and students may not have a thesis for a piece until they have written much "throwaway" writing (Bridwell 1981 : 98). And Brannon and Knoblauch (1982), arguing that a second draft may not always be a success, suggest however that what it does is to force the writer to re-assert control and thereby gain new experience' (1982 : 163).

It is worth noting, however, that before, during and after the first draft, students should receive oral and written feedback which guides them to make the appropriate changes before they hand in their final draft for evaluation.

5.3.4 Feedback, evaluation and the process approach

Feedback; whether oral or written or a combination of the two, is considered essential to the writing act as viewed by the process-oriented approach, for 'if we want our students to keep on writing, to take pleasure in expressing ideas, then we should always respond to the ideas expressed and not only to the number of errors' (Raimes 1983 : 267). Sommers (1982), observing that student writers, whether skilled or unskilled, linguistically able or not, attempt to communicate 'something', a message of some kind, describes feedback as follows :

Theoretically, at least, we know that we comment on our students' writing for the same reasons we ask our colleagues to read and respond to our own writing. As writers we need and want thoughtful commentary to show us when we have communicated our ideas and when not .We want to know if our writing has communicated our intended meaning and, if not, what questions or discrepancies our reader sees that we - as writers - are blind to.

(Sommers 1983 : 148)

Implied in Sommers' quotation is that writers expect readers to provide them with feedback which is useful for improving the first attempt of the writer to communicate his thoughts. Murray (1982), recognizing that 'the more inexperienced the student and less comprehensible the text, the more helpful the teacher's comments', has suggested that all texts can be improved when the instructor discusses with the student what is working and ...what isn't working and how it might be made to work' (Murray 1982 : 145). Winterowd (1983), evaluating Krashen's implication 'that acquisition of the ability to write is through "input" i.e., reading', has suggested that 'feedback is as

essential as input' (Winterowd 1983 : 242).

It is further argued that feedback, whether oral or written, is meant 'to dramatize the presence of a reader, and to help our students to become that questioning researcher themselves ... to evaluate what they have written and develop control over their writing' (Sommers 1982 : 148). Collins (1981), favouring oral feedback in the form of teacher-student conferences, argues that 'in training students to ask for explicit meaning during conferences ... we are teaching students to be aware of meaning when they write' (Collins 1981 : 213). Taylor (1981), proposing oral and written feedback as a means to break down the complexity of the writing process, has concluded that 'it will be necessary for students eventually to learn to be their own critics and to be able to revise without extensive outside input' (Taylor 1981 : 11). Britton et al (1975), observing that effective feedback follows 'very close reading of children's writing', have suggested that writing ability is likely to develop when 'the writer becomes the reader of his own work' (Britton et al 1975 : 76). And Bloom (1979), expressing concern about anxious writers, suggests that 'if they can be taught to evaluate their own work ... to have confidence in their own judgements, they can develop the self-critical facility so necessary to their maturation as writers' (Bloom 1979 : 57).

The process-oriented approach to composition, in shifting focus from form to meaning and in allowing students to write more than one draft, providing oral as well as written feedback, approaches evaluation of students writing in a way which differs from that of a product-based model. Britton et al (1975), advocating the use of evaluation as a means to observe progress in writing, argue that it is time teachers 'break the habit of using traditional evaluative means of good and bad' (Britton et al 1975 : 3). Then they continue to argue that evaluation does not necessarily imply 'marking or grading', but rather should aim at sharing the writing with the writer. They caution against evaluation which could be 'a disservice ... unhelpful or even inept', and suggest that evaluation

better 'come in the form of interest ... and appraisal of the [written] work' (Britton et al 1975 : 13). Hirsch (1977) recommends an evaluation method which is 'reliable and valid' and which leads to 'the student's motivation to improve his writing' (Hirsch 1977 : 186). Raimes (1983) has argued that in the light of findings which have taught us a lot about the writing process, evaluation has to be a means to encourage 'our students to keep on writing, and to take pleasure in expressing ideas' (Raimes 1983 : 267). Brannon and Knoblauch (1982) have argued that because traditional evaluation has served no more than 'showing the discrepancy between what the writing has actually achieved and what ideal writing ought to look like', teachers should not wait 'too long' before they adapt their attitudes to the findings of recent research on the writing process. They define 'process-based' evaluation as follows :

Evaluation ... is the natural conclusion of the process of response and negotiation, carried through successive drafts. By responding, a teacher creates incentive in the writer to make meaningful changes. By negotiating those changes rather than distracting them, the teacher returns control of the writing to the student. And by evaluating, the teacher gives the student-writer an estimate of how well the teacher thinks the student's revisions have brought actual effects into line with stated intention [By so doing], we show students that we take their writing seriously and we assume that they are responsible for communicating what they wish to say. The sense of genuine responsibility kindled in inexperienced writers can be a powerful first step in the development of mature competence.

(Brannon and Knoblauch 1982 : 166)

It may be concluded from the above discussion that a process-oriented approach to teaching writing entails a change, sometimes a substantial change, in the role and attitude of teachers toward the writing operation. Although the teacher's role and

attitude have already been described in the discussion on materials, topics, feedback and evaluation, it remains useful to shed some light on some aspects which characterize a 'process-trained' teacher.

5.3.5 The process-oriented approach and the role of the teacher

The process-oriented approach assigns more than one role to the writing teacher. But perhaps the most prominent of all is that of a reader. The teacher, as a reader, may look at the student writing and respond in a number of ways - as a 'common reader', a 'copy editor/proofreader', 'a reviewer', and a 'diagnostician/therapist' (following Purves 1984 : 260). As a common reader, the teacher may read the text out of 'pleasure and interest' with no intention to react one way or another. He/she may, however, pass value judgements about the text, such as recommending it to some other reader or not. As an editor, the teacher reads the text critically in order to decide whether to send it to the printer or return it to the writer'. As a reviewer, the teacher acts, in Purves' words (p. 260), 'as a surrogate for the common reader and says whether the text is worth reading or not'. And as a therapist, the teacher reads in order to judge whether the writer and not the text, requires some 'sort of treatment'. The therapist may, furthermore, diagnose the process through which the text has been created.

It should be noted that the teacher may choose to pursue any of these roles and may equally perform them all in reading a particular piece of student writing. Purves (1984) urging that teachers 'clearly indicate to students the spectrum of roles', concludes that 'the student as a writer must learn to deal with all these kinds of readers, know something of what the concerns of each might be' (Purves 1984 : 265). Ideally, one hopes that students internalize the different roles and become their own readers.

Another role the teacher is recommended to play is that of the listener - although traditionally, Murray (1982 : 143) argues, 'listening is not a normal composition teacher's skill'. Recommending regular teacher-student conferences, Murray (1982) has argued that when the teacher listens, allowing the student to speak about the draft he produced and how he produced it, he succeeds in helping his student, for the 'effective teacher must teach where the student IS not where the teacher wishes the student WAS' (Murray 1982 : 144). Collins (1981), illustrating by means of a script from a teacher-student conference, has observed that when the teacher listens and the writer talks about what she has written, 'the student changes what she has written ... [and] meaning is constructed ... by the [listening] teacher' (Collins 1981 : 211). The teacher, Collins adds, 'prods and probes, not as an examiner, but as a person who quite simply (listens) and encourages the writer to say more, to pack more meaning into the text of writing' (ibid : 211). Jeffrey (1981), recognizing that 'teachers and students differ in their perception of writing', has suggested that teachers and students 'must talk [and listen, of course] much more ... about what is being done ... so that ... accord can be reached on what should be occurring' (cited in Collins : 220).

It is further argued that teachers according to the process-oriented approach are seen as 'facilitators, resources, model writers and learners'. The teacher, argues Murray (1982 : 142), has to be 'a guide who doesn't lead so much as stand behind the younger explorer [the writer], pointing out alternatives only at the moment of panic'. Brannon et al (1982) argue that as resources, teachers can serve 'as a sounding-board enabling the writer to see confusions in the text and encouraging the writer to explore alternatives that he or she may not have considered' (Brannon et al 1982 : 162). Finally, teachers play the model writers when they themselves write with their students during the in-class writing session. 'I write with them [the students]', writes Spack (1983 : 711). In so doing, teachers 'share' with students the pains and pleasure of writing, discover for themselves the nature of the writing process, and adapt their teaching practices

accordingly.

5.4 The teaching of composition in Britain

5.4.1 Introduction

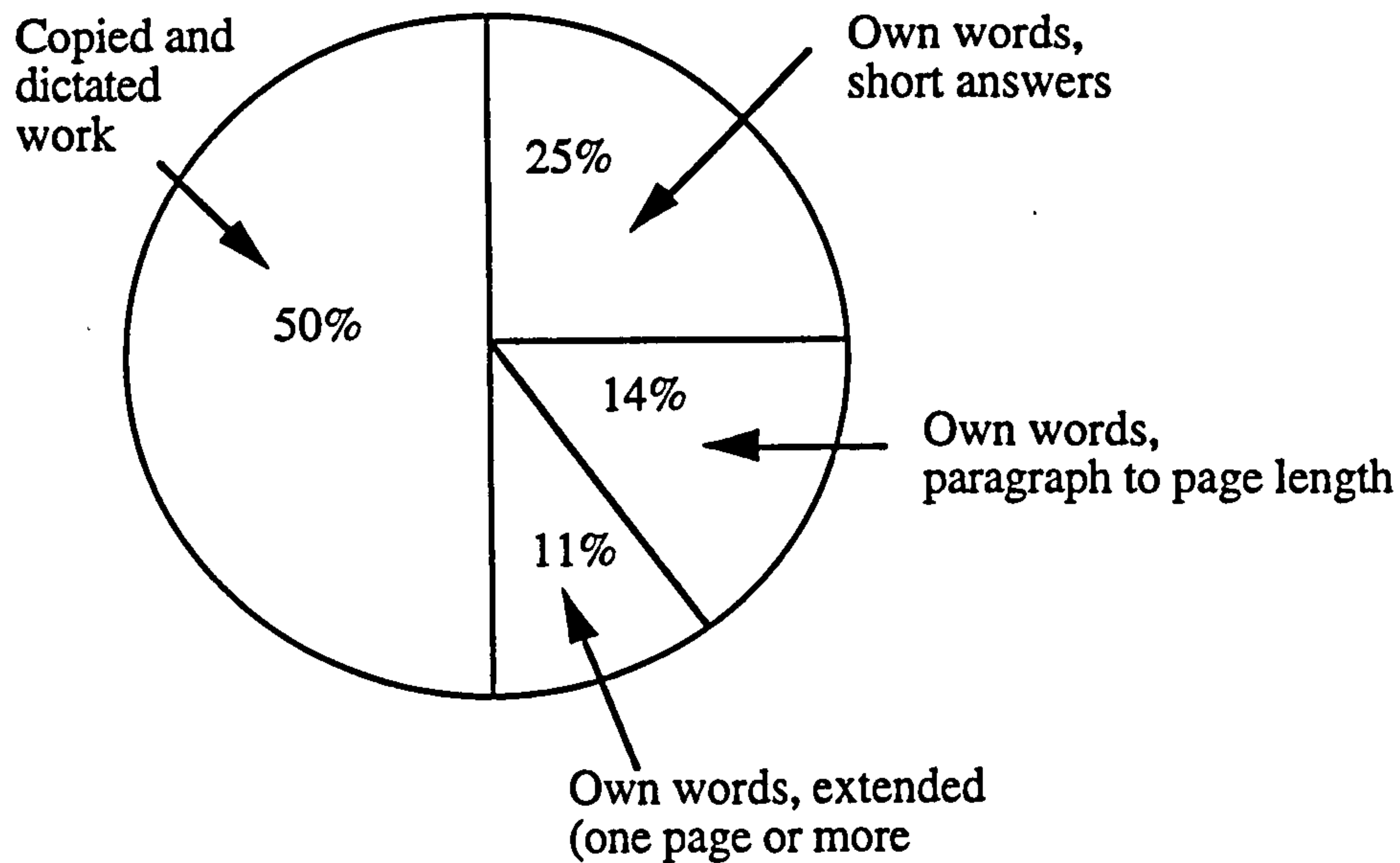
Most of the research literature on the process approach, as mentioned above has been produced in the USA. Researchers in the UK have only recently turned their attention to this aspect. There has, however, been an interest in classroom experiment and production of materials and it is a matter of adding a footnote on attitudes to teaching of writing in Britain because of certain parallels with the Malaysian situation.

In Britain, composition is considered 'a major activity in the teaching of English' (Gatherer 1980 : 138). From a survey done by the Scottish Council for Research in Education, there are several points mentioned in the report which support Gatherer. Firstly, teachers regard composition as an important skill, needed either for developing pupils' clarity and logic as thinkers, or for self-expression, or, as indeed most of them believe, for functioning effectively in society. Secondly, teachers also recognise some of the relationships between language and learning and between writing and learning. Moreover, most teachers and pupils emphasise the memorisation and recall of factual information or of the key concepts of their subjects when speaking of 'learning' and so think of writing primarily as a way of communicating information to the learner or of showing the teacher that it has been understood or recalled. Accordingly the most frequent purposes of written work are to store information for revision, to reinforce memorisation, and to allow the teacher to assess knowledge or understanding (Spencer 1983 : 13).

Oddly enough composition is an aspect of work that has been neglected most in the schools. What does exist in Britain concerns mainly the classification of composed text. 'Text composed by pupils has been studied with a view to giving teachers a descriptive and evaluative instrument, allowing them to assess a given script in normative terms' (Gatherer 1980 : 138). And the SCRE Writing Project found that 'there is much variation in the amount written in various categories of writing among individual pupils, but, overall, about half of what is written in schools is copied or dictated and about a quarter consists of short answers (single sentences, or 'fill-in-the-blank'). The remaining quarter is continuous writing in the pupils' own words but more than half of it is short - a few lines per task' (Spencer 1983 : 12). (see Figure 5.1)

Researchers on the Schools Council project in Britain dealt with the composition process when they investigated pupils' writing in sixty-five secondary schools between 1960 - 1971. Their report, *The Development of Writing Abilities* by James Britton et al (1975), is based on the descriptive and developmental study of over 2,000 pieces of writing drawn from the work of pupils across a wide age and ability range in all subjects of the curriculum where extended writing was used.

Figure 5.1 Average Amounts of Writing in Various Categories



Source : Ernest Spencer 1983 : 12

The report focuses not so much on the various end-products of the pupils' writing as on the process of writing, the variety of ways in which a writer views his task and how he sets about accomplishing it. The project team discerned six factors which combine in determining the nature and quality of the writing process in the secondary school, and which must be appreciated by teachers as important variables to be considered whenever a pupil is given a writing task of any significance within a given subject or curricular field. These factors are :

1. The degree to which a writer is *involved* in the writing task (whether he fully engages in the task or whether he performs it perfunctorily).
2. The writer's *sense of audience* as he prepares and completes his writing task (i.e. his expectations regarding his reader's view of what he writes). 'Audience' in the secondary school is usually equated with 'teacher'.

3. The *teacher's expectations* with regard to the class, whether as a group or as individuals.
4. The *function* served by the writing task as perceived by the writer - i.e. the demands made upon him by a particular task (e.g. telling a story, writing up a laboratory report, composing a poem, writing a history essay, completing a questionnaire).
5. The variety of *language resources* which individual pupils bring to their writing (e.g. the extent to which these resources include experience in reading about a given topic).
6. The extent to which the writing is a means to some *practical end* beyond the writing task itself.

(Jeffs 1980 quoted in Spencer 1983: 133)

In Scotland, Richard Binns (1978, 1980) has developed teaching techniques which seek to develop self-confidence very gradually by enabling pupils to identify themselves what they want to improve or change when they redraft writing. It is slow work requiring much patience on the part of the teacher to find ways of motivating pupils - particularly less able ones such as those with whom Binns works - to write initially and then to redraft, but some remarkable successess have been achieved.

Although Britton et al (1975) and Binns (1978, 1980) have recommended the process approach in teaching composition in Britain, 'many people still believe that the standards in the use of English would rise dramatically if the teachers returned to the formal teaching of grammar which was normal practice in most classrooms before

1960' (Kingman Report 1988 : 12). And there are people, including teachers, who believe that explicit teaching or learning of language structure is unnecessary. However, the members of the Kingman Committee believe that both these extreme viewpoints are misguided because 'research evidence suggests that old-fashioned formal teaching of grammar had a negligible, or, because it replaced some instruction and practice in composition, even a harmful effect on the development of original writing' (Kingman Report 1988 : 12). And the Committee do not recommend a return to that kind of grammar teaching because 'it was based on a model of language derived from Latin rather than English' (Kingman Report 1988 : 12). However, the Committee believe that for children not to be taught anything about language is seriously to their disadvantage.

Many teachers of English suspect that explicit talk about how language works may inhibit a child's natural abilities in speaking and in writing. The Bullock Report (1975) stated that 'In general, a curriculum subject, philosophically speaking, is a distinctive mode of analysis. While many teachers recognise that their aim is to initiate a student in a particular mode of analysis, they rarely recognise the linguistic implications of doing so' (quoted in Kingman Report 1988 : 13). The Kingman Report committee (1988) 'believe that within English as a subject, pupils need to have their attention drawn to what they are doing and why they are doing it because this is helpful to their development of their language ability. It is important, however, to state that helping pupils to notice what they are doing is a subtle process which requires the teacher to intervene constructively and at an appropriate time' (Kingman Report 1988 :13).

5.4.2 Product and Process Approach to Writing in Britain

Although composition is the most neglected skill in the teaching of English in Britain, yet there is a special concern about it (Spencer 1983). Teachers regard it as an important skill, needed either for developing pupils' clarity and logic as thinkers, or for self-expression, or, as indeed most of them believe, for functioning effectively in society.

General concern leads most teachers to feel some responsibility for teaching writing. However, the teaching of writing mainly concern for grammar, spelling and punctuation. Guidance given to pupils on written work consists mainly of brief advice explaining what to do in tasks which do not make a heavy demand on writing abilities. There is a reliance on past experience of similar tasks and of models of good writing to be imitated (Spencer 1983). If a fairly extended piece of writing is to be produced, a structure may be given. There is usually reference to the purpose of the writing, which is most often to contribute in some way to memorising the subject content. Orientation to a reader, however, is of very little importance in school writing, except to 'the teacher as examiner'. A good deal of pupils' writing - the copied and short answer especially - is not in fact read and responded to individually by the teacher. As a result of this many pupils have no sense of being taught how to write and are vague about the purpose of written work.

Realising the situation, some English teachers pay some attention to providing an interesting stimulus (often in reading and discussion) and give general advice about structure and expression. Some English teachers, however, show little awareness of many problems met by pupils *in the process of writing*. and "they try to encourage pupils to write to explore, define and account for their own feelings, attitudes and ideas, to evaluate and comment on ideas, to persuade others to a point of view or an action, to

entertain or give pleasure, to make a meaningful patterning of experiences, events, relationships, images and language. But they do not do the se things often and they do not do them all” (Spencer 1983 : 17).

However, not all teachers are interested in the new approach in teaching writing. According to the SCRE report 'There are a few English teachers who conceive of writing as a skill consisting of several sub-skills, each of which is to be identified, explained, exemplified, practised, and mastered. Their technique is similar to one deriving from behaviourist psychology, which involves the definition of a learning goal, the analysis of the goal into pre-requisite or constituent elements, the stimulation of a lot of practice in achieving these sub-goals, and immediate feedback about success with them. In English classrooms these methodological steps become translated into language exercises of various sorts : 'Correct these sentences'; 'Use these words in sentences of your own', and so on. The idea that each discrete feature of text - vocabulary, grammar, spelling, punctuation, topic sentence - can be mastered and, as it were, 'banked' for future use when the ultimate goal, writing is attempted. Teaching writing, therefore, consists of setting frequent language exercises and occasional compositions, which show the extent to which the exercises have been effective' (Spencer 1983 : 17 - 18).

What has been described is not a caricature, but it no longer represents the most usual method of teaching. A more typical approach is influenced by ideas about writing other than strictly behaviourist ones - for instance, ideas about appropriateness of language for different purposes, or about the value of writing as self-expression.

Dr. W A Gatherer, the Chief Adviser to the Lothian Region in Scotland who is in favour of the new approach to teaching writing says ;

The *basic* skills of good English, however, are not the surface,

clerical skills that catch the eye - handwriting, spelling, punctuation, accuracy in sense, grammar. These are the outer garments of competence. What makes communication effective is, firstly, its content, the information of ideas or feelings it conveys. Whatever the true relationship between thought and language, one will pay more attention to the meaning of utterance than its form.

(Quoted in Spencer 1983 : 82)

The National Curriculum English Working Group places great emphasis on the need for children to engage in the craft of writing, and argues that this should not be confined to the literary essay.

Pupils should be given the opportunity to write a wide range of forms : diaries, formal letters, chronological accounts, reports, pamphlets, reviews (of books, television programmes, films or plays), essays, newspaper, articles, biography, autobiography, poems, stories, playscripts, TV or film scripts.

(Cox 1990 : 23)

The essential proposals made by the group for the secondary school is '... that pupils should increasingly make their own decisions about their writing : what it is about, what form it should take, and to whom it is addressed' (Cox 1990 : 23). According to Cox (1990), for many years the essay has dominated the syllabus, from school certificate to university degree examinations. And Cox continues :

I am not denying its great importance, as a means of evaluating evidence, developing critical arguments, organising ideas in rational form. But the essay is usually a cloze form, not allowing students to admit to confusion and uncertainty in their

thinking, not allowing them to explore their ideas in imaginative and open ended ways. The essay form has been dominated by scientific models of objectivity, and, as I have already said, students have relied heavily on repetition of views of their teachers or critics, views often not in accord with their own personal response to the texts being studied. Images, ambiguity, dramatic tensions, all central features of the 20th century modern literature, are not usually allowed, as the student is marked for coherence, order and objectivity. We had imprisoned our students in the essay, where they "have heard the key turn in the door once and turn once only".

(Cox 1990 : 23)

The London Advice found in the SCRE report made by Spencer (1983) suggests that 'The main practical implication of thinking of writing as a pursuit of personal meaning is that teachers should concentrate attention on pupils' motivation to write, their perception of what they are writing for, their relationship with the reader, their own grasp of what they want to say, and their *own* language. Conversely, teaching which analyses the rhetorical components of 'genres' of writing (such as 'discursive prose', 'persuasive writing', etc), or which offers models of others' language to imitate, should be eschewed.' (Spencer 1983 : 83).

Realizing the problems that arise in the teaching of writing in the UK, The National Curriculum English Working Group has made recommendations for the National Curriculum which emphasize '... the importance of drafting, the *process* of writing as well as the final product' (Cox 1990 : 23). In fact in the conclusion of the SCRE report, it also recommends the same that teachers should 'assess both the finished product AND the process of writing' (Spencer 1983 : 109).

In Britain, a limited amount of research has been done on the process approach to teaching academic writing to overseas students on EFL courses. For instance, Hamp-Lyons (1988) did a research on the process approach for EAP students. According to her, in EAP writing what she calls 'product before' is very important. The student's writing process is constrained by this 'product before', and a task of EAP teachers is to reconcile such product constraints with helping students learn to write academically using a process approach. (The 'product before' is 'the essay question, and more specifically, the essay test question' (Hamp-Lyons 1988 : 35)). Bloor and St John (1988) from their experience while teaching overseas students at the University of Warwick and University of Aston, propose a combination of both process and product approach in project writing and state '... we argue that project writing is an example of an activity which is directly relevant to target needs and yet provides the opportunity for process-oriented language learning' (1988 : 85). To show the importance of using both approaches in writing projects, Bloor and St John continue 'The process of preparing and writing the report is a communicative activity (within which a series of smaller communicative activities are embedded, which fulfils the requirements of procedural work; the product (the report itself) is directly related to the specific target needs of the individual learner ...' (1988 : 89). And they continue add that 'Project work as part of the language programme aims, therefore, to be both process-oriented and product oriented. It is concerned with target needs so that 'it shadows the reality of project work in the student's subject discipline' (Swales 1985) and, moreover, provides a means whereby students can engage in the process of acquiring the language and those aspects of language use that are taught (as part of formal education and training even to native speakers)' (1988 : 90).

Davies (1988) in trying to design a writing syllabus in English for Academic Purposes suggested that 'The syllabus ... should be flexible and functional, giving due weight to both process and product' (cited in White 1988 : 142).

It is interesting to find out from the above discussion that the teachers and researchers in Britain are beginning to realize the importance of the process approach. The success of this approach in the USA has influenced teachers to introduce it bit by bit in their classrooms. According to Maley (1988) '... work in teaching the mother tongue both in the UK and the USA has been moving towards a process approach to writing. Rather than analyzing the features of finished texts and attempting to teach students to reproduce them, this approach starts from an examination of what good writers actually *do as they write*' (quoted in Hedge 1988 : 3).

CHAPTER SIX

THE MALAYSIAN EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

6.1. Introduction

The thesis is fundamentally concerned with the learning of English as a second language in Malaysia. However a section on her geographical and especially historical background, is considered significant towards a better understanding of the current English learning situation in the country.

6.2. Geography and history in brief

Located in South East Asia, Malaysia forms part of the Malay Archipelago. The country comprises Peninsular Malaysia, in the west (commonly called West Malaysia) and, Sabah and Sarawak in the east, the two regions being separated by the South China Sea. She shares the same border with the kingdom of Thailand to the north and is linked to the island of the Republic of Singapore in the south by the Johore causeway, while across the Straits of Malacca, the Indonesian island of Sumatra covers the length of her western horizon. Besides Sabah and Sarawak, there are twelve other states in Malaysia, all located within the peninsula. They comprise Johor in the south, Melaka, Negeri Sembilan, Selangor and the Federal Territory of Kuala Lumpur in the west, Perak, Pulau Pinang, Kedah and Perlis in the north, with Pahang, Terengganu and Kelantan making up the east coast states. Malaysia, which practices constitutional monarchy, inherits from the former colonial master a system of democracy governed by Parliament comprising the 'Dewan Rakyat' (House of Representatives) and 'Dewan Negara' (Senate). While the Government is led by the Prime Minister, Malaysia has, as

the Head of State the King, elected to the throne for a five year term by the other rulers of the states in the peninsula, headed by a 'sultan' or 'raja' (the reference used for the ruler depending on the state, for instance, Perlis is headed by a 'raja' and Kelantan by a 'sultan'). Melaka, Pulau Pinang, Sabah and Sarawak each are headed by a 'chief minister' while Kuala Lumpur is headed by a mayor.

The population of Malaysia is made up of three major races : Malay, Chinese and Indian, each of which has its own culture and religious beliefs. The Malays are all Muslim, the Chinese are commonly Buddhist, while most of the Indians are Hindus. In 1990 the population of Malaysia is 17.769 million, 14.617 million from the peninsula and the rest from Sabah and Sarawak (Figure 6.1).

The national language of Malaysia is Malay with English as its second language. Other languages spoken in Malaysia are Chinese (Mandarin, Hokkien and Cantonese) , and Tamil, Malayalam and Hindi, used by the Indians.

It is known that as far back as in the 15th century there were communities of Indian and Chinese merchants, particularly in Melaka. Some of the Chinese settled there taking Malay wives. Their descendants, who generally married ethnic Chinese, spoke (and in the case of some older people still speak) a creole, Baba Malay.

Table 6.1 Population of Malaysia 1989 - 1991

Population	1989 (Million)	1990 (Million)	1991 (Million)
Malaysia	17.353	17.769	18.193
Peninsular Malaysia	14.297	14.617	14.493
Malays	8.281	8.508	8.740
Chinese	4.514	4.581	4.650
Indians	1.412	1.436	1.460
Others	0.090	0.092	0.093
Sarawak	1.633	1.674	1.716
Sabah	1.424	1.478	1.534

Source : Ministry of Finance Malaysia, Economic Report 1990 - 1991 : 7.

It was after the establishment of British influence in the area, however, that large waves of Chinese and Indians began to arrive. In the Malay states, the immigration of Chinese increased rapidly in the late 19th century in the form of indentured labour for the tin mines. From the early 20th century there was also a considerable influx of Southern Indians, mainly Tamils, who came as indentured labour to work on the rubber estates (Platt and Weber 1980). A new pattern of population distribution developed as a result of these changes. The towns became overwhelmingly Chinese, with Indian minorities, particularly in the larger ones. Malays remained predominantly rural, engaging in rice farming, fishing and, later on, in running small rubber plantations. In areas of larger rubber plantations there were many Tamils living in coolie line on the estates (Platt, 1980). In tin-mining areas, Chinese (mainly Hakka and Cantonese) lived in

settlements near the mines and some Chinese also engaged in market gardening and other rural pursuits (Platt 1980). Among the Chinese, there was (and is) typically a dominant Chinese 'dialect'. In Penang, it is a variety of Hokkien. In Kuala Lumpur and Ipoh, and generally in the tin-mining areas, it is Cantonese (Platt 1980).

Table 6.2

Year	Malays	Chinese	Indians
1911	1,437,000	916,000	267,000
1921	1,651,000	1,174,000	471,000
1931	1,962,000	1,709,000	624,000
1941	2,278,000	2,379,000	744,000

Source : Hall, D.G.E., A History of Southeast Asia, 1964 : 750.

6.3. The Malaysian School System

The school system in Malaysia is inherited from the British system, since the whole of Malaya (the old name of Malaysia) was under British colonial rule for over a hundred years until 1957 when Malaya got independence. It was under the British colonisation that the foundation of the present school system was set up (Wong and Ee 1975).

The present educational system consists of various levels. These are : a six-year Primary education, a three-year Lower Secondary education, a two-year Upper

Secondary education and a two-year Form VI education. The Form VI level is followed by the Higher Education level which consists of two types of institutions, that is the colleges and universities.

6.3.1. Primary Education

Schools at the Primary education level are divided into two types:

- a. National Primary Schools; and
- b. National Type Primary Schools.

The medium of instruction in the National School throughout Malaysia is Bahasa Malaysia. However, the medium of instruction in the National Type Primary School (Chinese) (NTPS(C)) is the Chinese Language while the Tamil Language is the medium of instruction in the National Type Primary School (Tamil) (NTPS(T)) (Ministry of Education, Malaysia, 1985). In Peninsula Malaysia and Sabah the National Type Primary Schools (English) (NT(E)PS) have been using Bahasa Malaysia as their medium of instruction since 1975.

Pupils at the primary school level, that is from Standard I to Standard VI, are automatically promoted. And since 1965, there has been automatic promotion of pupils from Standard VI in the primary schools to Form I or Remove Class secondary school.

6.3.2. Lower Secondary Education

At lower secondary level the medium of instruction used is either Bahasa Malaysia or English. Education at this level is of three years duration except for pupils from

NTPS(T)) or NTPS(C)) who are required to go through Remove Class before entering Form I in Malay or English medium. Remove Classes are specially conducted with the aim of upgrading the language proficiency of pupils, either in Bahasa Malaysia or English Language in accordance with the media of instruction available at the lower secondary level. However, since 1975, is as a consequence of the language conversion programme which was introduced in NT(E)PS in the Peninsula in 1970, Remove Classes are conducted only in Bahasa Malaysia to cater for pupils from NTPS(C) and NTPS(T) (Ministry of Education, Malaysia 1985). In order to implement Bahasa Malaysia as the national language, all English medium schools have been replaced by the Malay medium, which is referred to as the language conversion programme. At the lower secondary level, the language conversion programme in Form I was fully implemented in 1976, followed by Form II in 1977 and subsequently Form III in 1978 (Ministry of Education, Malaysia 1985).

All pupils at lower secondary education level are automatically promoted from Form I to Form III and at the end of Form III they sit for a public examination, that is the Lower Certificate of Education. It is held to select pupils who are qualified to enter Form IV. For the years of 1971 to 1978, it was found that between 39.6% to 45.0% of Form III pupils did not succeed in continuing their education (Ministry of Education Malaysia 1985).

6.3.3. Upper Secondary Education

Schools at this level, like those at the lower secondary level, use two media of instruction that is Bahasa Malaysia and English. Based on the language conversion programme, education at this level, is fully conducted using Bahasa Malaysia as the medium of instruction from Form IV to Form V since 1980. Pupils promoted to Form

IV are channelled into three types of schools;

- a. Normal Secondary Schools;
- b. Technical Secondary Schools; and
- c. Vocational Secondary Schools.

In the normal secondary schools, including fully residential schools, two streams are available, the arts stream and the science stream. In the Peninsula in 1978, 61.8% of the pupils in Form IV and V were in the arts stream, 31.2% in the science stream. 2.4% went to the technical schools and 4.6% to the vocational schools (Ministry of Education, Malaysia 1985).

Upper secondary education ends with the Malaysia Certificate of Education Examination (MCE). This examination is taken by pupils from normal and technical secondary schools. Pupils from the vocational secondary schools take the Malaysia Certificate of Vocational Education Examination.

6.3.4. Form Six Education

Pupils are selected into Form Six based on their achievement in the MCE Examination. They are channelled into two streams, science and arts. The average percentage of pupils selected to Form Six annually for the years 1971 to 1978 was approximately 13% of the total number of pupils in Form V (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 1985).

At the end of the second year, pupils at this level will take the Higher School Certificate (HSC) Examination. A certain level of achievement in this examination becomes the basis for selection of candidates for entry into local universities.

6.4. The Pre-British Period (Prior to 1824)

During this period education was generally non-formal in nature and emphasised Quranic teaching, good behaviour and morality, spiritual knowledge and martial arts. It also included some rudiments in handicraft and apprenticeship in agriculture, fishing and hunting.

At a more formal level there was a system of religious education known as the 'pondok' school set up by established religious Islamic scholars. Students studied in the religious schools and stayed in huts (pondok) built around them. A number of such religious school still exist in a more organised manner in certain states in Malaysia.

6.5. Pre-World War II (1824-1941)

The administration of education in the Malay Peninsula during this period was in accordance with the 'colonial policy of divide and rule' (Kementerian Pelajaran Malaysia 1985). As a consequence of this policy, education was available in four language media namely Malay, Chinese, Tamil and English, in four somewhat separate school systems serving different purposes. The present system of Education in Malaysia had its beginnings with the coming of the British in the early 19th century.

i. Malay Education.

Early Malay education had a strong Quranic orientation. Malay education was provided for by the government up to only elementary level (Kementerian Pelajaran Malaysia 1985). When secular education in Malay was introduced, as a branch of Penang Free School these Malay schools were not well-received. Gradually outlook and attitudes

changed and more parents began to send their children to these schools.

Initially, the Malay schools were assisted by the British East India Company. In 1858 they were taken over by the British administration and financial aid was provided. By 1938, there were 788 aided Malay schools in the Straits Settlements and the Federated Malay states (Kementerian Pelajaran Malaysia 1985). The purpose of Malay education was to preserve the traditional Malay ways of life as mentioned by Sir George Maxwell;

Our policy in regard to the Malay peasant is to give them as good an education as can be obtained in their own language. The last thing we want to do is to take them away from the land.

And then he continued,

the aim of the government is not to turn out a few well-educated youths, nor a number of less-educated boys, rather it is to improve the bulk of the people and to make the son of the fisherman or peasant a more intelligent fisherman or a peasant than his father had been, and a man whose education will enable him to understand how his own lot in life fits in with the schemes of life around him.

(Hall 1964, p.155)

The policy mentioned above was indeed the policy followed throughout the period of British rule. It was advocated that, at best, what a Malay required was perhaps an improved vernacular education, but above all else this should also prevent or discourage him from leaving his land (Hall 1964)

ii. Tamil Education

Tamil education was first opened in 1834 as a branch school attached to the Singapore

Free School (Kementerian Pelajaran Malaysia 1985). The Federated Malay States Ordinance 1923, incorporated a provision which required employers especially in the rubber plantations, to build schools for their employees' children (Kementerian Pelajaran Malaysia 1985). By 1938, there were 13 government, 511 estate, 23 missionary and 60 private Tamil schools throughout Peninsula Malaysia (Kementerian Pelajaran Malaysia 1985). The curriculum of the Indian schools was Indian-oriented with books imported from India and teachers recruited from India (Wong and Ee 1975)

iii. *Chinese Education*

Like the Indian schools, the Chinese schools were Chinese-oriented, using text-books and recruiting teachers from China. The Chinese schools, as commented by Manson (1957):

reflected the determination to propagate a Chinese cultural pattern. It included Chinese, Arithmetic, Civics, History, Geography, Art, Singing and Physical Training. Some of these subjects have a different meaning and context from those in English or Malay schools. The most obvious difference in curriculum is that English schools included English Literature, Malayan and World Geography, and Commonwealth History, while a considerable part of the curriculum in the Chinese schools is concerned with the history and the culture of the Chinese mainland.

iv. *English Education*

In the mid-nineteenth century, Christian missionaries helped to set up a number of English schools. In fact, the first English school Penang Free School was founded by a chaplain in 1816 (Miller 1968). This was followed by other 'free' schools such as Malacca Free School (1826), the Singapore Free School (1834), King Edward VII

School, Taiping (1906), and the Victoria Institution in Kuala Lumpur (1906) (Wong and Ee 1975). By 1938, there were 56 government, 59 assisted and 106 private English schools throughout Peninsula Malaysia (Kementerian Pelajaran Malaysia 1985). The curriculum of these schools was patterned after the grammar school curriculum in Great Britain, with the view of producing junior administrative officers to support the British administration. The Malay College at Kuala Kangsar, Perak was established in 1905 to train administrators for the Malayan Civil Service whose members were initially drawn from the aristocratic families (Kementerian Pelajaran Malaysia 1985).

6.6. The Pre-Independence Period

During World War II, the states constituting the present Federation of Malaysia were occupied by the Japanese. During the Japanese military occupation (1941 - 1946), Japanese education policy was that vernacular schools for Malays and Indians were to continue as before but with the addition of the Japanese language and with a Japanese orientation. The Japanese military administration established Nippon-Go (Japanese Language) Schools to replace Chinese and English schools. The teaching of Nippon-Go, Japanese folk songs and their way of life were emphasised in the primary school curriculum (Kementerian Pelajaran Malaysia 1985).

Secondary education was discontinued and in its place a number of technical schools and colleges for studies in the communication, fisheries, agriculture and building were established (Kementerian Pelajaran Malaysia 1985). A few urban school buildings were used as barracks, stores, trading centres and as headquarters for the Japanese military administration. Local people were trained to become Japanese language teachers.

Since the end of Second World War, education, language and culture have loomed as causes of racial tensions in Malaysia. This racial problem in the field of education seems to be largely a legacy of the past when the British colonial government choose to operate a communal system of education instead of laying the foundation of an integrated school systems for all races, using the English language as the medium of instruction. The increasing inflow of Chinese immigrants and the subsequent economic policy of the British government to import Indian labourers, resulted in a diminishing Malay numerical superiority, which should have made it plain that any racially discriminating education policy was fraught with serious long-term difficulties.

Broadly speaking, there are four streams of education in Malaya. The British provided a limited number of English schools for a minority of children of all races. Help to mission and denominational schools was granted in the form of monetary aid, provided they conformed to the establishment standards of the Education Department (Federation of Malaya 1957).

Ever since the introduction of the Muslim religion, the Malays have been sending their children to the Quranic schools. As part of its pro-Malay policy the government provided free vernacular education for the Malays (Corry 1955).

Indian education was closely associated with the rubber estates. Large estate owners were required by the law to produce and staff a vernacular school whenever ten or more of their workers' children were within the school age, i.e. between seven and fourteen years (Simandjuntak 1969). A small per capita grant, based on examination results and attendance, was given annually. But generally these schools were far from satisfactory due to poorly paid teachers and part-time employment of children (Silcock 1954).

But the government did not regard it as part of its responsibilities to provide for the

education for the Chinese, and this was, in Corry's words, "perhaps the most serious sin of omission which can be laid at the door of British administration" (Corry 1955). Undismayed, the Chinese founded their own vernacular schools with the financial backing of wealthy Chinese *towkays* and voluntary Chinese subscribers (Simandjuntak 1969). Conforming largely to the Chinese government's code of education, these schools taught the young how to remain Chinese outside the homeland (Corry 1955). Trouble started when the teachers, who were recruited from China, allowed their zeal for Chinese nationalism and communism to seep into the classroom, causing the schools to become a hotbed of alien politics.

Realising the development of these non-Malayan tendencies, the government passed the Registration of Schools Ordinance in 1920, whereby these schools were brought under close government supervision. In 1935 the government decided to extend the grants-in-aid system to the Chinese vernacular schools which were prepared to conform to the standards set by the Education Department. But accustomed by this time to looking after their own affairs, most of the Chinese schools chose to shoulder their own financial responsibilities rather than to part with their educational independence (Mat Salleh 1962).

In Sarawak and North Borneo the situation was also characterised by uneven education development between the different communities. There were education departments, but they were not very active until the post-war period. The real burden of establishing and maintaining schools, particularly on the secondary level, was borne by the Chinese and Christian missions, the former autonomously, and the latter with British encouragement and some government aid (Harris et al 1956).

Thus there developed a mosaic of education systems which worked satisfactorily only as long as each community was content to live its own life and to leave the

administration of the country to the British. But it was idle to expect this state of affairs to continue indefinitely, and it was futile to ignore the fact that allowing alien schools to cater for almost half the population of the country was to create a sociopolitical problem of the first magnitude.

6.7 Crisis in Malayan Education

6.7.1 In search of a new policy

The Malayan Union constitution, the principal author of which was Sir Edward Gent (Corry 1955), then head of the South East Asia Department of the Colonial Office, was designed in great secrecy by a small coterie of officials in London. Its main features were : i. a Malayan Union of the whole peninsula plus Penang Island, ii. a separate government for the colony of Singapore, iii. a Governor-General over Malayan Union and the colony of Singapore, iv. a common citizenship for the Malayan Union and the colony of Singapore (Simandjuntak 1969) scheme it was proposed in 1946 to introduce a centrally controlled six year free primary education with Malay, Chinese, Tamil, or English as the medium of instruction and English taught as a subject in all schools. It was also proposed to conduct secondary school education with English as the medium of instruction and the pupil's mother tongue as a subject, and vice versa (Federation of Malaya 1957). This looked like an attempt to remedy the pre-war neglect in respect of the education of the non-Malay communities. But with the abandonment of the Malayan Union these proposals were shelved.

The constitution of the new Federation of Malaya attempted to implement the federal principle of a division of powers between the units and the centre. The State include

among others, executive authority over primary, secondary, and trade school education. But the non-federal character of this management was revealed by the fact that legislative power rested with the central government. Speaking on the federal principle with regard to education, Wheare said "this (education) in all federations and matter substantially in the hands of the regional governments and it seems best that it should be" (Wheare 1962).

This has left Malaya with an unprecedented choice, and a powerful factor contributing to it was the limited financial resources of the Malay states to meet the increasing demand for education, and for defence against the communist insurrection before the country had recovered from the devastations of the Second World War. Under these difficult circumstances the Malay states had little choice but to surrender education to the central government.

In 1949 a Central Advisory Committee on Education was set up to formulate education policy that would contribute most to the nullifying of communal divisions and the integration of all in to one Malayan community (Federation of Malaya 1950). The following year the Committee presented its report, advocating the policy very similar to the 1946 education proposals. It was discussed in the Federal Legislative Assembly, but owing to the many objections then raised it was also shelved. It was agreed, however, that the most urgent need was the improvement of Malay education.

6.7.2 The Demands of the Malays

In 1950 the High Commissioner appointed a Committee to "inquire into the inadequacy or otherwise of the education facilities available for Malays" (Federation of Malaya 1951). This Committee, chaired by L.J. Barnes, Director of Social Training at the

University of Oxford, was a symbol of Malay communalism, because its fourteen members included only Malays and Europeans (Simandjuntak 1969).

Unable to propose any improvements in the Malay schools without involving the entire system of education in Malaya, the Committee went beyond its term of reference, and advocated the establishment of an inter-racial system of National primary schools in which only the two official languages would be used as the medium of instruction. It recommended a bilingual National school system, which would employ both Malay and English as the media of instruction (Federation of Malaya 1951). But the most obnoxious part of the plan was the suggestion that the Chinese and Indian communities should give up their vernacular schools gradually, and send their children to schools where neither Chinese or Tamil was to be taught (Federation of Malaya 1951). Summarising its recommendations, the Committee said:

We have set up bilingualism in Malay and English as its (the National Schools') objective, because we believe that all parents who regard Malaya as their permanent home and the object of their undivided loyalty will be happy to have their children educated in those languages (Malay and English). If any parents were not happy about this, their unhappiness would properly be taken as an indication that they did not so regard Malaya.

(Federation of Malaya 1951)

While the intention of the Barnes Committee of establishing a system of education to include all races was unquestionably sound in principle, nevertheless the report, could only kindle the resentment of the non-Malay communities. Moreover, not only were the Chinese and the Indians not represented in the Committee, but they had not been consulted at any time during an inquiry involving the future of their education, language and culture (Simandjuntak 1969).

6.7.3 The Reaction of the Chinese

Moved by the amount of criticism against the features of the Barnes Committee by the Chinese, the High Commissioner in early January, 1951 invited Dr. William P. Fenn, Associate Executive Secretary of the Board of Trustees of a dozen institutions of higher learning in China, and Dr. Wu Teh - Yao, an official of the United Nations, to come to Malaya to investigate Chinese education.

Unlike the Barnes Committee, the Fenn-Wu mission sought the opinion of representatives of the various communities. The Fenn-Wu Report, published in June 1951, was on the whole sympathetic towards Chinese education. It was warned against turning Malaya into a cockpit for aggressive cultures, and declared that any restrictive imposition of one language or two languages upon the peoples of Malaya was inimical to community understanding and national unity, since the unity of a nation "depends not upon the singleness of the tongue or simplicity of cultures" but upon the "hearts of its citizens" (Federation of Malaya 1951)

While the report deplored the China-consciousness of the Chinese schools, it did not throw the blame entirely on the Chinese for this non-Malay outlook. It argued that insufficient government schools and sustained government neglect of Chinese education had forced the Chinese to establish their own schools, and just as English schools were replicas of schools in England, so were the Chinese schools in Malaya copies of those in China (Simandjuntak 1969). The report agreed to the necessity of including Malay and English in the curriculum of all schools, but added that as one of the great languages of the world the Chinese language was there to stay. On the future of the Chinese schools in Malaya it went on to say "They cannot be eliminated until the Chinese themselves decide that they are not needed ... That day may never come, for it

is possible that the Chinese schools should form an integral part of any education programme of the future Malaya" (Federation of Malaya 1951).

By implication the report censored the Barnes bilingual National school plan, but at the same time it was not unmindful of the danger of any excessive *Chineseness* in Chinese schools. It advised that the ideal education programme for the Malayan Chinese was that which gave adequate attention to Chinese language and culture, but which was free from any of the characteristics of education in China. Foreign politics should not be mixed up with education, because such combination would tend to create misunderstanding. While textbooks were not necessarily the ultimate determinants of political views, the Fenn-Wu report agreed that these could lead to divided Malayan orientation (Federation of Malaya 1951).

6.7.4 The decision of the Government

Following the publication of the Barnes and the Fenn-Wu reports, the Central Advisory Committee on Education was charged with the duty of considering the vital issues involved in the question of Malay and Chinese education. The Indian sector did not enter into the picture, since in the opinion of the government there were no problems peculiar to Indian education that would warrant a separate inquiry (Federation of Malaya 1951).

By and large the Central Advisory Committee, composed of twenty Malayan educators, officials, and Malay, Chinese and Indian officials, came out in support of the Barnes report, but it made concessions to the Chinese. Contrary to the Fenn-Wu report, the Committee believed that an inter-racial National school system would eventually replace all the racially segregated vernacular schools in Malaya. But while the Barnes report advocated the teaching of Malay as the only oriental language, the Committee believed

in the soundness of the teaching Kuo-Yu and Tamil as subjects of study to all Chinese and Indian pupils respectively, and of using Malay or English as the medium of instruction (Federation of Malaya 1951).

A special Committee of eleven members of the Federal Legislation Council was appointed in 1952 to give further consideration to the reports of the three previous committees, and to make recommendations for suitable legislation covering all aspects of education in the Federation. The draft legislation was introduced into the House, passed and subsequently enacted as the Education Ordinance, 1952 (Simandjuntak 1969). It accepted the Barnes concept of a system of National schools providing a six-year course of free education, and the Central Advisory Committee's proposal to have Malay and English as the languages of instruction, while at the same time facilities should be provided for the teaching of Kuo-Yu and Tamil if fifteen or more pupils in any grade wanted it. Although it may be possible to employ both Malay and English as the media of instruction in a single school, as recommended by the Barnes report, the Committee found it better to have two types of National schools. One type should have Malay as the medium of instruction with English as a subject language from the beginning of the first year, while the other type should use English as the medium of instruction with Malay as the subject language from the beginning of third year (Federation of Malaya 1952). Few of the ambitious plans contained in the Ordinance were carried out. To begin with, the policy of national streams did not appeal to a large section of the Malays, who continued to see in the plan a "deliberate attempt by the government to oust the Malay language [sic]" (Straits Times 1954). The Chinese also opposed the policy very bitterly, because "it endangered their language and culture" (Straits Times 1954). But the government expenditure on education jumped from M\$11.5 million in 1946 to M\$95.68 million in 1953, and this was aggravated by a government deficit of over M\$200 million in 1953. In view of this unfavourable financial position the High Commissioner appointed a special Commission to study the

feasibility of implementing the education policy. It came the conclusion that multi-racial schools were "essential" but out of the question because of the lack of funds to pay for them (Federation of Malaya 1957).

6.7.5 The Alliance Education Programme

6.7.5.1 The Razak Plan

In September 1955, just a month after the Alliance government was formed, a Committee was appointed to recommend "a national system of education acceptable to the Federation as a whole" (Simandjuntak 1969). The 15-member Committee, headed by Tun Abdul Razak, the Minister of Education, was drawn from the Federal Legislative Council, and was representative of Malaya's major communities. Its decisions, therefore, were much more likely to win general acceptance than any of the former policies. Recognising the fact that Malaya was in the transitional period of education, the Committee agreed it would not be in the interests of the country to formulate a policy of a permanent nature. It was therefore, decided to draw up a transitional plan, which, in the Committee's definition, would cover for the following ten years (Federation of Malaya 1956).

The Razak Report, which was published in May, 1956, abandoned the idea of a National school system, and children would continue to receive their primary education in separate vernacular schools. At the same time, however, the Committee endeavoured to elevate the Malay language in the education system. In order to achieve this goal the primary schools were divided into two broad categories, i.e. (i) the standard primary schools with Malay as the medium of instruction, and (ii) the standard-type primary

schools with Kuo-Yu, Tamil or English as the media of instruction and Malay as a compulsory subject of study (Simandjuntak 1969). Where English was not the medium of instruction, that language would be taught, whenever there were fifteen or more pupils whose parents wanted them to learn the language (Federation of Malaya 1956). The effect of this proposals was that Malay pupils would be bilingual, and non-Malay pupils trilingual.

To ensure that Malay was taught in primary schools a knowledge of Malay was to be a compulsory requirement for admission into secondary schools which were wholly or partly run by public funds. In contrast with the primary school system, there was to be only one type of secondary school, i.e. the National Secondary School, where the pupils would receive instruction based on a common syllabus, but where there would be sufficient flexibility in the curriculum for the study of other languages and cultures. To make certain that the teaching of Malay was continued in the secondary schools, Malay was made a compulsory subject of examination for the Lower Certificate of Education (LCE) and for the National Certificate of Education, which was later known as the Federation of Malaya Certificate of Education (FMCE). These two public examinations were to come at the end of the third year and at the conclusion of the five to six-year secondary school course respectively (Federation of Malaya 1956). Because of the utilitarian value of English, the study of this language was required in all National secondary schools.

The Razak plan won the goodwill of the non-Malay communities because it did not seek to alter the practice of Chinese secondary schools of using Kuo-Yu as a general medium of instruction. The content of education was considered to be important than the medium of instruction, and the promotion of Malay to the position of a national language was to be achieved, not by its use as the medium of instruction, but as a compulsory subject in all schools. By making this approach the Razak Committee

skirted the explosive language conflicts of the past, and allayed the non-Malay fears of the ultimate extinction of their education, language and culture.

It was rather strange that the only opposition came from the Malays. Five UMNO (United Malay National Organisation) elected Councillors and one nominated Malay member were dissatisfied because Malay was not made the sole medium of instruction in all schools. Answering these critics, the Minister of Commerce and Industry, Dr. Ismail Dato' Abdul Rahman, said that "such ambition was tantamount to posing as imperialists with no considerations for the Chinese and Indians who are already in this country" (Federation of Malaya 1956). Fourteen other Councillors spoke in support of the report, describing it as "a shining example of Malay liberalism", and as "a pattern for the weaving of what may in time truly become a virile Malayan culture" (Federation of Malaya 1956). The critics having been silenced, the Council unanimously approved the "ten-year school blueprint", which was subsequently embodied as the Education Ordinance, 1957.

6.8. Post-Independence Period (after 1957)

The subject of education became part of the controversy on account of the ambition of certain Malays of conservative opinions to restrict the language medium at the LCE examinations to Malay, and to prevent Chinese from being used as a medium of examination at the secondary level so as to ensure the supremacy of the Malay language (Lowe 1960). This prompted Dr. Lim Chong Eu, the then President of the MCA (Malayan Chinese Association) to communicate with Tunku Abdul Rahman, the Prime Minister and the leader of the Alliance, in a "secret" letter urging that until the Malay language was sufficiently developed, Kuo-Yu should continue to function as a medium of instruction and examination in Chinese schools, and that the results of such

examinations should be recognised by the government as equivalent to those of the National Secondary school examinations (Straits Budget 1959). The Alliance yielded to sustained pressure from the MCA, and promised to encourage and to sustain the growth of the languages and cultures of the non-Malay races, and to recognise Chinese secondary school examinations results as equivalent to the LCE (Straits Budget 1959).

Pursuant to its election promises, the Alliance government appointed in February 1960 an Education Review Committee under the chairmanship of the Minister of Education, Abdul Rahman Haji Talib, to review the Razak policy and the extent of its implementation. In June the Review Committee reported that the Razak policy had been "faithfully and successfully carried out within the limits imposed by financial stringency in 1958 and 1959 and by the sheer magnitude of the many-sided task" (Federation of Malaya 1960). Apart from having to review the Razak policy, this Committee also made some recommendations. And its main recommendations was incorporated into the Education Act, 1961. The recommendations of the committee had an important bearing on educational development in the 1960s. Among the important recommendations are:

- a. Universal free primary education;
- b. Automatic promotion to Form III;
- c. Assessment Examination at Standard V;
- d. Improvement of Vernacular Primary Schools;
- e. Enhancement of Technical and Vocational Education;
- f. Control of Primary Education;
- g. Setting up the Federal Inspectorate;
- h. Introduction of Bahasa Malaysia as the medium of instruction;
- i. Official language medium for Public Examination;
- j. Expansion of Teacher Training Programmes; and

k. Provision of Religious and Moral Instruction.

(Kememterian Pelajaran Malaysia 1985, p.8)

While allowing the system of multilingualism to continue in the primary schools, it was considered incompatible with an education policy, designed to create a national consciousness and to establish Malay as the national language, to make the racial and linguistic diversities permanent features to the publicly financed secondary schools. So it was recommended that Malay or English should be used exclusively as the medium of instruction in these schools and as the medium of examinations at the LCE and FMCE. Describing the LCE and FMCE as the "lynchpins in our national secondary system of education, the Committee went on to say that the most unsatisfactory aspect of the existing system would be eliminated, if the Ministry of Education scrapped examinations in the Chinese language" (Federation of Malaya 1960).

To the government-assisted Chinese secondary schools all this meant a reorganisation of their school system. In fact, the Committee had proposed a change from the Chinese 3-3 system, i.e. three years of Senior Middle School, into the Federations 3-2 secondary system, i.e. three years of National secondary school course followed by two more years of upper secondary. The first year of the Chinese secondary school course, which the Committee proposed to call "Remove Class", could be utilised to provide extra extensive instruction in one or both of the official languages, preparatory to the first year of the 3-2 Malay or English-medium school course. Simultaneously the Chinese secondary school examinations would be replaced by the LCE and the FMCE examinations (Federation of Malaya 1960). The most serious impediment to this grandiose scheme, however was the severe shortage of suitably trained teachers.

Opponents of these proposals denounced the scheme as a calculated onslaught against the non-Malay languages and rejected them as a break of the promises made by the Alliance on the eve of the 1959 general elections (Federation of Malaya 1960). During

the debate on the new Education Bill Too Joon Hing, the rebel MCA Secretary-General in the 1959 crisis, called for the withdrawal of the bill and for the appointment of an all-party committee to undertake a fresh review of the Razak Report. But in spite of solid assaults according to the non-Malays the controversial Bill was passed.

Although the issue of reforming education was taken up immediately following independence, the use of one language as the medium of instruction was implemented in stages over a planned period of fourteen years, beginning with the enrolment of pupils into Malay-medium classes for Standard One in 1970 (Asmah Haji Omar 1976) This initial phase of conversion at the first level of primary education signified the start of a period when the instruction of all school subjects would ultimately be in the national language, except for the learning of English, conforming to the National Educational Policy which aims to establish English as an effective second language in schools throughout the country.

The underlying purpose of learning English is to create a society that is able to utilise the language for effective communication as need arises, and as a key to wider experiences.

(Kementerian Pelajaran Malaysia 1973)

In a way, the implementation of the National Education Policy, with particular respect to the use of the national language as the medium of instruction in the schools caused the racial riots of May 13, 1969, which many saw as the culmination of pent-up emotional upheavals - the result of religious, cultural and language differences between the country's multi-ethnic components. One of the issues that led to the racial clash following the general election in 1969 was the status of Malay as the national language. Many among the non-Malays challenged the right of the government to impose upon them a language which they claimed to belong to only the Malays. Hence, it was after

the riot that the term 'Malay language' or *Bahasa Melayu* was changed to *Bahasa Malaysia* or the Malaysian language'. Possibly free from any racial overtone, Bahasa Malaysia could then be looked upon as the key belonging to every Malaysian (Penyata Jawatan-Kuasa Pelajaran 1956). However, although the use of Bahasa Malaysia as the primary medium of instruction in the country's educational establishments has been fully implemented, there is also provision for the teaching of the pupils' mother tongues under the Educational Act, 1961 as long as fifteen or more pupils in a particular school request such a class.

Undoubtedly, in order to unite the different races in Malaysia it is essential to introduce a common curriculum for schools throughout the country to ensure that pupils would be aware of similar issues pertaining to the nation through learning identical subjects in spite of the different language of instruction. All schools, including those at the primary level where education is offered in three languages, have to follow a common-content curriculum.

The first Education Committee of Independent Malaysia states:

We cannot over-emphasize our conviction that the introduction of syllabuses common to all schools in the Federation is the crucial requirement of educational policy in Malaya. It is an essential element in the development of a united Malayan nation. It is the key which unlocks the gates hitherto standing locked and barred against the establishment of an educational system 'acceptable to the people of Malaya as a whole'. Once all schools are working to a common content syllabus, irrespective of the language medium of instruction, we consider the country will have taken the most important step toward establishing a national system of education which will satisfy the needs of the people and promote their cultural, social, economic and political development as a nation.

We do not consider that the order in which the material is treated is of major importance but priority should be given to the Malayan aspect of each subject and non-Malayan elements in the syllabus should only be admitted either if they are of international value, or if they provide the necessary background.

(Federation of Malaya 1956, p. 18)

Hence, from the day Malaysia got independence, the National Education Policy - based on the report by the Government Committee on Education in 1956 - began to take shape through the implementation of a coordinated curriculum, first in primary schools and over the years encompassing the secondary level. It was not until 1983, however, that the national language began to prevail as the medium of instruction right up to the tertiary level when all the first year courses at universities began conducting lectures in Malay.

6.9 The functions of English in Malaysia

Fishman (1968 : 6) has stated of new nations that 'in the absence of a common nationwide, ethnic and cultural identity (they) proceed to plan and create such an identity through national symbols that can lead to common mobilisation above, beyond, and at the expense of pre-existing ethnic - cultural particularities. It is at this point that a national language is frequently invoked ... as a unifying symbol'.

Even before complete independence, the Alliance Government had set about the establishment of Malay as the national language. However,

the immediate operational needs of the country may well necessitate the short-term recognition of another or of multiple languages ..Thus some nations have hit upon the expediency of

recognising several local languages as permissible for early education (i.e. grade one to three or even six), whereas the preferred national language is retained for intermediate education and a non-indigenous language of international significance is retained (at least temporarily) for government activity and higher education.

(Fishman 1968 : 7)

Clammer (1976) claims that the Malaysian situation possessed:

many of the classic sociolinguistic problems of rapidly developing countries: literacy problems, problems of non-standard speakers, problems of second language learning, of the elaboration and codification of the national language and of its modernisation and standardisation and general problems of language policy and planning in relation to education and overall social and economic development.

(quoted in Chai 1977 : 26)

In the case of Malaysia, although Malay was made the national language, there is no prohibition of using English in the country. In fact it is still used as a second official language for independent Malaysia. Due to the importance of this language internationally it was retained for 'official' purposes, for the courts, for diplomacy and for consultative purposes.

Article 152 of the Federal Constitution states:

The national language is Malay, and Parliament has the right to decide the script in which it may be written. (Romanized script is the official script, Jawi may be used). Until 1967 English will continue in all Parliament Bills and Acts. Similarly, both Malay and English may be spoken in Parliament and the State Assemblies, but English remains the language of the Supreme

Court until Parliament decide otherwise.

Thus it can be seen that English was retained for some time for the courts and parliament . In fact it has been retained for a much longer period. What Fishman (1968) states in regard to languages of education also has been generally true in Malaysia, although it would not be appropriate to consider that the policy of allowing primary education in Mandarin or Tamil, with Bahasa Malaysia as a second language is merely 'expediency' (Platt and Weber 1980). This is because the non-Malays have the right to receive education in their mother tongues. At least at the primary level, in order to introduce, if not the language then the form of the language, and later the children should be given a choice either to continue their education in Malay or in their own language

Of course, although a language may be made officially the national language, this does not of itself make it de facto the national language. It is the task of various official, or officially sanctioned, bodies to bring about changes in language use patterns so that the language does indeed become the national language. The changes which have occurred and still are occurring in the functions and status of English, should be considered, the former prestige language in relation to the increasing functions and status of Malay. By referring to English as the former prestige language, it is not implied that there were no other high status speech varieties. Quite obviously there are prestige forms of Malay, varieties of Chinese , Indian languages such as Tamil and Punjabi, as well as the special prestige language connected with the religious domain, Arabic (Platt and Weber 1980). What it is meant is that English was considered a prestige language because being fluent in it will lead "to higher status of occupations and higher income" (Platt and Weber 1980).

With the present policy of implementing Bahasa Malaysia as the de facto as well as de jure national language, there has obviously been a change in the relative status of Bahasa Malaysia and English. For the Malays, there is obviously a cultural attachment to Bahasa Malaysia. In addition many of those now able to receive higher education and higher status positions are not from a background in which English had any great relevance. For the rural population, there would have been a degree of awareness that English was the language of the British administration and a language of power but as they had little or no opportunity to learn it they had neither sentimental nor instrumental attachment to it.

Obviously Bahasa Malaysia is becoming more and more the language which will have increasing functional value for most of the population as it becomes even more important as the language of government. The process by which it becomes the language to which the whole population has sentimental attachment will be slower, but the more it is used and accepted as appropriate for the private domains of Family and Friendship, the more this state is likely to be achieved. Obviously in a multi-ethnic, multilingual, multicultural society such changes do not occur overnight.

For some English-medium educated Malaysians, English has been on the borderline of being a Second Language and a First language but the number of such people will diminish. The reason is obvious because through the conversion programme all English-medium schools have been replaced by Malay-medium institutions. There are a few private schools offering English as their medium of instruction. Obviously not all parents can afford to send their children to such schools so English remains as the language of communication only for those who can afford it - the upper and middle classes. For many, especially those who do not go on to higher education and/or have little or no contact with the English-speaking world, English, although it is taught as a 'second language'; will be more a foreign language.

Although the use of Bahasa Malaysia has increased among the people of Malaysia, English is also still used actively by a small percentage of its population for instance in the family domain. The use of English in this domain has typically been restricted to the urban elites of various ethnic backgrounds. English was not used by the rural communities, whether Malay farmers and fishermen, Tamil rubber estate workers or Chinese market gardeners and tin mining workers. However, in the larger towns and cities, especially in Kuala Lumpur, Penang, Malacca and Johore Bahru, there were and still are, families in which English is used among siblings and to English-educated parents. And according to Anie Attan, although the status of English had been reduced to that of second in importance to Bahasa Malaysia, it still plays a major role in society:

Whereas the status of English was reduced to one of language as a subject in primary and secondary schools, at the tertiary level it is still widely used in lectures, tutorials, seminars and crit-sessions at the advanced levels and for research purposes.

Although the National Language is the language of administration in government offices, English is still the working language for the writing statutory documents which are then translated into the national language. English is also the prevailing language in the courts.

In the private sector, a major proportion of the day-to-day transactions, either locally or internationally, is still conducted in the English Language, with the exception of transactions with the government.

(Fourth Malaysian Plan : 344)

Ainon Mohamad (1980) refers to the varying status of English in the last decades says that there are now three schools of thought : those who would like to see English

emphasised more; those who want English and Malay to be used equally so that the schools would produce more proficient bilinguals; and those who would like English to remain in second place to Bahasa Malaysia.

Chin (1977) identified the function of English in Malaysia as the following:

1. Paradoxically, the first function is a non-specific one. If we conceive of education for the child as equipping him with a desirable body of knowledge and skills in attitude to live a good life and to grasp the opportunities that life has to offer, then we include in the curriculum what we believe to be relevant to the modern world, and in the modern world, giving the child access to an external language is certainly both relevant and desirable. The fact of choosing English is simply a question of pragmatics.
2. We want a “window on the world” and English is so widely used around the world that with it the child can gain access to the knowledge, events and developments around him, not only in serious journals but in all other things that can enrich his life.
3. Knowledge will no doubt be more and more available in Bahasa Malaysia as more and more Malaysians educated in the language can put their own expertise in writing ... but even when we have books in Bahasa Malaysia for all levels of education, an ability to draw on other resources is an inestimable asset.
4. Although we have our own universities, knowledge of English puts institutions of higher learning in the English-speaking world within our reach.
5. With a knowledge of English, the child has the option to enter special and specific areas of training and employment for which English is an asset or a prerequisite.

(Government of Malaysia 1980 : 193)

In an investigation of ethnically Chinese Malaysians in the age group of 20 - 25 (Platt 1976c), it was found that there was a considerable difference according to educational background in the percentages of those who claimed to use English for all or some purposes with members of the family, as shown in Table 6.3

Table 6.3 The use of English in the Family Domain

The use of English with	E (percent)	C (percent)
mother	6	0
father	39	0
siblings	84	0

E : Completely English-medium educated.

C : Chinese-medium primary education, English-medium secondary education.

Source : Platt and Weber 1980 : 157.

Among those of an ethnically Indian background in the same age group and with an

English-medium education, a high use of English was claimed with siblings and, in some cases, even with parents. Among Malays, there was a considerable difference according to the educational and socio-economic background of the speakers and their parents. According to Platt and Weber (1980) there are two trends, not necessarily mutually exclusive, that are probably operating :

1. A move towards greater use of the background language - the Chinese dialect or Indian language.
2. A move towards the use of Bahasa Malaysia.

The first trend would operate in families of an English-medium background where younger members of the family are now being educated through the medium of Bahasa Malaysia but where some of the older members of the family do not have an adequate command of it. Thus, older members of the family would usually have been able to communicate in *Bahasa Pasar* (Bazaar Malay) on certain topics within the transaction and employment domain but would not typically have been able to discuss more 'elevated' topics in any kind of Malay. As a result they turn to their dialects or language.

The second trend would also operate where younger members of the family are being educated through the medium of Bahasa Malaysia but where the older members of the family are also attempting to improve their competence in it or where conversation is between younger members of the family.

In the friendship domain, English has been widely used among the English-medium educated, especially between the speakers of different language or dialect backgrounds. Even among those of the same Chinese dialect group or speaking the same Indian language, English has provided them with the appropriate lexical range for certain

topics.

In Platt's (1976c) investigation the ethnically Chinese Malaysians' reported speech variety is shown below.

Table 6.4 Speech variety used with friends in home town

Reported use of	E (percent)	C (percent)
English	90	58
Dialects	58	68
Mandarin	3	58
Malay	6	16

E : Completely English-medium educated.

C : Chinese-medium primary education, English-medium secondary education.

Source : Platt and Weber 1980 : 157.

The figures refer to the percentage of speakers who stated that they used the particular speech variety. Some would use two or more varieties, either with the same friends or according to the verbal repertoire of the friends. As may be seen, a majority even of those with Chinese-medium primary education claimed to use some English with friends, but in group C the same proportion of speakers claimed to use Mandarin. Quite obviously, Mandarin has become at once a lingua-franca and a variety in which to

discuss more 'elevated' topics among those with some Chinese-medium education (Platt and Weber 1980). However, English was still an important speech variety in this domain in 1975 when the investigation was carried out, and obviously the dominant one among the English-medium educated.

Before independence the English language was used as the medium of instruction at all school levels in English-medium schools apart from being the medium of communication amongst people in the middle and upper classes. This situation has changed since independence as Bahasa Malaysia has, in stages, been made the medium of instruction in all schools with the aim of making it the unifying force amongst the people. Nevertheless, English is still taught at all school levels, because of its importance especially in the acquisition of knowledge, for example in the field of science and technology. Bearing in mind that Malaysia aspires to bring forth a progressive society based on modern science and technology, it is appropriate that English is made the instrument to achieve this objective.

Realising its importance, Education Minister Datuk Musa Hitam during a parliamentary debate stated that:

the English language was an important second language in schools and institutions of higher learning. The Ministry would see to it that the standards were maintained and improved. He agreed that the teaching of English should be given serious attention not only by the Ministry but the parents as well. His Ministry, Datuk Musa said, was actively studying the various ways to improve the teaching of the language both from the short and long term view.

(New Straits Times 7 April 1978)

A major concern affecting the acquisition of English in Malaysian schools is that pupils are not learning sufficient English to make them competent enough in the language.

Anie Attan comments that :

Despite their eleven years of exposure to English as subject in schools, the writer, through her years of teaching experience at the tertiary level, found learners to be lacking in the linguistic competence needed to facilitate learning. This finding has been confirmed by an investigation and analysis made by the English Department, University of Technology, Malaysia in 1983. A summary of the findings indicated that learners found their level that would enable them to read the reference texts with facility and efficiency. Similar findings were also obtained with regards to listening.

(Government of Malaysia 1980 : 347)

McMeekin, Jr (1975) also comments on the low standard of English in Malaysia :

The most severe criticism levelled at teachers of English [in Malaysia] is not so much that pupils have not passed the English examinations at the Standard Five, SRP or SPM levels, but that those who have obtained passes and have managed to obtain entrance to Universities or Colleges or to secure employment in Government departments and private firms are unable to speak, read or write English with fluency and confidence.

(Government of Malaysia 1980 : 96)

Replying to a question put to him in the *Dewan Rakyat* (Malaysian Lower House of Parliament), Haji Salleh Jafaruddin, Deputy Education Minister, outlined steps to be taken to improve the standard of English. In addition to a research project on the standard of English required for the 1980s, other measures would be :

1. Increasing the reading materials in English for primary schools and launch supplementary reading programmes for secondary schools;
2. Review and update the English language syllabus for primary and secondary schools; and
3. Intensify in-service training for English teachers to expose them to latest teaching techniques of the language.

(New Straits Times, 6 April 1978)

Later, Datuk Musa Hitam told the *Dewan Negara* (Malaysian Upper House of Parliament) that :

he had directed his officers to draw short and long term programmes to improve the standard of English among pupils. He said the short term plan - comprising immediate steps to overcome the problem - might be carried out next year. The long term programmes would include a careful review of all aspects of the teaching of English, including the training of teachers, facilities and other related matters.

(New Straits Times, 27 April 1978)

Despite all the efforts made by the Ministry of Education, the standard of English among the school pupils is still relatively poor. The main purpose of the English lessons is to impart basic skills and knowledge with two specific aims; firstly, to enable the pupils to use the language in their work, and secondly, to improve their skills and increase their knowledge of the language to be used for specific needs at higher levels of education (Ministry of Education Malaysia 1985). At present English is a compulsory subject in schools and all public examinations, although the candidate need not pass this subject in order to continue his education. This situation has made the majority of Malay-educated learners of today view English as nothing more than a school subject

without any immediate purpose. They can dispense with English entirely and still get themselves promoted from one level of schooling to the next. This, teachers generally believe, undoubtedly colours their attitudes towards the subject which in turn affects their examination results. As an example, in the 1973 Standard Five Assessment Test, only 43% of the total Malay-medium candidates throughout the country passed the English paper and in 1977 the figure dwindled to 17% (Government of Malaysia 1980). Similarly, in the SPM common Communication paper conducted for the first time in 1977, only 10% of the total Malay-medium candidates throughout the country passed the paper as against 60% of English-medium candidates (Government of Malaysia 1980).

The low standard of English among the Malay-medium pupils was once commented on by Datuk Abdullah Badawi, then Minister of Education:

Buat masa ini adalah jelas sekali kepentingan bahasa Inggeris telah begitu diabaikan sehingga mutu dan juga penggunaannya dikalangan rakyat Malaysia telah menurun . (Utusan Malaysia, April 12, 1985 : 6)

(Currently it is clear that the importance of English has been neglected to the extent that its quality and use among Malaysians have declined)

As a consequence of this the quality of teaching and learning English in schools especially in national schools is found to be less than satisfactory (Ministry of Education Malaysia 1985).

6.10 Language situation at tertiary level

Until 1969 the University of Malaya was the only degree giving institution in the country. English was the medium of instruction for all subjects. Until the 1970's, the student population was predominantly Chinese especially in the faculties of science, engineering, medicine and economics. The government, therefore, increased the number of universities (by three) and also opened other tertiary level institutions to widen the opportunities for Malays to enter higher education. The Majid report (1971), recommended that the racial composition of universities as a whole, as well as each faculty separately, should represent the racial composition of the country "as far as possible" (Watson 1982 : 102).

Since 1983, the medium of instruction in all tertiary level institutions in Malaysia has been Malay, except for English language and literature studies.

CHAPTER SEVEN

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

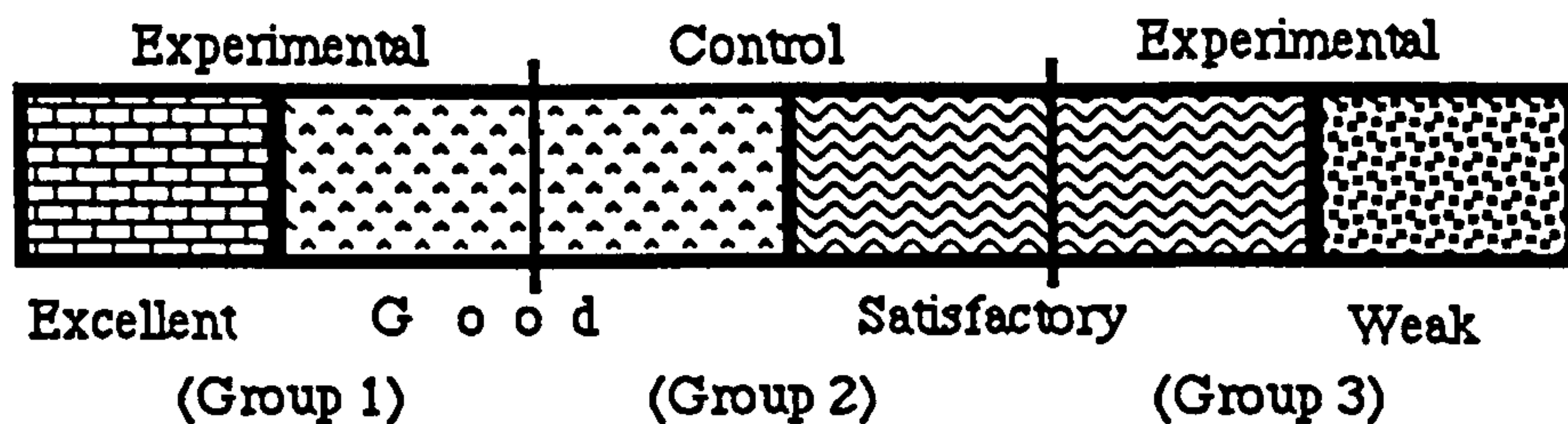
7.1 Methodology

The investigator used two instruments for gathering data : the Writing Apprehension Test to measure pretreatment levels of student apprehension about writing, and a two-hour writing sample taken at the end of the treatment period to measure overall writing quality

7.1.1 Design of Experimental and Control Classes

The study was conducted for eight weeks during the second semester of 1991 - 1992. The subjects of the study are the students enrolled for the Written Communication 1 course. There are three groups of students in this course. The criterion for allocating the students to the groups is according to their academic achievement in their previous courses. In other words the students are streamed. Having to consider that the students have been placed in the groups according to their academic achievement, the investigator has chosen groups 1 and 3 as the experimental while group 2 as the control. Group 1 consists of students who are excellent to good, group 2 good to satisfactory and group 3 satisfactory to weak. By choosing groups 1 and 3 as the experimental groups the study will cover all students across the range from excellent to good to satisfactory to weak (figure 7.1).

Figure 7.1 Experimental and Control Group



The study make use of the pre-test,post-test design, where two groups, the experimental groups, receive a treatment, while one more group, the control, does not. The control group use the original syllabus for the course.

The students meet for two hours three times a week. Unfortunately, only half an hour was allocated for the syllabus prepared by the investigator, and the remaining one and a half hours was used for the original syllabus for the course. In the experimental groups the first six meetings after the collection of the pre-test were devoted to apprehension lowering activities. First, students and instructors participated in the 'Signature Hunt' activity. In this activity each student was asked to get the signatures of three other students who pretended to be famous people. The students who obtained to get the signatures then had to describe the famous people. For example, "I have shaken hands with Michael Jackson He is a famous singer ..." After that, the students participated in 'Who I am' activity where they were asked to bring two objects which would show the others in the class what kind of a person "I am". Students were told to spend three to five minutes talking about their objects and to say why or how each object reveal a part of their personalities. After the introduction activities, students participated in paired and small group activities, usually word games and puzzles where students worked together to solve them.

After the students became relatively at ease with the idea of working with each other (five lessons of group activities) they were introduced to the writing workshop concept. Students were told by the instructors that their peers as well as the instructors would read and comment on all their writing in the treatment period : rough drafts or prewriting, more polished drafts and the final drafts. As the students have not shared their writing with peers before, they may be apprehensive about doing so. To reassure them, the instructors showed them how to review a piece of writing. Then using a “safe” writing sample -taken from the previous semester- the instructors and students practised giving positive-only then positive and negative comments. This large group activity allowed students to try out their review voices and enabled the instructors to guide them toward useful comments. Thus, after being in an atmosphere of sharing and working out problems together for over two weeks it was felt that the students were ready to begin writing and presenting their own papers to their writing groups.

The writing workshop was conducted exactly as the students had practised it and in the same manner suggested by Peter Elbow (see Appendix 17) and Ken Macrorie (see Appendix 5). Students were divided into groups of four or five. After they received the composition topics they were asked to discuss how to approach the topics and also do other prewriting activities such as rehearsing, planning and making notes (for details see Chapter Four - section 4.2). After this, the students had to write the compositions at home due to the lack of time in the classroom. At the next meeting the students were asked to read the essays one at a time. Copies of each student’s writing were handed out, and students then read their papers to their groups. After a paper was read and following a thirty-second to one-minute pause, each of the group members took turns to comment on the paper. For the first paper, responses were limited to the positive-only kind. Then the students were required to write the revision of the paper at home. After the first paper students were instructed to provide both positive and negative feedback.

A brief summary of additional salient features of the experimental treatment appear below in the same sequence as they were used:

1) Introductory Large-Group Interaction Activities: Included a 'Signature Hunt' in which the students were given a list of one-line descriptions ("I have shaken hands with at least two famous people") and were instructed to obtain the signatures of two class members next to the 'appropriate' descriptions. (e.g., "I have shaken hands with Michael Jackson, who is a famous singer. He is 35 years old and he began singing at the age of 7...").

A brief 'non-written' composition was also included in which students brought two objects to class and in about five minutes, explained the connections and relationship the objects had to them. The objects were to somehow 'symbolise' their owners.

2) Paired-Students Language Problem Solving Activities: Students worked in pairs only. These problems were designed to give students practice and reinforcement in talking with each other in order to solve a problem. With each new problem presented which they had 10 to 15 minutes to solve, they had to switch partners.

3) Small-Group Language Problem Solving Activities: These were designed to give students non-graded practice in solving problems in small groups of four or five students. With each new problem (which groups had 15 minutes to solve), students had to switch groups so that they would be working with a new set of people for each task. (See Appendix 4)

4) Instruction in Peer Evaluation Process: Each student was asked to read Chapter Four from Elbow's *Writing Without Teachers* (1973) (see Appendix 17), which carefully outlines workshop process in simple and lucid terms. This chapter, along

with the list of 'musts' for workshop participants was summarised by the investigator and then were discussed thoroughly by the instructors and their students (see Appendix 5).

5) Introductory Large-Group "What-To-Look-For" Practice : Before peer groups were formed, the instructors led their classes through three examples of students' papers (from the previous semester) and questioned students about the papers' possible good points, and also pointed out any desirable elements in the papers which student overlooked. The key was variety - as many different qualities as possible were reviewed, such as smooth transitions and sentence structure variety. In these initial practice evaluations, only positive responses were practised, with the example papers demonstrating sufficiently high quality - "good" writing, but not necessarily excellent - so that a variety of positive comments could be made.

6) Small Groups for Sustained Peer Evaluation : The first essay was restricted to positive feedback only. Subsequent responses had to be either positive or positive-negative; solely negative would never be allowed. In addition to other kinds of responses, each student has to discuss whether or not the essay in question had correctly fulfilled specific assigned objectives. All essays were reproduced so that each student has copies of everyone else's writing. Instructors could check on small group progress by acting as participants in each group, alternating groups, striving for equal time with each group, making allowances for more time in particular groups requiring attention. Instructors would sometimes need to act as catalysts to get slow groups moving at a faster pace, as well as to get fast groups to slow to a reasonable pace.

7) Specific Objectives for Each Essay : Throughout the study, the instructor and researcher examined students' writing to determine students' most common skill deficiencies. The limited specific objectives for each essay were selected to remedy

these observed problem areas. Then, there would be an attempt to match or correlate these objectives with essay topic choices so that the topics would easily lend themselves to student illustration and demonstration of the objectives.

8) Instructional Sequence Preceding Each Essay : For each paper written by the students, the same "instructional cycle" was implemented. A brief description of the six major steps in the cycle follows:

Step 1: *large-group clarification of objectives session* - Instructor first writes the specific objectives on blackboard and then, in his/her own words, simply explains what the objectives mean.

Step 2: *large-group oral and written practice of objective sessions* - Next instructors lead students through selected oral and written exercises that enable students to perform and practise the selected objectives.

Step 3: *identification and discussion of superior and inferior uses of objectives within students' own past writing* - For "in context" illustration of objectives, instructor selected from all past writings.

Step 4: *actual writing of essays* - The necessity for each group to reach consensus on topics created a need for students to exchange ideas and views on what they would write, and how they would approach the topic. Actual writing would always occur outside the class.

Step 5: *peer group evaluation sessions* - The students have to sit in groups to review the papers written by their peers (See number six above, "Small Groups for Sustained Peer Evaluation").

Step 6: *individual revision of writing* - After peer evaluation sessions students were given ample opportunity for revision of all papers.

The control group received the conventional course of instruction offered at the university (see Figure 7.1 on page 178).

The first topic for the first paper was simply "Write down your childhood memory". This topic was chosen in order to introduce the workshop techniques. Since this topic is very broad it was up to the students to discuss with their group members how to approach this topic. For the next papers there was a set of three or four suggested topics for each paper and students were asked to select one of the topics from the set. For the final two-hour essay, both groups received one topic.

7.2 Procedures

Three graduate instructors taught the experimental and control groups. Two instructors were Malaysian and one American. All instructors had several years of experience teaching both high school and university level composition courses. Prior to this study, all three instructors had been exposed to the theory of process instruction, but had no direct experience of using it in their classes. They also had no previous experience with the study's particular experimental treatment, but each instructor had experience with the control methodology.

All classes met three times a week. For the experimental groups, the time spent in the classroom was used for the writing activities such as prewriting and revision. Due to the lack of time in the classroom, the students were asked to do their writing (drafting)

and rewriting as homework.

The students in the experimental group were required to write five essays. For the last two topics the students had to reach consensus in their small peer evaluation groups so that all group members wrote on the same topic. All topics were selected or created by the researcher in accordance with four criteria : (1) they had to be clearly and concretely worded; (2) they had to involve a variety of contemporary issues rather than obscure or historical questions; (3) they had to elicit varied kinds of writing, and (4) they had to arouse some interest and had to be intellectually challenging for university students.

After reaching consensus on which topic to write the students were involved in prewriting activities (rehearsing, planning, trying out beginnings etc) on how to write the essays on such topics. After doing so, the students, then, were asked to write the essay outside the classroom. Then, the essays were revised by their peers. This would take about thirty minutes. And finally the students were asked to rewrite the essays before handing them to the instructors. The instructors would read the essays and discuss the essays with the students during student-teacher conferences.

7.3 Syllabus for experimental and control class

For the purpose of collecting the information, a process based syllabus has been implemented by the experimental group (See table 7.1) While the control group uses the original syllabus designed for the course "Written Communication 1" apart from the first and last day of the experiment (See table 7.2).

Table 7.1 The syllabus and timetable for the experimental group

DAY 1	<p>Take Daly-Miller Writing Apprehension Test.</p> <p>Instructor informs students to bring three objects for large-group activities.</p>
DAY 2	<p>Large-group Interaction Activities. "Signature Hunt" in which students pretend to be famous people. All students should obtain the signatures of the class members (who will pretend to be famous people). Appropriate descriptions should be given.</p> <p>"Non-written Composition" in which students bring three objects to class and in about five minutes explain the connections and relationship the objects have to them. The objects should somehow "symbolize" the owner.</p>
DAY 3	<p>Paired group work - students work in pairs only. The problems are designed to give students practice and reinforcement in talking with each other to solve a problem. With each new problem presented, which students have ten minutes to solve, they have to switch partners. The activities are "Animal Maze", "The Lawnmower", "The Barbers" and "Telling the Time" (See Appendix 3).</p>
DAY 4	<p>Small group language solving activities - these are designed to give students non-graded practice in solving problems in small groups of four or five students. With each new problem (which they have about ten minutes to solve), students will have to switch groups so they will be working with a new set of people for each task. The activities are "Test Your Survival IQ", "Desert Island" and "Imprisonment" (See Appendix 4).</p>
DAY 5	<p>Instruction in the Peer Evaluation Process : Each student will be asked to read Chapter Four from <u>Writing Without Teachers</u> (Elbow 1973) (See Appendix 18), which carefully outlines workshop processes in simple and lucid terms. The students are required to finish reading it at home.</p>
DAY 6	<p>Students will discuss the chapter with their instructors.</p>

DAY 7	Introductory Large-Group "What-To-Look-For" Practice. Before peer groups are formed, the instructor will lead the class through two examples of student papers (from the previous semester) and question students about the papers possible good points and point out desirable elements in the paper - as many different qualities as possible will be reviewed. In these initial practice evaluations, only positive responses will be practised, with example papers demonstrating sufficiently high quality - "good" writing, but not necessary excellent - so that variety of positive comments can be made.
DAY 8	Paper 1 "Childhood Memory" (See Appendix 10). Writing Workshop begins. Prewriting. Writing (continue at home).
DAY 9	Revision (See 7.2.1 - No. 6). Rewriting - after peer evaluation (revision) students will be given ample opportunity for revision individually (continue at home).
DAY 10	Paper 2 - Definition Paper (see Appendix 11). Prewriting. Writing (continue at home).
DAY 11	Revision. Rewriting (continue at home).
DAY 12	Paper 3 - Character sketch (See Appendix 12). Prewriting. Writing (continue at home),
DAY 13	Revision. Rewriting (continue at home).
DAY 14	Student-teacher conference (done outside the class) for the three papers. Instructors spend about 20 minutes for each student. Conference based on suggestions made by Carnicelli (1980) (See 2.2.2.2.1).

DAY 15	Continue student-teacher conference (also done outside the class).
DAY 16	<p>Paper 4 - Process Analysis (See Appendix 13). For this paper the students are given several topics to choose from and they have to reach consensus and choose the same topic to write on with their group members.</p> <p>Prewriting.</p> <p>Writing (continue at home).</p>
DAY 17	<p>Revision.</p> <p>Rewriting (continue at home).</p>
DAY 18	<p>Paper 5 (See Appendix 14).</p> <p>Prewriting.</p> <p>Writing (continue at home).</p>
DAY 19	Writing.
DAY 20	<p>Revision.</p> <p>Rewriting (continue at home).</p>
DAY 21	Introspective Inventory (See Appendix 7).
DAY 22	Student-teacher conference for the two paper
DAY 23	Student-teacher conference.
DAY 24	Take Writing Apprehension Test.
DAY 25	Two-hour in class writing (See Appendix 9).

Table 7.2 Syllabus and timetable for the control group

DAY 1	Take Daly-Miller Writing Apprehension Test. Introduction to course. In-class essay
DAY 2	Introduction to Langan *
DAY 3	Thesis. Specific Evidence.
DAY 4	Exercise/in-class practice.
DAY 5	Exercises. Grammar.
DAY 6	"Thank You" Alex Haley.
DAY 7	"Thank You" Alex Haley.
DAY 8	In-class practice.
DAY 9	Exercises/grammar. Par 1 assigned.
DAY 10	Organization. Error-free sent.
DAY 11	Exercises/ in-class exercises.
DAY 12	Par 1 due. Exercises/grammar
DAY 13	Exercises/in-class practice.
DAY 14	Exercises/in-class practice.

DAY 15	Exercises/grammar. Par 2 assigned.
DAY 16	Unity.
DAY 17	Exercise/in-class practice.
DAY 18	Par 2 due. Exercises/grammar.
DAY 19	Support.
DAY 20	Exercise/in-class practice.
DAY 21	Exercise/grammar. Par 3 assigned.
DAY 22	Coherence.
DAY 23	Exercise/in-class practice.
DAY 24	Par 3 due. Exercises/grammar. Take Writing Apprehension Test.
DAY 25	Two-hour in-class writing.

*Langan, J. 1986. College Writing Skills with readings, 2nd edition, New York : McGraw Hill.

7.4 Instrumentation

Two instruments were used in the study :

1. pre- and post Writing Apprehension Test.
2. a post-only two-hour writing sample.

The Writing Apprehension Test was administered at the beginning and the end of the study to find out whether the students have the problem of apprehension or not. It was designed by Daly and Miller (1975) and has a 26-item scale. It has been used in numerous research studies for the native students since its initial testing. For example it was used with college students (e.g., Daly 1977, 1978, Daly and Miller 1975b), high school pupils (Harvey-Felder 1978, National Assessment of Educational Progress 1980, Zimmerman and Silverman 1982) and adults (Claypool 1980, Daly and Witte 1982, Gere, Shuessler and Abbot 1984). It has also been used for ESL students (Hadaway 1985, Elkhatib 1985). Since it has been used successfully for ESL students in Egypt (Elkhatib 1985), then it is considered suitable for other ESL students including those in Malaysia.

The two-hour writing sample was taken at the end of the treatment period only. One topic was given to both the control and experimental classes. The topic was constructed by Fox (1978) and revised by the investigator for the study. The topic itself is flexible enough to allow students to use past experiences or fantasy experiences to develop the essay while rhetorically adopting a cause/effect mode of writing (See Appendix 9)

The investigator also observed the lessons in order to find out the atmosphere of the

classrooms and whether the students were happy with the treatment. Comparison will be made between the atmosphere in the experimental and control groups.

7.5 Collection and Treatment of Data

On the first day of the class students were given the Writing Apprehension Test as the first order of business. Instructors read aloud the instructions and allowed students 15 minutes to complete the 26-item questionnaire. On the last day of the class the Writing Apprehension Test was administered again.

The Writing Apprehension Test measures the level of writing apprehension. Each of the 26-items is weighed either negatively or positively, half each way. Scores on both the pre-test and post-test were obtained by adding the number 78 to the total score of the items weighed positively and then subtracting the total score weighed negatively. Thus writing apprehension = $78 + \text{positive scores} - \text{negative scores}$. Whole scores range from 26 - 130. The responses 'strongly agree' have a value of one. If a student strongly agrees with statement 1, a positive statement, then one point will be added (Refer to Appendix 2). The response 'strongly disagree' has a value of five. If a student strongly disagrees with statement 2, a negative statement, five points will be subtracted from his or her score. The other responses have the following values : agree = two; uncertain = three; disagree = four. If a student makes one of these responses, points will be added or subtracted. Scores may range from a low 26 (an extremely apprehensive writer) to a high of 130 (a very confident writer).

During the final week, all students were required to write a final essay during the two-hour examination period. The investigator used this two-hour essay to measure the overall quality of student writing. In order to avoid any possible let down which might

occur in the final writing sample, students in both groups were strongly encouraged to make the final essay their "best" writing of the year. They were encouraged to practice those techniques and principles which they had learned during the treatment period.

7.5 Research Problems

In carrying out the field work, the researcher faced two difficulties :

1. the attitudes of the instructors and the students, and
2. the limited time available for the treatment.

At the beginning of the field work, the researcher conducted a meeting with the instructors who would be involved in the study to discuss what they had to do. Due to lack of exposure to the process approach, all the instructors were quite reluctant to use the process syllabus prepared by the researcher (see Figure 7.1 on page 185). In fact these instructors had never used this approach before and because of this they could not see the advantages of such an approach in the ESL classroom. However, the researcher explained about the importance of the process approach especially to ESL students and the fact that the new primary (1983) and secondary school (1987) syllabus introduced by the Ministry of Education has signalled an interest in this approach. After the discussion with the instructors they then agreed to use the syllabus prepared by the researcher in teaching their students (only two classes used the syllabus - the two experimental groups, while the other group followed the original syllabus for the course Written Communication 1). In all the researcher spent 4 hours (2 sessions) in briefing the instructors on how to teach with this new method.

From the observation done by the researcher, it was found that the attitude of the students was also negative when the process approach was introduced. The main

reason for the negative attitude of the students is the same as the instructors : they were not familiar with the process approach. As listed in the syllabus for the experimental (figure 7.1, page 185) the process approach involves a lot of activities ranging from large group to small group and to pair activities. Because the students had never used this approach before, they felt uneasy when they had to change groups and switched partners. However, after a few lessons the students looked comfortable and began to enjoy the activities.

The second problem faced by the researcher was the limited time permitted for the treatment. For the Written Communication 1 course, the students met for two hours three times a week. The researcher planned to use all the two hours for the treatment (for the experimental groups), unfortunately, only thirty minutes were allowed by the course coordinator and the remaining ninety minutes were devoted to the original syllabus. Due to the limited time available (thirty minutes each lesson) the researcher had to revise the syllabus for the experimental groups. At the beginning, the syllabus required students to complete all activities and writing in the classroom but because time was limited the researcher revised the syllabus so that only the activities (such as prewriting and revision) were done in the classroom because they required group discussion). While the actual writing (writing [drafting] and rewriting) was done outside the classroom.

Although the researcher had to face problems while carrying out the study, the main aim was not affected. As expected, the attitudes of the instructors and students were not positive when a new approach was introduced. The instructors needed convincing about the importance of the new approach and the students needed time to be familiar with the approach. After the revision of the syllabus, the limited time allowed for the study did not affect it.

It is worth noting that by the end of the study both instructors and, to a lesser extent, the students have positive feelings about process writing.

CHAPTER EIGHT

ANALYSIS OF TESTS

8.1 Introduction

Two types of tests were given to the students in this study. One was given at the beginning of the study while both were given at the end. The two types of tests are:

- a. pre- and post Writing Apprehension Test.
- b. a post only two-hour writing sample.

The pre- and post-test Writing Apprehension questionnaire was administered at the beginning and the end of the study in order to assess and compare the effects which each treatment had had on the writing apprehension of the subjects in the control and experimental groups. The pre-test analysis would inform us about the writing apprehension of the subjects before implementing the treatments; whereas the post-test analysis would inform us about the subjects' writing apprehension after the treatments have been applied.

The two-hour writing sample was taken at the end of the treatment period only. One item was given to both control and experimental classes. The item was constructed by Fox (1978) and revised by Brewer (1985). The item itself is flexible enough to allow students to use past experiences or fantasy experiences to develop the essay while rhetorically adopting a cause/effect mode of writing (See Appendix 9) Since the data used in this study is in the form of written tests, it is thus felt necessary to review the

procedures used for describing and assessing written tests.

8.2 Procedures for describing written texts : a general survey

Tests of writing ability and measurement of writing development may be described under two main headings : atomistic and holistic (Lloyd-Jones 1977). Atomistic tests are those which 'rely on the assessment of particular features associated with the skill in discoursing' (Lloyd-Jones 1977 : 33). Holistic tests are those which 'consider samples of discourse only as whole texts' (Lloyd-Jones 1977 : 33).

8.2.1 Atomistic measures

Atomistic measures - sometimes called 'analytic', 'indirect', 'objective' or 'count' measures - involve specifying relatively objective features of a piece of writing and then counting them for each essay' (Applebee 1981 : 461). The features that have commonly been specified, counted and analysed include vocabulary, usage and syntax. Vocabulary tests, for example, examine 'the average number of letters per word ... the etymology of words chosen, the percentage of polysyllables, or the rankings of words on word frequency lists for writing' (Lloyd-Jones 1977 : 34). Tests of usage and syntax examine the extent to which a piece of writing conforms with the conventions, forms and rules of standard written language. Here, for example, errors in usage such as spelling, punctuation, agreement, tense, etc. are pointed out. The fewer the errors, the better is the piece of writing, and vice versa.

The above types of atomistic count measures which 'have been used, particularly by psychologists, over the past fifty years' (Wilkinson 1983 : 69), have been criticised and

challenged. Lloyd-Jones (1977), criticising vocabulary counts for failing to relate to skills in discourse, concludes that 'the vocabulary test is, at best, a device for finding out whether a person might control merely one feature necessary for skill in writing' (Lloyd-Jones 1977 : 34). Wilkinson (1983), arguing that 'it is very late in the day to investigate writing development in purely linguistic terms', suggests that "count" measures are very crude indicators of surface structure and do not take into account meaning' (Wilkinson 1983 : 70). Jacobs et al (1981), admitting that count measures are 'highly reliable', continue to say that such measures 'are little more than measures of editorial skills or at most, of students' knowledge of discrete skills and patterns of language (Jacobs et al 1981 : 3). Applebee (1981) accepting that count measures of 'spelling errors' ... or breadth of vocabulary ... are highly reliable', argues none-the-less that such measures beg a 'values problem ... is accuracy in mechanics an adequate definition of "good" writing?' (Applebee 1981 : 461). And Schacter and Celce-Murcia (1977), observing that atomistic count measures focus only on errors in a student-writer's performance, argue that 'to consider only what the learner produces in error and to exclude from consideration the learner's non-errors is tantamount to describing a code of manners on the basis of the observed breaches of the code' (Schachter and Celce-Murcia 1977 : 445).

Researchers in first and second/foreign language learning, expressing dissatisfaction with atomistic count measures, turned to Kellogg Hunt's (1965) T-unit analysis 'which has greatly influenced the direction and quantity of normative and experimental research in written composition' (Witte 1983 (cited in Kameen 1983) : 171).

8.2.2 T-unit analysis

The T-unit as a measure of growth in syntactic maturity was developed by Kellogg Hunt

in 1965. The T-unit is defined as 'one main clause plus any subordinate clauses or non-clausal structure that is attached to it or embedded within it', or the shortest segment which it would be grammatically acceptable to write with a capital letter at one end and a period or question mark at the other, without leaving any residue' (Hunt 1970 : 4).

According to Hunt, syntactic maturity is often indicated by increases in the average length of a writer's T-units. The increase, Hunt claims, is due to the writers' ability to use embedding and deletion transformations, that is, the writer's ability to manipulate the syntax of the language. The mature writer, for example, changes independent clauses into subordinate clauses, uses more subordinate clauses, reduces subordinate clauses into phrases and reduce phrases into single words (cited in Kameen 1983 : 170).

Hunt's T-unit, which was first applied to measure the syntactic maturity of native speakers, has been widely used for the same purpose in second and foreign language contexts. It has been used 'as a normative measure, allowing researchers to quantify gross syntactic differences among the texts produced by writers of different age and ability groups', and also 'in experimental research as a gauge of the effects of writing instruction and writing curricula on writing performance' (Witte 1983 (cited in Kameen 1983): 172).

Recent research, however, has revealed the shortcomings of the T-unit as a measure of writing ability on the one hand and as a measure of syntactic fluency on the other. Odell (1979), acknowledging 'the great advantage of evaluating students' syntactic fluency that Hunt (1965), Christensen (1967) and Mellon (1969) have provided', has cautioned us from relying too heavily on T-unit analysis because 'syntactic fluency is only one aspect of writing competence' (Odell 1981 : 121). Lloyd-Jones (1977), classifying T-unit analysis under atomistic tests yet distinguishing it from vocabulary and other

linguistic tests because it uses 'larger syntactical units' has criticised Hunt's measure because it assumes that sentence quality is 'independent of the kind of discourse' (Lloyd-Jones 1977 : 35). That is, T-unit analysis remains an invalid measure unless the data to which it is applied represent samples of varied modes of discourse. Kameen (1983), in a study designed 'to determine if there is a correlation between syntactic skill and scores assigned to compositions written by college-level ESL students' has concluded that 'the commonly held intuition that "good" writers have a superior command of the use of subordinate clauses, allowing them to embed more clauses ... within a main clause matrix than do "poor" writers, is in no way supported by this study' (Kameen 1983 : 166). And Witte (1983) observing that 'mean T-unit length was not a stable individual trait across descriptions written by beginning college freshmen', has cautioned that 'variation in mean T-unit length across repeated measures may be so great that one discourse sample will not yield an accurate indication of such writers' abilities to manipulate syntax in the texts they write' (cited in Kameen 1983: 176).

The inadequacy of the 'error approach' and the 'syntactic approach' to evaluating writing has, furthermore, been revealed in light of recent research in written discourse. This research addresses questions concerned with extended discourse rather than with individual sentences, questions about how humans produce and understand discourse units often referred to as TEXTS (Witte and Faigley 1981 : 189). Researchers in composition, dissatisfied with writing measures which stop at sentence boundaries, have turned to Halliday and Hasan's Cohesion in English (1976). Cohesion analysis, as a writing measure which extends beyond sentence boundaries, has been widely adopted by researchers in first, second and foreign language.

8.2.3 Cohesion Analysis

According to Halliday and Hasan (1976), a text is a semantic unit whose parts are linked together by means of explicit cohesive ties. They define a cohesive tie as 'a semantic relation between an element in a text and some other element that is crucial to the interpretation of it' (Halliday and Hasan 1976 : 8).

Halliday and Hasan identify five types of cohesive ties : reference, substitution, ellipsis, conjunction and lexical. Examples of these ties, given by Halliday and Hasan are provided below :

1. Reference

'If the buyer wants to know the condition of the property, he has to have another survey carried out on his behalf' (p. 47).

2. Substitution

'Did you light the fire?
... only wood ones' (p. 94).

3. Ellipsis

'Would you like another verse?
... I know twelve (verses) more' (p. 143).

4. Conjunction

'I was not informed.
... Otherwise I should have taken some action' (p. 159).

5. Lexical

'Henry presented her with his own portrait.
As it happened, she had always wanted a portrait of Henry' (p. 284).

Halliday and Hasan further divide the above major classes of cohesive ties into nineteen subclasses and numerous subclauses. They also offer a detailed coding scheme as well as models for organising the results of a cohesive analysis into tables. In addition, they analyse several kinds of texts as examples of cohesion analysis.

Cohesion analysis has been widely used as a powerful and reliable index of difference in writing samples. Witte and Faigley (1981), analysing the cohesive ties in good and poor essays written by native English speaking college-level students, have found that 'good writers created a much richer, denser texture of ties and relied more on immediate and mediated ties (Witte and Faigley 1981 : 199). Crowhurst (1981), analysing 'the cohesive ties in the argumentative writing of students in grades 6, 10 and 12' found that older students used more lexical ties per T-unit and were better able to manage remote ties (cited in Witte and Faigley 1981 : 199).

Halliday and Hasan's cohesive analysis as a measure for evaluating writing and assessing writing maturity has, however, been recently criticised. Evda, Hamer and Lentz (1983), analysing cohesive devices in the essays of 94 Arabic and Farsi-speaking university students of 5 second language proficiency levels, have concluded that:

Skills in the usage of cohesive devices are indeed minor indicators of overall language proficiency. A student's ability to use conjunctions, pronouns and articles cannot be expected to reflect his communication ability although it must contribute to finer aspects of that skill.

(Cited in Connor and Lauer 1985)

Connor (1987b), in a study designed to investigate the 'density of cohesion' in the essays of native-speakers and ESL university students, has concluded that 'the density

of cohesion was not found to be a discriminating factor between the native speakers and ESL students' (cited in Scarcella 1984).

Another criticism of Halliday and Hasan's cohesion analysis has come from scholars investigating the relationship between surface cohesive ties and the overall coherence of a text. Morgan and Sellner (1980), arguing that cohesion is a consequence of 'content' and not in itself responsible for coherence, illustrate their views with the following example (from Halliday and Hasan 1976) :

'Wash and core six cooking apples. Put them in a fireproof dish'.

They argue that 'them' in sentence 2 is coreferent with 'six cooking apples' in sentence 1. Morgan and Sellner make the point that 'them' refers to six cooking apples 'actually in existence', and that it is the apples that have 'to go into the dish, not the words'. They, therefore, concluded that 'them' refers to the apples due to our knowledge of cookery and not the language. Tierrey and Mosenthal (1980), studying the extent to which cohesive density correlated with coherence, have found a negative correlation between 'an objective measure of cohesion according to Halliday and Hasan's method and spontaneous holistic rankings of the coherence of the same texts' (cited in Linnarud 1986 : 11). Witte and Faigley (1981), arguing that 'the quality of "success" of a text ... depends a great deal on factors outside the text itself, factors which suggested that 'coherence conditions ... allow a text to be understood in a real-world setting ... [and] Halliday and Hasan's theory does not accommodate real-world settings for written discourse' (Witte and Faigley 1981 : 199). And Connor and Lauer (1985), surveying some recent theoretical and empirical studies of coherence in writing such as 'Connor 1984; Lautamatti 1978, 1980; Lindeberg 1985; Wikborg 1985; and Bamberg 1983, 1984', have observed that 'there is now a consensus about the separate qualities of coherence and cohesion' (Connor and Lauer 1985 : 310).

Composition researchers, dissatisfied with writing measures which treat discourse as 'a collection of parts' (Lloyd-Jones 1977 : 36), and influenced by the on-going research of discourse analysts, rhetorical text linguists, and cognitive psychologists, have used measures which treat discourse as a unified whole. Diederich (1974), for example, has argued that 'as a test of writing ability, no test is as convincing ... as actual samples of each student's writing' (Diederich 1974 : 1). Such tests have been referred to as Holistic tests.

8.2.4 Holistic Tests

Holistic evaluation of writing has been proposed as a more valid test of writing ability. Cooper (1977) describes holistic evaluation as follows :

Holistic evaluation of writing is a guided procedure for scoring or ranking written pieces. The rater takes a piece of writing and either (1) matches it with another piece in a graded series of pieces or (2) scores it for the prominence of certain features important to that kind of writing or (3) assigns it a letter or number grade. The placing scoring or grading occurs quickly, impressionistically.

(Cooper 1977 : 3)

There are various types of holistic tests. Although the various types treat the written text as a unified whole, they vary in their approaches to describing texts and to assigning scores. In our discussion, we will identify and discuss four holistic tests : these are the 'essay scale', 'analytic scale', 'primary trait scoring' and 'general impression marking'.

8.2.4.1 Essay Scale

The essay scale is one in which a set of complete compositions are arranged in order of their quality. On top of the set is the best composition, while at the bottom is the poorest. The compositions from which the scale is made 'are usually selected from larger numbers of pieces written by students like those with whom the scale will be used' (Cooper 1977 : 4). Following the scale, a reader/rater will be able to place a particular composition along the scale, matching it with the scale composition most similar to it.

The main criteria for placing a piece of writing along follows these five areas :

- '1. Realisation : the extent to which the writing already reflects the writer's own experience ...
2. Comprehension : the extent to which a piece of writing shows an awareness of audience and can thereby be understood ...
3. Organisation : the extent to which a piece of writing has shape and coherence.
4. Density of Information : the amount of unique and significant detail.
5. Control of Written Language : extent of control over the special forms and patterns of written syntax and rhetoric.'

(Cooper 1977 : 6)

8.2.4.2 Analytic Scale

The analytic scale is a holistic evaluation device in which a list of the prominent features

which characterise a piece of writing in a particular mode of discourse are specified. Once the list of features is prepared, 'we describe briefly in nontechnical language what we consider to be high, mid, and low quality levels for each feature' (Cooper 1977 : 15). Raters, guided by the descriptions of features, can then read compositions and impressionistically assign their scores. Diederich (1974), who developed the analytic scale identifies two main features, 'general merit' and 'mechanics', each of which is subdivided into further features. The 'general merit' feature embraces 'ideas', 'organisation', 'wording', and 'flavour', and the 'mechanics feature' embraces 'usage', 'punctuation', 'spelling' and 'handwriting' Diederich 1974 : 54). Each of the sub-features is 'described in some detail ... with high-mid-low points identified and described along a scoring line for each feature' (Cooper 1977 : 7). The following is Diederich's scale:

Table 8.1 Diederich's Analytic Scale

	Low	Middle	High		
GENERAL MERIT					
Ideas	2	4	6	8	10
Organisation	2	4	6	8	10
Wording	1	2	3	4	5
Flavour	1	2	3	4	5
MECHANICS					
Usage	1	2	3	4	5
Punctuation	1	2	3	4	5

Spelling	1	2	3	4	5
Handwriting	1	2	3	4	5

Total

(Diederich 1974 : 54)

With regard to what constitutes a 'Low', 'Middle' or 'High' feature, Diederich offers a general description of each level, as in the following descriptions for 'ideas' :

“HIGH. The student has given some thought to the topic and writes what he really thinks. He discusses each main point long enough to show clearly what he really means. He supports each main point with arguments, examples, or details; he gives the reader some reasons for believing it. His points are clearly related to the topic and to the main idea or impression he is trying to convey. No necessary points are overlooked and there is no padding.

MIDDLE. This paper gives the impression that the student does not really believe what he is writing or does not fully understand what it means. He tries to guess what the teacher wants and writes what he thinks will get by. He does not explain his points very clearly or make them come alive to the reader. He writes what he thinks will sound good, not what he believes or knows.

LOW. It is either hard to tell what points the student is trying to make or else they are so silly that, if he had only stopped to think, he would have realised that they make no sense. He is only trying to get something down on paper. He does not explain his points; he only asserts them and then goes on to something else, or he does not bother to check his facts, and much of what he writes is obviously untrue. No one believes in this sort of writing - not even the student who wrote it.”

(Diederich 1974 : 55-56)

8.2.4.3 Primary Trait Scoring

Primary trait scoring is an holistic scale which suggests that different writing tasks must be scored according to the particular qualities which characterise one sort of writing from another. The assumption is that 'qualities that are important for one sort of writing assignment may be irrelevant to or inappropriate for another kinds of tasks' (Odell 1974 : 124). Odell (1974) illustrates it by means of two types of writing. In the first, students were asked to write an essay on the topic "A woman's place is in the home"; in the second, students were asked to write 'a letter in which they would try to persuade their principal that the school should be changed in some way and so that the proposed change would be both practical and beneficial for the school' (Odell 1981 : 124). When readers were asked to judge the essays and the letters, they were given different sets of questions. On the essays they were asked the two following questions (based on Odell 1974 : 124 -125):

- 'i. Does the writer support his or her claims with elaborate reasons?
- ii. Does the writer cite a variety of sources (personal experiences, authority, books) in support of his or her reasons?

On the letters, however, judges were asked to consider the following questions :

- i. Does the writer identify a single problem that needed to be solved?
- ii. Does the writer propose a solution?
- iii. Does the writer show that the proposed solution is workable and beneficial?

In the light of the above, primary trait scoring recommends that the rater's attention must be drawn to 'just those features of a piece which are relevant to the kind of discourse it is : to the special blend of audience, speaker, role, purpose, and subject required by that kind of discourse and by the particular writing task' (Cooper 1977 : 11).

8.2.4.4 General Impression Marking

General impression marking, unlike the above three types of holistic evaluation, does not require a detailed description of the writing features and no adding of scores assigned to each feature. Instead, the raters, following a 'rubric' which is concerned mainly with the relevance of the answer', would assign a score to the composition 'by deciding where the paper fits within the range of papers produced for that assignment or occasion' (Cooper 1977 : 12).

Holistic evaluation of writing, in whichever form it occurs, is basically dependent on the rater's/raters' subjective and 'intuitive sense of adequacy and effectiveness of a piece of writing ... from mechanics and handwriting to ideas and organisation' (Applebee 1981 : 461). This element of subjectivity has led some researchers to question the reliability of holistic, subjective scoring.

8.3 Reliability of holistic evaluation

Holistic ratings of essays, unlike atomistic ratings, have for long been questioned on the basis of their reliability. Critics of holistic evaluation of students' written composition 'have reasoned that (1) students are apt to perform differently on different occasions and when writing on different topics; (2) the scoring of essays is highly subjective'

(Kaczmarck 1980, cited in Kehl 1990). The two problems stated in the previous quotation, and on which opponents of holistic evaluation agree, pose two interrelated questions. First, if a student's writing performance varies from one occasion to another, how reliable can the rating of one writing performance be as representative of the student's writing ability? Second, if the rating of a student's piece of writing is entirely dependent on the rater's personal and subjective judgment, how reliable can such a judgment be? The answers to these questions have been attempted by theoretical claims and empirical studies carried out by a number of researchers.

With regards to the first question, Cooper (1977), accepting the claim that 'writers vary in their performance', has however suggested that 'to overcome ...[this difficulty] we must at least have two pieces of a student's writing, preferably written on different days' (Cooper 1977 : 18). With regard to the second question, Cooper (1977) realising that 'a group of raters will assign widely varying grades to the same essay, has nevertheless argued that:

When raters are from similar backgrounds and when they are trained with a holistic scoring guide - either one they borrow or devise for themselves on the spot - they can achieve nearly perfect agreement in choosing the better of a pair of essays, and they can achieve scoring reliabilities in the high eighties and low nineties on their summed scores from multiple pieces of a student's writing.

(Cooper 1977 : 19)

The reliability of holistic assessment to writing has furthermore been reported in a number of recent studies. Mullen (1980), in a study in which 'five judges participated' in evaluating essays written by university ESL students, has argued that 'judges ... achieve high reliability and show no significant difference in scoring' (Mullen 1980 :

167). Diederich (1974) arguing that 'actual samples of each students writing' is the most convincing test of writing ability, has recommended that 'staff grading ... will completely eliminate bias either for or against particular students' (Diederich 1974 : 14). Connor and Lauer (1985), in a study in which 'the compositions were rated for overall quality by three independent raters, have observed that 'the agreement among the raters was high, the Cronbach alpha (using SPSS programme reliability) being .83' (Connor and Lauer 1985 : 316). And Jacobs et al (1981), citing research which has 'reported reader reliabilities in the eighties or nineties : Britton et al 1966, Diederich 1974, Finlayson 1951, Flahsive and Snow 1980, Godshalk et al 1966, Hogan 1977, Moslemi 1975 and Mullen 1977' have concluded that 'holistic evaluations have been shown capable of producing highly reliable assessments' (cited in Connor and Lauer 1985 :229).

8.4 The Grading of Tests used in this study .

As mentioned before, two tests are used in this study, namely the Daly-Miller Writing Apprehension Test and a two-hour post test.

8.4.1 The Daly-Miller Writing Apprehension Test

For the grading of Daly-Miller Writing Apprehension Test see page 191.

8.4.2 Two-hour post test

The two hour-post test composition was graded holistically based on the writing

evaluation survey described before, and also because of the objectives of the study. When we compare atomistic and holistic assessment, the latter treats a piece of writing as one unit of the discourse. The study, having been based on two types of treatment, sought to ensure a writing measure which eliminates bias either for or against the students in either the control or the experimental groups. In other words, because the control group underwent a form-oriented treatment, and the experimental group a meaning-oriented treatment, it was necessary that the writing measure should take both meaning and form into equal consideration.

For the study an analytic scale was used in evaluating the two-hour post-test. The scale known as the Personal Narrative Writing Scales (PNWS) was developed by Anderson, Kaiser Ketterer and McAndrew (see Appendix 16). This scale has been used extensively in classrooms by students to guide peer feedback.

8.5 The results of the pre- and post-tests

8.5.1 Pre-test results (Daly-Miller Writing Apprehension Test)

Pre-test results reveal that writing apprehension does occur among the ESL college students in Malaysia. Out of fourteen students in the control group who sat for the test four are apprehensives. One student scored 64, the second 78, the third 77 and the fourth 68. The experimental group is divided into two : low experimental and high experimental. Low experimental group consists of students with low writing apprehension (excellent students) while high experimental group is for students with high writing apprehension (weak students). The students in the low experimental group are all non-apprehensives while four students out of twelve in the high experimental group were found to be apprehensives as defined on page 191. Their scores are : 67, 68, 73 and 74.

Table 8.2 The result of the Writing Apprehension Test (pre) for both Control and Experimental Groups

Group	No.of students	Apprehensive	Non-Apprehensive
Low Experimental	15	0	15
High Experimental	12	4	8
Control	14	4	10

Table 8.3 Two-Way Analysis of Variance of Pre-and Post Writing Apprehension Test for both Control and Experimental Groups

Source	SS	df	MS	F
Instructor	1473.36	2	736.68	40.79
Treatment	285.48	1	285.48	15.81*
Instructor x Treatment	70.71	2	35.36	1.96
Within	1372.34	76	18.06	
Total	3201.89			

* Significant at .01

When the Daly-Miller Writing Apprehension Test (pre and post) was compared between the control and experimental groups, the analysis of variance revealed a significant difference between the experimental and control groups. The result shows that the experimental group students are less apprehensive compared to the control group students ($F = 15.81$, significant at .01). Table 8.3 provides a summary of the analysis.

8.5.2 The post-test results

8.5.2.1 Daly-Miller Writing Apprehension Test

After giving the treatment to the experimental group, the Daly-Miller Writing Apprehension test was administered again at the end of the study. The result of the test shows that there was an improvement for the high experimental group. The number of students who are apprehensives has decreased by fifty percent. While the achievement of the students in the low experimental group is the same as in the pre-test : no apprehensive students. However, the result of the post-tests show that there is no improvement in the control group - four students are found to be apprehensives - which is the same as the pre-test results.

The results of the post-test reveal that all four hypotheses (hypotheses 1-4) concerning writing apprehension found significant differences. Students in the experimental group reported significantly lower levels of writing apprehension than students in the control group. The high apprehensives in the treatment group reported significantly lower levels of writing apprehension than high apprehensives in the control group as presented below :

Table 8.4 Writing Apprehension (pre- and post) mean scores for both groups

	Control	Experimental
Pre	83.42	86.07
Post	85.00	90.92
(N = 41) Difference	1.58	4.85

Table 8.4 reveals both groups reduced their writing apprehension . However, the experimental group students reduced to a greater extent than students in the control group. The difference between mean for pre- and post-test scores of control was 1.58 (85.00 - 83.42). For the experimental group the difference between mean for pre- and post-test scores was 4.85 (90.92 - 86.07). This means that hypothesis 1 (that all students involved in the experimental groups would report a significant reduction in writing apprehension as measured by pre and post Writing Apprehension Test scores) is accepted. However, this result rejects hypothesis 2 - it shows that students in the control group also reduce their writing apprehension although the reduction is less compared to the experimental group.

The difference of the mean scores presented in Table 8.4 also confirms hypothesis 3 that all students (not only the highly apprehensive writers) in the experimental group would report lower levels of writing apprehension at the end of the study than would similarly ranked students in the control group.

Table 8.5 Writing Apprehension Test (pre- and post) mean scores for high apprehensives in both groups

	Control	Experimental
Pre	70.75	71.75
Post	77.75	82.00
(N = 42)	Difference 7.25	10.25

The result presented in table 8.5 shows that highly apprehensive students in both control and treatment groups also reduced their writing apprehension at the end of the study. However, the students in the experimental group reduced their writing apprehension to a greater extent compared to control group students. And this confirms hypothesis 4.

Table 8.6 The result of Writing Apprehension Test (post)

Group	No.of students	Apprehensive	Non-Apprehensive
Low Experimental	15	0	15
High Experimental	12	2	10
Control	14	4	10

8.5.2.2 The two-hour writing test

The writing test which was administered at the end of the study is used to measure writing quality and length between the experimental and control groups. The students were asked to write a composition based on the instructions given by the researcher. This test was controlled for time, topic, type of writing elicited, time allowed for completion and procedure of administration. All the essays were holistically scored by two trained and experienced raters. Although this study concerns the process approach which is meaning-based, it is considered unfair to grade meaning only since the students in the control group did not receive the process treatment. Prior to this, both meaning and form were graded in the essays. Twenty-one students in the experimental and eleven students in the control group sat for the test.

On ratings of the overall quality, the holistic scores revealed that the students in the experimental group wrote better essays compared to those written by the students in the control group (refer to table 8.5) thus confirming hypothesis 6.

Table 8.7 Overall Quality and Length Means for all writers in Experimental and Control groups.

Group	Number	Overall Quality Mean	Length Mean
Experimental	21	61.53	584.57
Control	11	60.90	562.27

The result of the writing test shows that the highly apprehensive writers in the control group write better quality essays than those written by the highly apprehensive writers in the experimental group thus rejecting hypothesis 5 that students ranked highest in writing apprehension at the beginning of the study in the experimental group would write post-test compositions significantly higher in overall quality than the post-test compositions completed by similarly ranked students in the control group.

Table 8.8 Overall Quality and Length Mean for all high apprehensive Writers in Experimental and control Groups

Group	Number	Overall Quality Mean	Length Mean
Experimental	4	57.75	528.5
Control	4	67.00	773.25

The handcount of the length of the essays revealed that the highly apprehensive writers in the control group wrote longer essays compared to the highly apprehensive writers in the experimental group.

When all writers from both groups were compared for length, the experimental group writers wrote longer post-test compositions than their control group counterparts (see Table 8.9), and the difference was significant at .01 level.

Table 8.9 One-way Analysis of Variance of Post-test Compositions Length Score between Experimental and Control Groups

Source	SS	df	MS	F Value	P
Between	68006.9	2	34003.47	1172.53	<001*
Within	1601509.78	29	55224.48		
Total	1669516.70	31			

*Significant at .01

8.6 Discussion of the post-test results

Looking at the results, we can observe that the subjects in the process /experimental group had performed better than the subjects in the product/control group. Another observation, which is related to the first, is that the improvements in the writing ability of the subjects in the process group were significantly greater than those achieved by the subjects in the product group.

The results favour the experimental group for a number of reasons. To begin with, it is possible that the experimental group had performed better as a result of the so-called *Hawthorne* effect. That is the subjects in the experimental group were likely to perform better by virtue of being in the group which had received 'special' attention from the researcher and from the process teacher. Furthermore, the subjects might have become

aware that what was happening in their classroom was different from what was happening in other English classes, including the control group class.

It may be argued that the subjects in the process group had benefited from the process treatment more than the subjects in the product group benefited from the product treatment. That is, the writing instruction package implemented in the process classroom could have been more effective than that implemented in the product group. It is therefore appropriate at this stage to discuss the predominant feature embodied in the process treatment which could have led to the significantly better performance of the process subjects.

In the first place, it may be argued that the subjects in the process group had benefited from the kind of reading they experienced in the process classroom. The subjects were exposed to authentic, i.e. not grammatically-graded materials, allowing them 'to develop a wide repertoire of discourse structures or schemata' (Rose 1983 : 120). Furthermore, the subjects were directed to focus their attention on the meaning conveyed in the reading materials, giving them opportunity to engage in meaning-creation both as readers and as writers.

In the second place it may be argued that the subjects in the process group had benefited from the group discussions which constituted an essential component of the process treatment. In group discussion students can benefit by comparing what they observed or found with what their fellow classmates observed in order to discover different perspectives. Furthermore, '... experiment and observation reinforce students' abilities to generalize, predict, and synthesize material. Thus they provide specific experience and information for a writing task and are helpful as well in developing descriptive powers necessary for comparison-contrast, classification, definition, and process, empirically revealing various aspects of a subject, issue, event, problem, or object'

(Hughey et al. 1983 : 76). In the process treatment the subjects were encouraged to participate in group discussion which give them opportunities to '... explore their subject matter' (Odell 1981 : 99), to try out the ideas before writing them down.

In the third place, it may be argued that the subjects in the process group had benefited from the kind of writing topics assigned in the process classroom. The topics were designed in a such a way as to stimulate a challenge to the students. The topics usually raised a controversy which the students had to debate with their group members, and on which the students' opinions varied to a small or a large extent. The students therefore, were motivated to express their views and defend them in their composition. In other words, the topic initiated the students' commitment to explore, argue for or against, and persuade their reader/teacher of their attitude towards the controversy in question. In so doing, the students treated the topic as a challenge which they willingly decided to undertake.

In the fourth place, it may be argued that the subjects in the process group had benefited from the revision that the students have to undergo in the writing process. In the classroom the students were given ample opportunities to write the first draft, and have it revised before reaching the final draft. While revising the students received constructive feedback from their peers and the teacher. Based on the feedback the students go over their drafts and rewrite and edit them into works that more adequately express their ideas.

In the fifth place, it may be argued that the subjects in the process group had benefited from the constructive feedback they received from the teachers. Although feedback is a fundamental element in the process approach, the teacher should only give constructive feedback and be tolerant and lenient toward surface errors. The response given by the teacher is supposed to be in a distinctly human voice, with sincere interest in improving

the writing. And this has been proven to encourage the students to be better writer. Errors in students' papers should be treated as a means to discover the inconsistencies in their learning strategies.

In the sixth place, it may be argued that the subjects in the process group had benefited from the kind of student-teacher relationship which is also a fundamental aspect in the process approach. In the process approach the teacher is a facilitator not the grade-giver, and also not "The One Who Knows". The relationship between the teacher and students is more like a partnership in the teaching/learning operation, and this had initiated in them a sense of academic responsibility which can be a 'powerful first step in the development of mature competence [in writing]' (Brannon and Knoblauch 1982 : 106).

In conclusion, from the result of the post-tests it is proven that the process approach has been beneficial for ESL students when it was compared to the traditional approach. However, the result of this study should be viewed as an invitation to further research because of two main reasons. Firstly, the study was conducted for the period of 8 weeks, and with a small sample of students. Thus, it is difficult to predict whether the result would be similar if a larger sample and longer period of time was spent. Secondly, the treatment comprised more variables than we could control, and therefore it is necessary that further research is carried out in order to find out the impact each variable has on the writing performance of a larger sample of students and over a longer period.

CHAPTER NINE

IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

9.1 Summary of the study

9.1.1 The starting point

Despite the belief in many ESL circles that the most crucial language learning objective is to provide the learner with an adequate reading ability, the need to be able to write in English still exists. Be it the first, second or foreign language, it is a major educational concern which is unlikely to diminish appreciably in the near future, bearing in mind that some measure of writing competence is essential in many spheres of life. It is especially indispensable to academic success. More often than not the evaluation of what has presumably been learnt is through its manifestation in the written form. In fact, universities have increasingly come to recognise the importance of writing within the learning process itself, with the result that greater emphasis has been put on developing students' writing abilities. This is especially pertinent in the second or foreign language context, for compounded with the inherent difficulties of writing in one's mother tongue are added those of expressing oneself appropriately and clearly in a different language. Limited research has been directed toward second language learners and their writing efforts, although, as Raimes (1985) notes, English as a second language writers have all the concerns that native speakers do and more. Second language learners as well as native speakers must attend to phonology, grammar, syntax, vocabulary, rhetoric and semantics and

in addition, they must also learn the mechanism of prose in another language. Jones and Tetroe seem to agree by saying that ‘... second language writers, unless they are truly bilingual, must deal not only with the problems of composing, but also with the problems of doing so in a language in which they are not as competent as they are in their first’ (Jones and Tetroe 1987 : 34). Research has shown that one of the causes of these difficulties is the problem of apprehension and this study investigates the attempt to solve the problem by using the process approach.

9.1.2 The purpose and design of the study

The purpose of this study is to investigate the effects that the process approach to teaching writing had on writing apprehension among ESL students at university level in Malaysia, and the effects of this approach on overall quality and length of student writing. For this purpose three groups of students were chosen to receive two types of treatment over a period of eight weeks. One group received the traditional approach treatment while the other two received the process approach treatment.

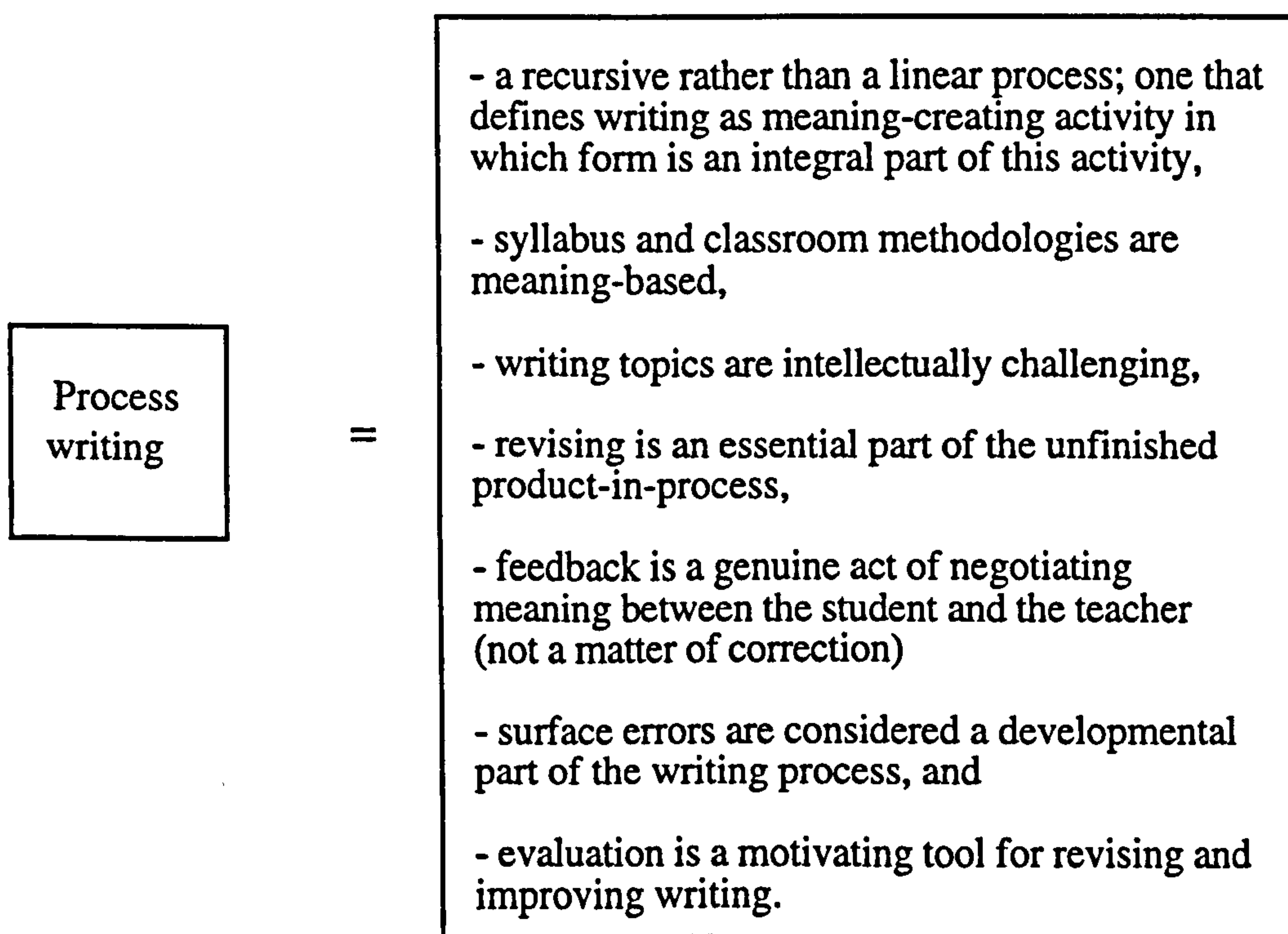
9.1.3 Writing instruction : the product perspective

Traditionally, instruction in (and theory of) second-language composing has assumed that the most important thing is form - the contents of the writing syllabus have been form-based. Grammatical accuracy is considered the most important variable, if not the only variable. In the writing syllabus grammatical rules are explained and drilled, writing topics are designed to elicit linguistic forms and structures, surface errors are pointed out, corrected and penalized, and evaluation is based on the single draft (which has not been revised).

9.1.4 Writing instruction : the process perspective

In the 1960s, the traditional approach to teaching composition was challenged precisely because it does not represent the actual composing process of writers. Researchers began to ask what kind of thinking precedes writing and urged teachers to teach students the structure of thinking rather than focus on error-free product. It was then suggested that focus on written product should be shifted to writing process. The features of process writing can be summarized as follows:

Figure 9.1 The features of process writing



9.2 Discussion of the findings

The purpose of this study is to investigate the effectiveness of the process approach to teaching writing ESL students in Malaysia. Three classes at the National University of Malaysia were chosen as samples. Two classes were taught by the process approach (experimental group) while at the same time one control class was taught by practices that can be described as traditional composition instruction.

Data was obtained in two ways : pre-test and post-test administration of the Daly-Miller Writing Apprehension Test and a post-test writing sample which was evaluated holistically for overall quality and length.

The findings of the statistical analyses of the data resulted in rejection of three of the eight hypotheses. All students in the experimental group significantly reduced their writing apprehension. At the same time students in the control group also reduced their apprehension although the reduction was less compared to the experimental group students. Therefore three of the hypotheses (1,3 and 4) concerning writing apprehension were accepted and one was rejected (hypothesis 2).

The examination of the mean scores for both groups reveals that the treatment students reduced their writing apprehension to a greater extent than the control group students. The difference between mean for the pre-and post test scores for the control group was 1.58 (85.00 - 83.42) (see Table 8.5). For the experimental group the difference between mean for the pre- and post test scores was 4.85 (90.90 - 86.07) (see Table 8.6) So while the mean scores are fairly close and both groups did succeed in significantly reducing their writing apprehension, it shows that the students in the experimental group reduced their apprehension to a much greater degree. The findings of the post-test compare favourably with the findings of the

Brewer (1985) study with native-speaker freshmen. Brewer reported that his control group mean score on the post Writing Apprehension Test was 70.39 while the experimental group's mean score was 73.63 (Brewer 1985 : 114). Therefore, it would not be unreasonable to conclude that the kind of teaching done in the traditional English class will reduce writing apprehension, but the methods and practices used in the process approach are more successful .

The special population of students in the treatment group and in the control group - those students identified as having high levels of writing apprehension - also reduced their writing apprehension. The difference of pre- and post-test mean scores for the control group is 7.25, while the mean score for the experimental group is 10.25) (see Table 8.8). This shows that both methods successfully reduced writing apprehension among high apprehensive students. However, methods used in the process approach are considered more successful in reducing apprehension of this type of students.

An analysis of variance also revealed a significant different in the post-test mean scores on the Writing Apprehension Test for all students in the study. A significance level of 0.01 favoured the students in the experimental group over the students in the control group. In all hypotheses concerning writing apprehension, then, results clearly suggest that if teachers implement the writing process procedures practiced in the study, they can be reasonably certain that all students can reduce their apprehension toward writing, and those students with high levels of writing apprehension can also reduce their anxiety toward writing.

The overall quality of student writing is best determined by examining the post-treatment essays. For this purpose one topic was given to both control and experimental groups. Then, the essays were evaluated for overall quality and length.

When mean for overall quality and length were compared between the two groups, the results favoured the experimental group (see Table 8.7). From this, then, a conclusion can be made that the process approach used in the study produces better quality and longer essays than the traditional approach.

9.3 Pedagogical Implications

9.3.1 The writing process and the written product

From the result of the study it is clear that teaching writing as a process can reduce writing apprehension among ESL students. Although the result of the study favours the process approach, the product is similarly important. It is misleading to even think about process in isolation from the product and vice-versa. A more realistic view is that process and product are complementary to each other, in fact, supportive of each other. There will be no product without process and no process without product.

It is recommended therefore that attention should be given to both process and product in the writing classroom. Consideration of process can occur at the various writing stages before reaching the final draft - from pre-writing to drafting to revising until the final draft is completed. During the pre-writing stage the students are given opportunity to explore the writing topic together with their peers and teacher in classroom discussions. Furthermore, consideration of the process can occur during the drafting stage. After the pre-writing stage, the students, then, try to write the first draft which is the unfinished product-in-process. After doing so, the students and the teacher confer to discuss the contents of the first draft. During this stage discussion of the draft is done by peers and by the teacher in student-teacher

conferences. By doing so the students will find out where they failed and where they succeeded in presenting their ideas. Finally, consideration of process occurs when students discuss with their peers and teacher as they prepare for the final draft.

Consideration of product also occurs at more than one writing stage. The first draft is considered the product-in-process because it will have to go through certain processes before reaching the final draft which is the original product. In the first draft, the students tried to convey the ideas that will be used in the student-student conference and student-teacher conference. Finally, as a result of such conferences, the student will attempt to produce a better piece of writing.

For the reasons explained above, it is clear that both process and product are considered important in the writing classroom and thus attention should be given to both aspects in teaching ESL students.

9.3.2 Writing as meaning-creating activity

The results of this study suggests that teaching writing as a meaning-creating activity is likely to reduce writing apprehension among L2 students and thereby improve the product. Such development is likely to occur in the context of a writing instruction package and a set of classroom strategies which are designed to engage students in meaning-related activities. The activities in the process approach classrooms require students to work to extend their skills, to stretch their intellectual muscles, to actively discover both the way they think and how to best present this knowledge in writing. Providing such activities in the classrooms demands sensitivity, because the teacher needs to set problems that challenge the students without discouraging them.

In the process writing classroom students are firstly given writing topics which are challenging in themselves. The topics require students to think and argue, and defend points logically and convincingly. Secondly, students are given the opportunity to explore the topics by discussing them with their peers. Thirdly, students are given the opportunity to write drafts and discuss them with their peers, as well as teachers in student-teacher conferences. And finally, students are given a chance to write the final draft before submitting the compositions to the teacher to be graded.

9.3.3 Social interaction in the writing classroom

The results of the study suggest that social interaction such as group discussion can help the student writers to reduce their writing apprehension. The interactive composition class - a class that involves students in writing for one another, reading and responding to each other's papers, and writing some papers collaboratively should be encouraged.

The importance of social interaction is both theoretical and practical. The theoretical basis lies in the social nature of language, language use, language learning and learning in general. Believing that "learning is above all, a social process", that knowledge is transmitted in social contexts", and "the words that we exchange in these contexts get their meaning from activities in which they are embedded" (Halliday and Hassan 1985 : 5). Many sociolinguists, like Halliday have turned attention to the relationship between language and the social context in which it is used and learned. Furthermore, within the social context, as Moffet (1968) points out, "learning to use language ... requires the particular feedback of human response, because it is to other people that it is directed" (p. 191). In the traditional approach of

teaching writing this “human response” does exist between student as a writer and the teacher as the reader. However, in the process approach there is a difference - it also involves peers. As Bruffee (1984) argues it, “harnesses the powerful educative force of peer influence that has been - and largely still is - required and hence wasted by traditional forms of education” (p. 638). Moreover, collaborative learning, to use Bruffee’s term, changes the social context to “a community of status equals : peers”, the kind of community that both “fosters the kind of conversation college teachers value most” and approximates to the one most students must eventually write for in everyday life, in business, government and professions” (p. 642). In short, the social context created by peer interaction is more realistic, and therefore the response is more powerful.

In addition to these assumptions about the nature of language and social interaction, there are also other practical and theoretical considerations. Cooperation and collaboration are valuable aspects of learning. There are at least three specific benefits of an interactive composition classroom. First, social interaction in the form of talk about paper topics is beneficial in the prewriting stage, when students are exploring subjects they may write about later. At this stage, students should be given the opportunity to discuss with their friends about the topics assigned to them before attempting to write the first draft. By doing this the students will be able to explore the topics about which they will write later and share ideas with their friends. Secondly, social interaction in the form of group readings of student papers (revision stage) provides an audience for the writing and can help teach students the importance of writing from the readers' perspective. By alternately taking the roles of teacher (reader) and writer, students begin to see the complementary relationship of these roles : a piece of “writing” is really a piece of “reading” - that is , we write “reading”. And because they reciprocate in the role of audience for their peers, students gain a clearer understanding of meeting the reader’s needs. At the same

time, by responding critically to their colleagues' writing, students exercise the critical thinking they must apply to their own work. Clearly, peer reviews put into practice what we preach about audience awareness. If students are to understand the influence their own writing has on others, they need to experience and examine closely the impact of others' writing on them. The peer review process requires them to do that.

Finally, there is an affective element to peer interaction : students see that their peers also have difficulties in writing and thus may gain confidence in, or at least feel less apprehensive about, their own abilities.

Although group interaction can have an impact in the development of writing abilities, students may be reluctant to share their writing problems with others. This could be due to lack of confidence in their fellow learners' judgements. Even if they do become accustomed to analysing each other's problems, the question of what the discussion will centre on becomes difficult. Since most learners have only learned about writing through grammar it is possible that they will only feel comfortable criticising at the sentence level.

9.3.4 The importance of attitudes

The result of the study suggests that the change of attitudes among students can contribute towards lowering writing apprehension. In the writing class, the teacher can set problems, arrange experiences and give advice - and all of these are important - but the students, ultimately, must become engaged in writing, actively applying and extending what they know and discovering what skills they lack. Thus, it is crucial that students willingly invest energy in writing, that they value the process and products of composing. Therefore, the attitudes that students have about writing are

really quite central to the composition class, and the teacher needs to deal effectively with apprehensive or discouraged writers.

9.3.5 Toleration of errors

The result of the study suggest that toleration of errors can help ESL students reduce their writing apprehension. According to Bartholomae (1980), errors fall into three main categories : errors that are evidence of an intermediate system; errors that could truly be said to be accidents, or slips of the pen as a writer's mind rushes ahead faster than his hand; and finally, errors of language transfer, or, more commonly, "dialect interference", where in the attempt to to produce the target language, the writer intrudes forms from the "first" or "native" language.

Perhaps the wisest statement of the importance of students' errors comes from Mina Shaughnessy : "Errors count but not as much as most English teachers think" (1977 : 120). The point is that errors do interfere with many students' ability to express themselves fluently and to communicate effectively. Errors should not be dealt with by simply marking every violation of standard written conventions, leaving it to the students to interpret the meaning of the red ink. Rather, errors should be viewed as a valuable analytical tool, a way to understand the strategies that a student is using in his or her writing, a way to show the student the logic of an error, and, of course, a way to demonstrate a thinking process which leads to the correct form. The approach should be one of "error analysis", which is "identifying and systematically categorizing mistakes, dealing with each student's most salient and consistent writing errors and refusing either to overwhelm the students by pointing out every deviation from written conventions or to discourage the student by dwelling on the negative aspects of composition" (Kroll and Schafer 1978 : 245).

Over the past decade, considerable attention has been given to the treatment of error in the work of second language learners. There is still no consensus, however, on how teachers can best react to student error or at what stage in the composing process such feedback should be given. Krashen (1985), for instance, advocates delaying feedback on errors until the final stage of editing and offers intensive reading practice as a long-range cure for the immediate problems of surface error. Research on the composing processes of native English speakers has reflected a similar orientation toward error correction by proposing that teachers respond to more global problems of planning and content in students' writing (Giffin 1982).

9.3.6 The writing topics

The results of the study confirm that the writing topics assigned to the students can play an important role in reducing writing apprehension and help to produce better quality of writing. The topics selected for and by the students should be psychologically interesting and stimulating and intellectually compelling and challenging. By choosing such topics the students will have a chance to explore with their friends and produce interesting essays.

9.3.7 Revising/Rewriting

From the results of the study it is clear that having revising as one of the writing activities helps to reduce writing apprehension among ESL writers. This stage of the writing process is crucial for ESL students as this is when they can develop ideas insufficiently elaborated in the draft, cut out sections which seem irrelevant and superfluous and re-order if necessary. As process provides students with audience

(their friends and teachers) who read and comment on the drafts,. it is then easier to revise and produce the final draft. For without the presence and comments from the audience, the student writers would likely to miss many errors in the drafts.

9.3.8 Evaluation and feedback

The results of the study suggest that evaluation and feedback play an important role in motivating the ESL students in the writing classroom. In the process approach evaluation is viewed as a means :

to share the writing with the writer,

to show an interest in the writing and the writer,

to motivate students to improve their writing,

to observe progress in writing,

to initiate rewriting and

to sharpen the critical skills of the writer to become the evaluator of his own writing.

Feedback is a fundamental element of the process approach to writing. It can be defined as an input from a reader to a writer with the effect of providing information to the writer for revision. In other words, it is the comments, questions and suggestions a reader gives a writer to produce 'reader-based prose' (Flower 1979) as opposed to writer-based prose. Through feedback, the writer learns where he or she

has misled or confused the reader by not supplying enough information, by illogical organization, lack of development of ideas, or something like inappropriate word-choice or tense.

9.3.9 Writing as a thinking process

Writing which is treated as a thinking process helps ESL students in reducing their writing apprehension as suggested by the result of the study. Within the traditional classroom, "writing" appears to be a set of rules and models for the correct arrangement of preexisting ideas. In contrast, outside the school, in private and professional life and profession, writing is a highly goal-oriented, intellectual performance (Flower and Hayes 1977). It is both a strategic action and a thinking problem. In an effort to treat writing as a thinking process, rather than an arrangement problem, Flower and Hayes (1977) introduced writing as a form of problem solving. According to them :

"Problem solving", as a relatively new area in cognitive psychology, is uniquely adapted for this plan because it combines a well developed experimental method for studying thought processes with a teaching method Aristotle used - teaching the student heuristic procedures for thinking through problems.

... As a study of cognitive thinking processes, problem solving explores the wide array of mental procedures people use to process information in order to achieve their goals. People use basic problem-solving procedures (such as planning, inference making) to solve all kinds of "problems" which range from inventing a mouse trap to designing a course syllabus or writing a sonnet.

(Flower and Hayes 1977 : 449)

To conclude, a composition course for ESL students should be based on the theory that entails the presentation of challenging - but interesting and realistic - writing tasks which require students to extend their skills of thought and language. To the greatest extent possible, we should create a situation in which students produce writing that will mean something to a group of readers - writing that will be read, at least by peers and hopefully even a broader audience. In the process of fulfilling such composing tasks, students will probably make mistakes, but these should be welcomed as promising signs of development, as opportunities to explore the composing strategies the students are trying out.

9.4 Implications for the teaching of writing in Malaysia

The results of the study have important implications for the teaching of writing in Malaysia, and are especially important for those in positions to make or recommend policy at local, state, and national levels. Unfortunately, recommendations at the state and national levels are likely to have little effect on classroom practice without funds being designated for training teachers in how to use the more effective teaching strategies.

Before the implementation of the new curriculum for both primary and secondary schools, most instruction in teaching writing in Malaysia followed the traditional model as described by Applebee (1981), consisting of exercises and drills, with little opportunity for students to explore the act of expressing their thoughts. The orientation towards grammatical correctness is not difficult to understand since many teachers believe that the most serious problems of ESL writers is their incorrect English usage. As a result the ESL teachers stick to the principles of the audio-

lingual approach that (1) writing should be the last of the four skills to be acquired and (2) that teachers should prevent occurrence of written errors at all cost. Reports from classroom research indicate that teachers respond most frequently to mechanical errors. In a study of writing in the secondary schools in the United States, Applebee (1981) found that 80% of foreign language teachers ranked mechanical errors as the most important criterion for responding to student writing. A recent study by Zamel (1985) shows that ESL teachers approach student writing with a similar attitude. When she compared ESL and content (subject) teachers' feedback on the samples of writing, Zamel found that language teachers focused primarily on mechanics, whereas teachers from other disciplines responded most frequently to the students' presentation of facts and concepts.

The new English curriculum in Malaysia aims to achieve a balance between the teacher and student and tries to promote more learner-centred activities when students are involved in the class work. To achieve this the new curriculum recommends class work in pairs and small group to reduce learners' dependence on the teacher and encourage greater independence of the learners' part. During pair and group work the teacher should move around the class from group to group advising, guiding and giving information when needed. And in the writing class attention should be given to help students develop the process of writing rather than concentrate on the end product. From this we can see that the new curriculum emphasises process writing, though it still stresses the importance of spelling, punctuation and grammatical structure, which is exactly like the traditional approach. This product-based approach to teaching writing is considered important especially for the lower ability students. In fact several researchers have shown that this is not so, and the process approach can have positive effects on the low-level students. In the light of the results of this study showing the importance of the process approach in reducing writing apprehension and improving student writing, the Ministry of

Education should revise the current curriculum in order to help ESL students.

In recommending the process approach in the new national curriculum, the third volume of "Compendium" (Ministry of Education Malaysia 1991) which is a handbook for the English teachers has listed four points were raised about the suitability of the process approach with the curriculum :

- "1. The national curriculum seeks to ensure the intellectual development of the child. By insisting that children write to express their ideas, feelings and attitudes, the process approach encourages the intellectual development of the children.
2. The national curriculum requires the teacher to go beyond a teacher control role. The process approach requires the teacher to be resource person and facilitator as well.
3. The national curriculum requires the student be given learner training. By training the students to handle with confidence the various processes involved in writing, the teacher using the process approach ensures that learner training takes place.
4. The national curriculum English Language programme recommends that the skills be taught in an integrated manner. The process approach can integrate all the skills, especially in the pre-writing activities". (Ministry of Education Malaysia 1991)

From the quotation above we can see that the new national curriculum for schools in Malaysia is moving towards the process approach in teaching writing. In order to ensure the implementation of the approach, first of all, the ministry of education should provide in-service trainings for all English Language teachers.

As mentioned before (10.3.1) product and process are both important in teaching writing. This means that grammar teaching should not be dropped from ; it does however, force a re-evaluation of its role. Grammar has a part to play in what should be the final stage of the composing process, editing. Writers can use their conscious knowledge of grammar to fill in the gaps left by acquisition, to supply those grammatical items and necessary punctuation marks. These items can and should be taught; their absence gives writing an unpolished and uneducated look. What is crucial, however, is that this aspect of the language is not allowed to dominate; it is only a small part of teaching students to write, and overteaching of grammar for editing can seriously impair the composing process (Perl 1979). Such teaching of error-correction should be limited to straightforward rules and their application should be limited to editing, the very last stage of the composing process.

As discussed above, the new English curriculum has started to introduce the process approach to teaching writing. The problem is that many teachers in Malaysia are quite reluctant to use this approach in the classroom. They still approach students' texts as final products to be evaluated upon some preconceived notions about good writing. One of the reasons for this is that many ESL teachers do not think that the process approach is applicable for students (Ammon 1985). And this is particularly true in Malaysia since teachers are not familiar with the techniques involved in process writing. Mohan and Lo (1985) working with ESL students in Singapore claim that the process approach is difficult to implement in ESL classes in terms of students' familiarity with the methods used, the large class size, and the pressure from the standardised examinations. And this argument is supported by Keh (1990) when she says that :

For some teachers (particularly those in exam-driven systems such as found in Asia) such an approach may be viewed as impractical or "too time consuming" (or perhaps not "good"

preparation for the exam). In such cases, teachers may equate endless hours of marking (particularly red-pen corrections at the surface level). This “traditional” method has great face-validity to on-lookers (e.g. fellow teachers; headmaster). Further, red marks on students’ papers may also “prove” the teacher’s superiority over students and demonstrate that the teacher is doing his/her job.

(Keh 1990 : 294)

In addition, it is quite difficult for many teachers to give up the controlling and ‘grammarian’ role in the classroom. Even if they are willing to practise process writing, they may find themselves lacking the proper training and school resources for implementing that practice.

As process writing is important in reducing writing apprehension, teachers must start to reconsider their role in the language classroom. They need to consider the value of being no longer judges but facilitators. Thus, in responding to students’ writing, they should not be too obsessed about grammatical accuracy, ignoring their responsibility of taking care of various aspects of students’ writing process. Grant-Davie and Shapiro (1987) suggested that the teachers should behave with the same combination of a sense of responsibility and a sense of helplessness as the coach of a football team, booing and cheering while pacing the margins of the students’ paper, shouting encouragement and tactical advice. This requires the teacher to go beyond his or her normal range of duties for it calls for a different teaching approach. The teacher has to be able and willing to participate wholly in the approach.

Apart from the change in the classroom procedures and practices, innovations have to be introduced in the training of ESL teachers. First, ESL teachers must be given the opportunity to learn what process writing is and to be trained in the process writing skills. The Ministry of Education should provide ESL writing courses for both in-

service and pre-service teachers. In-service training programmes can involve teachers in learning about more effective techniques, collaborative planning for the use of techniques across the writing curriculum, systematic observation and evaluation of their use and results, and continued revision. Such in-service work obviously requires more than the one or two days available in most school systems. It may require school-holiday workshops, released time during the school day for planning and observing, and time for follow-up evaluations and revisions. Without such a serious commitment, change in teachers' behaviour and therefore, in students' writing is likely to be negligible.

In addition, new textbooks have to be written to meet the needs of process writing in schools. Students also need guidance in how to play an active role in the language classroom. In order to achieve these objectives, more guidance and resources must be offered to ESL writing teachers and more support has to be given for carrying out Malaysian-based research on teaching process writing. In this way it is hoped that the process approach can be developed in Malaysia and the writing produced by the students improved.

The results of this study indicate clear directions. If we wish our schools and colleges to teach writing effectively, we cannot retreat to the grammar book and rely on the presentation of rules and advice, or expect students to teach themselves how to write effectively simply by writing whatever they wish for varied groups of their peers. We must make systematic use of instructional techniques which are demonstrably more effective. We must also continue our efforts to evaluate and understand those techniques and to develop new instructional procedures.

9.5 Directions for future research

The present study is just the beginning and should be considered as an invitation to other researchers to join in the investigation. The scope and potential for future research are great, and very necessary for the benefit of teachers and students in Malaysia. The priorities for future research are :

1. Replicating the study in the National University of Malaysia to include both levels of writing class, and to confirm the present findings at level 1.
2. Investigating the results of this approach when applied over a longer period of time e.g. several academic years.
3. Applying this experimental method with suitable modifications, at school level : primary, lower secondary, upper secondary and pre-university.

Future research in this field is necessary because, as Krashen says "...studies of second language writing are sadly lacking..." (1985 : 11).

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Appendix 1.

DALY-MILLER WRITING APPREHENSION TEST

DIRECTIONS : Below are a series of statements about writing. There no right or wrong answers to the statements. Please indicate the degree to which each statement applies to you by circling whether you (1) strongly agree, (2) agree, (3) are uncertain, (4) disagree, or (5) strongly disagree with the statement. While some of the statements may seem repetitious, take your time and try to be as honest as possible.

	SA	A	U	D	SD
1. I avoid writing.	1	2	3	4	5
2. I have no fear of my writing being evaluated.	1	2	3	4	5
3. I look forward to writing down my ideas.	1	2	3	4	5
4. I am afraid of writing essays when I know they will be evaluated.	1	2	3	4	5
5. Taking a composition course is a very frightening experience.	1	2	3	4	5
6. Handing in a composition makes me feel good.	1	2	3	4	5
7. My mind seems to go blank when I start to work on a composition.	1	2	3	4	5
8. Expressing ideas through writing seem to be a waste of time.	1	2	3	4	5
9. I would enjoy submitting my writing to magazines for evaluation and publication.	1	2	3	4	5
10. I like to write my ideas down.	1	2	3	4	5
11. I feel confident in my ability to clearly express my ideas in writing.	1	2	3	4	5

12. I like to have my friends read what I have written.	1	2	3	4	5
13. I'm nervous about writing.	1	2	3	4	5
14. People seem to enjoy what I write.	1	2	3	4	5
15. I enjoy writing.	1	2	3	4	5
16. I never seem to be able to clearly write down my ideas.	1	2	3	4	5
17. Writing is a lot of fun.	1	2	3	4	5
18. I expect to do poorly in composition classes even before I enter them.	1	2	3	4	5
19. I like seeing my thoughts on paper.	1	2	3	4	5
20. Discussing my writing with others is an enjoyable experience.	1	2	3	4	5
21. I have a terrible time organizing my ideas in a composition course.	1	2	3	4	5
22. When I hand in a composition I know I'm going to do poorly.	1	2	3	4	5
23. It's easy for me to write good compositions.	1	2	3	4	5
24. I don't think I write as well as most other people.	1	2	3	4	5
25. I don't like my compositions to be evaluated.	1	2	3	4	5
26. I'm no good at writing.	1	2	3	4	5

Appendix 2

SCORING PROCEDURES FOR THE DALY-MILLER TEST

- 1 +
- 2. -
- 3. -
- 4. +
- 5 +
- 6. -
- 7. +
- 8. +
- 9. -
- 10. -
- 11. -
- 12. -
- 13. +
- 14. -
- 15. -
- 16. +
- 17. -
- 18. +
- 19. -
- 20. -
- 21. +
- 22. +
- 23. -
- 24. +
- 25 +
- 26. +

Appendix 3

GROUP INTRODUCTORY ACTIVITY (PAIR WORK)**1 Animal Maze**

You and your partner will have 10 minutes to decipher the animal mazes below. Each sentence will have hidden in it a name of some creature. Find the name of the creature and write it in the bracket provided.

Example : LONG TIME AGO A TINY BABY WAS BORN (GOAT)

1. THE ARAB BIT INTO THE BREAD ()
2. NOBODY CAME LATE TO SCHOOL ()
3. JOE FINALLY BELIEVED HIS NAKED EYES ()
4. I ENJOY EVERY TRIP I GO ON ()
5. WILL I ONLY NEED TWO PIECES ()
6. BRING A PET TO THE SHOW ()
7. JACK COULDN'T SEE THROUGH OR SEE OVER THE FENCE
()

8. CAN A RYE BREAD AND SWISS CHEESE SANDWICH BE ORDERED?
()
9. HE WILL NOT BE AROUND LONG ()
10. EVERYONE PLAYED ON KEY ()
11. HE DOESN'T DO VERY WELL IN SCHOOL ()
12. HE DOESN'T DO VERY WELL IN SCHOOL ()
13. WE SAW HOW HALE AND HEARTY YOU LOOKED THIS MORNING
()
14. THE CARPENTER WACKS HIS NAILS WITH MIGHTY WACKS
()
15. WHERE HAS WALDO GONE ()
16. HOW ASPIRING THE YOUTH ARE ()
17. THE BOX ENCLOSED ABOUT TWO POUNDS OF DIRT ()
18. IN THE END SHE NODDED HER APPROVAL ()
19. I GAVE THE ELECTRIC CLOCK A CRUSHING BLOW ()
20. GRAB AT THE FIRST THING YOU SEE ()

2 The lawnmower

Are you tired of pushing a back-breaking hand mower? Well, we have just the thing for you.

So you usually can't get the thing started? Ours never gives us any trouble on that score.

Yours noisy? Disturbs the neighbours on a Sunday afternoon? Ours is nearly always silent.

Do you dislike the fumes from your present machine? We propose a solution that solves all the problems of pollution.

No petrol fumes, no dangerous electric wires, in fact, no work at all for you - our great new market innovation is fully automated.

Never needs oiling.

There is no way you can catch your fingers in its wheels.

The model we present to you is a logical evolution from much earlier models.

Our product's colour scheme blends with your garden - purely natural colours.

The problem is this : What exactly is this lawn mowing innovation?

3 The Barbers

A philosopher went to visit a small town lost in an immense desert.

On arrival he decided that he rather badly needed a haircut and asked if there were any barbers in this town.

There were two, he was told.

He was also told that the first was a very smart man with excellently cut hair and a very clean shop.

The second wore dirty clothes and his place is a mess. What's more, his hair was horribly badly cut.

Neither the first nor the second had an assistant.

After hearing about the two barbers, the wise man wondered which of them to go to.

After thirty seconds thought, he jumped to his feet and strode across the square to one of the barbers' shop.

Your problem is this : which one did he go to and why was he sure he was right?

4 Telling the Time

Marie went into a restaurant and ordered some soup.

When she had finished she asked for the bill which came to eight francs.

She began counting out the money : "One, two, three, ..." and then said, "Oh, what time is it?"

The waitress looked at her watch : "Five madam," and Marie went on counting out the francs : "Six, seven, eight."

An old man sitting in the corner had been watching this going on. He thought he'd do the same.

He came back next day at lunch and ordered some soup.

When he'd finished it he called for the bill which came to eight francs.

He started counting out the money : "One, two, three,.. " and then said, "Oh, what time is it?"

The waitress looked at her watch : "One, Sir," and the old man went on counting, "... two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight."

How much money did the waitress lose on these two transactions?

Appendix 4

GROUP INTRODUCTORY ACTIVITY

From "Test Your Survival IQ" by Anthony Acceraro

Outdoor Life, May, 1979

The following quiz is designed to keep you appraise - and improve - your knowledge of survival techniques. The situations cover the gamut of potential outdoor dangers, ranging from a fish hook in the finger to a bear attack. Try this test in a group and get the consensus of either to choose True or False and give reasons for choosing so.

1. You're planning a fishing or hunting trip to the arctic and since it's a vast and comparatively unpeopled region, you decide to bone up survival basics. Nearly every survival book you read states that "all arctic plants are edible". That fact should be remembered if food becomes a problem. TRUE OR FALSE.
2. You've tracked a deer far into the woods. You have no ideas where you are, but soon you stumble onto a logging road. Eventually you face a fork in the road. This indicates that you've probably been walking in the wrong direction and that the odds of finding civilisation would be better if you turned around and hiked the road in the opposite direction. TRUE OR FALSE.
3. While crawling over the prairie , you stop short and see a rattlesnake stretched out on a rock in front of you. Even though the snake isn't coiled, it still can strike at you. TRUE OR FALSE.

4. You're hiking along a trail, perhaps enroute to a stream, when suddenly a bear appears on the path ahead. Waving your arms and shouting is the best way to frighten the bear away. TRUE OR FALSE.
5. While canoeing or rafting, you fall overboard in a rapids. Someone tosses you a rope. To avoid dropping the rope, the safest procedure is to tie it around your wrist - or better yet - your waist. TRUE OR FALSE.
6. Stranded in the woods, you're scared and hungry. You observe a bird feeding on red berries. You can eat the berries safely, since any food consumed by birds is suitable for human consumption. TRUE OR FALSE.

2. Desert Island

The teacher reads the paragraph to the students

Close your eyes... You are lying on white sand...on an unknown island... The sun...is beating down on you..from a blue sky...that has no clouds... Your mouth...feels dry and your body is sore...from lying for so long... You can hear... the rush of the sea...as it meets the shore...and the cries...of strange birds... You remember now...yes it was an emergency landing...the aeroplane had to make an emergency landing and you ran from the scene of the crash... You can still hear the terrible explosion that followed... Now all is still..you are here on the sand...exhausted, but you are alive.

Tell the students :

Get into groups of five or six. You have been on the island for two days now and you are the only survivors. You have decided to sketch a detailed map of your island.

How are you going to make use of what is on the island in order to survive?

Discuss with other members in the group how to survive and escape from the island.

3. Imprisonment

A prisoner is lying curled up under a thin blanket...the air in the cell is damp, his body is sore...he can't stay in one position for long...his bones ache...he is cold. Water drips from the stone walls... He listens... The steady drip, drip...drip reminds him that time is passing...

Time...that is all he has left because he is waiting... His ears strain to listen and then...the key scraping in the lock... Now he finds himself being led out into the prison courtyard... The first rays of the early morning sun make him screw his eyes up... He shuffles past the row of armed men...he flattens his body against the cold stone wall...every muscle is tense...his whole body is taut and stiff... He waits for the order to be given...nothing happens...he can't believe it...slowly he realise his life has been returned...and he asks himself...who...when...why?

In the groups of five or six discuss:

- a. Who is the prisoner (His name, his age, what he did, etc.)
- b. Why wasn't he executed?
- c. Who has saved his life?

Appendix 5

RULES FOR THE WRITING WORKSHOP

1. All essays must be neatly written and single-spaced.
2. While in groups, you must sit facing each other.
3. Everyone must have a copy of everyone else's writing.
4. You must read your own paper to the group.
5. Readers are not allowed to apologise or say anything about their writings before reading them to the group. You may talk only after everyone in the group has responded.
6. Other group members, while following along the line while the papers are read by the writer, should mark words, sentences, etc. that "penetrate your skulls" for some reason. Anything that jumps out the page and makes an impression on you should be marked.
7. After each paper is read, the group must wait from 30-60 seconds in silence. During this time respondents can either do additional marking, formulate responses in their heads, etc. This time often allows new perception and criticism to surface. These might be otherwise lost if feedback began immediately.
8. Respondents must point to specifics in the papers. "I like it. It was good" is not a valid response. It tells nothing. You must discuss the writing itself and support your

contentions with specifics.

9. As either writer or respondent, never quarrel with someone else's reaction.

10. As a respondent, if you feel reluctant to talk, think of your responsibility to others. There is no other person in the world with the same set of past experiences. Only you can say what you feel and think. What every serious writer looks for is the effect of his writing upon individuals. You can't say anything wrong to him if you truthfully report your response to his work. And you may help the writer a lot.

11. The first few papers will be restricted to positive feedback only. After that, feedback must be either positive or positive-negative. Solely negative feedback is not allowed.

12. When your group is working on specific writing objectives, the first priority of respondents is to decide and reveal to the writer whether or not he successfully accomplished his objectives. For example, "Yes your paper did have a lot of variety in the length of its sentences and you used parallel construction two times. You definitely accomplished the objectives".

13. If a writer has difficulty with a passage in his writing or if he does not successfully complete his objective, the group should select a brief portion of his paper and rewrite it as a group so that it does satisfy the requirements.

Adapted from Ken Macrorie, Writing to be Read, 2nd Edition, Rochele Park, N.J : Hayden Book Company, 1976.

Appendix 6

**THINGS TO DO WHEN THE WRITING WORKSHOP FINISHES
EARLY**

1. Group picks one or two paragraphs from one or two papers to revise.
 - A. Revise content (add details) (delete unnecessary words).
 - B. Revise organisation.
 - C. Revise opening/introduction.
 - D. Revise closing/conclusion.
 - E. Write out revisions on the back of the paper.
2. Individuals work on revisions (same items as above).
3. Group work on punctuation and grammar.
 - A. Commas.
 - B. Agreement.
 - C. Sentence variety.
4. If all groups finish, ask each group to pick out the "best" writing from their papers.
Have groups exchange the best writing, read and discuss.

Appendix 7

INTROSPECTIVE INVENTORY

Students should answer these questions based on paper 5

1. How much time did you spend on this paper (both drafts)?
- 2a. What did you try to improve when you revised a paper?
- 2b. If you have questions about what you were trying to do, what are they?
- 3a. What are the strengths of this revision?
- 3b. Place a squiggle line beside those paragraphs you feel are very good.
- 3c. What specific writing skill or idea have you improved?
- 4a. What are the weaknesses of your paper?
- 4b. Place an X beside paragraphs you'd like me to correct or revise.
- 4c. Place an X over any punctuation, spelling, etc. where you need help or clarification.
5. What grade would you give yourself on this revised composition?

Appendix 8

LARGE-GROUP INTERACTION ACTIVITIES

1. "Signature Hunt" in which the students pretend to be famous people. And all the students should obtain the signatures of two class members (who will pretend to be famous people). Appropriate descriptions should be given.
2. "Non-written composition" in which the students bring 3 objects to class and in about five minutes, explain the connections and relationship the objects have on them. The objects should somehow "symbolize" the owner. **Instructors have to ask the students to bring the objects on Day 1.**

Appendix 9

FINAL ESSAY TOPIC

“It was monstrous quiet on the river that time of the night and somewhere far off there was a church bell ringing, but you couldn't hear all the strikes, only a slow bung ... bung... and the next one would drift away before it was finished ... At that time of night all the sounds are late sounds and the air has a late feel and a late smell, too. All round, you can hear the river, sighing and gurgling and groaning like a hundred drowning men, and laying there in that awful dark, I could hear the river terrible clear and it seemed to me like I was floating in a damp graveyard”.

-from The True Adventure of Huckleberry Finn

by John Seeyle

The distant bell, the lamenting of the river, the blanket of the darkness - all contribute to the isolation and loneliness this modern Huck Finn feels. This particular place - the river, the shores, the town beyond - have a sombre effect on Huck.

Other environments obviously have different effects on different people. In the following passage the feelings of Viv are described as she thoughtfully wanders through her room for the last time.

“She asked that he wait on the other side of the muslin curtain that separated her tiny room from the rest of the fruit stand. Hank thought that she would be ashamed for him to see the squalor of the dwelling and complied in silence while she ducked through the curtain to pack. But what he mistook for shame was closer to reverence; in the little cluttered room that had been her home since her parents death, Viv was shriving herself

like a nun before communion. She let her eyes roam over the room's shabby walls - the travel picture, the clipping, the arrangement that she knew she must leave as sure as the walls themselves, until she finally let her eyes meet with those looking out at her from a wood-framed oval mirror. The face that looked out at her was cramped into the lower part of the mirror to avoid a crack in the glass, but it didn't seem to mind the inconvenience, it smiled brightly back, wishing her luck. She glanced about once more and made a silent excited of allegiance to all the old dreams and hopes and ideals that these walls had held, then, chiding herself for being such a silly, kissed the face of the glass goodbye”.

-from Ken Kesey

Whether you call it environment or simply place our physical surroundings invariably have effects on our emotions and our states of mind. For this essay, then, describe in detail a place that has some kind of effect on you and why it makes you feel the way it does. The material for your paper may come from your past, present or future; in other words, the place and the effect you deal with may be real or imaginary.

Appendix 10

Topic for paper 1

Write about a childhood memory and tell what the significance of that event is.

Appendix 11

Topic for Definition paper

Your assignment for essay 2 is to define one of the following qualities in a 400-500 word essay :

compassion	heartache	frustration
wholesomeness	courage	loneliness
lechery	grace	treachery
snobbery	debauchery	fright
courtesy	apathy	femininity
caring	misery	masculinity
stubbornness	curiosity	determination
sex appeal	rebelliousness	bliss

You may approach this assignment in one of two ways : a) You may write a paper in which you explain the term by an extended definition, using examples, negations, comparisons, contrasts or historical backgrounds. Or b) you may write a story in which you show the quality in a person, institution or business by using examples and specific, vivid details.

Appendix 12

Topic for paper 3

For this paper write a character sketch of someone that you know very well. Include physical, mental, emotional, spiritual characteristics or concentrate primarily on a couple of these. Select details about the person that are the most revealing of his/her character.

Appendix 13

Topics for the Process Analysis

1. As you are probably aware, beings from outer space have been visiting Earth for years. One day in the near future you have an encounter with one of these beings. He has been sent to Earth to find out about some of our strange customs. He happens to see you worrying about a girl/boy in whom you are extremely interested. Since he knows nothing about Earth customs, he is amazed at this dating ritual. You are to inform him how to meet and attract a member of the opposite sex. Analyse the process attracting a possible date.
2. By an odd series of circumstances which are irrelevant to this assignment, you happened to be up all night before your heaviest day of classes. At 8.00 you stagger into your first class, which coincidentally is your most boring class. You must stay awake and take notes in this class because it is a review for the final exam. During the class, you devise a method for helping stay awake and you are impressed with your success that you decide to write an essay on how to stay awake in class for the next issue of the campus newspaper. Using the method of development by process analysis, write an essay which describes the best procedure for staying awake in a boring class.
3. Whether we realise or not, each week we tell others how to do something. We might explain how to find the best restaurant in town or how to study for a test and so on. For this essay you will be telling a friend how to do one of the following :
 - a. how to flunk a test
 - b. how to select a car (new or used) or house

c. how to get a date with _____

d. how to break a specific habit (chewing tobacco, over eating, picking one's nose in public, blowing spit bubbles, driving too fast, and so on).

Appendix 14

Topics for Classification Papers

1. The university has decided to implement a "student centred" housing assignment system for incoming students. Assignments to a hostel/dormitory will be made on the basis of what type an entering student is. Identify four different types you have observed on this campus. Name and explain the characteristics of each of these students. In this essay, explain to the housing office how they should classify incoming students in order to place them in the appropriate dormitory.

2. Listed below are approximately 20 unrelated items. You are to create a narrative incident in which you can mention all the items under a certain categories, which you will invent to serve your purpose. The items are :

- | | |
|------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| shaving mug | a notebook |
| type writer | a bottle of shampoo |
| three Coke bottles | a t-shirt |
| a ream of yellow paper | 12 volume encyclopedia |
| a set of screwdrivers | vitamin pills |
| one orange | plant food |
| a clarinet | 1 packet of sugarless chewing gum |
| a tube of toothpaste | a hat |
| an ashtray | an airconditioning filter |

3. What would you consider to be the major stages in the development of a love relationship which results in marriage. Support your paper as specifically as you can, supplying details, examples or illustrations.

Appendix 15

Topics for Argumentation/Persuasion Papers

1. Joe, a college student, was leading a relatively pleasant existence. He was engaged to a former "Miss Malaysia" and was considered a shoo-in for Cambridge Law School. Then, in a series of odd occurrences, his rosy life changed; his girl ran off with a farmer, Cambridge Law School decided to close its enrolment to men for 10 years; a wart on his big toe was diagnosed as a cancerous growth; and his bank called to say that all his assets had been frozen for six months while the bank ran an audit on him. After talking to the bank manager, Joe left to buy a pistol with his American Express card, intending to kill himself.

You just happen to be strolling down the street when you meet Joe, a close friend. He tells you of his troubles with a glazed stare. Then, he calmly tell you that he is going to kill himself. You try to talk to him out of it, but you can see you are getting nowhere. You get more frantic and continue to stop him until he suddenly turns the gun on you and say, "Bug off!" You know what you say in the next few moments may mean your own death or Joe's - or both of your lives.

For this paper you may fill in as many details of Joe's character as you wish. Be serious or humorous but be certain that your comments are supported with as much specific information as possible. Remember : his life is in your hands. Just how would you persuade someone not to kill him/herself?

2. You are attending the National Day parade when a collegiate couple walks by. The male has a Malaysian flag sewn into his jeans as a back pocket and the female has a flag made into a poncho. Someone nearby says, "Some people get very disturbed over

seeing a Malaysian flag sewn on the seat of someone's pants or made into a poncho like that. It's silly to take that view! The flag is just a piece of multi-coloured cloth".

This paper is a reaction (agree/disagree) to this statement. What would you say to someone who has said this?

3. You have been chosen as an exchange student to Japan. Before you may enter the ranks of "unofficial representative of Malaysia" the State Department wants an honest evaluation of your bad habits. You have to plan an essay so that the State Department will believe you 100%.

You may take this assignment humorously (deciding you really don't want the hassle) or you may take this seriously (you would really like to have the experience). This paper, then, will be an evaluation for the State Department of your 3 or 4 bad habits as you persuade them to take you.

Appendix 16

Personal Narrative Writing Scale***I. General Qualities:*****A. Author's Role**

The author's role is the relationship of the author to the subject, incident, or person. In *autobiography* the author writes about himself/herself. He/she is the main participant. Most of the time he/she will use the pronouns, I, me, we, us. In *biography* the author writes about some other person. He/she is not involved in what happens; he/she is just an observer. He/she uses pronouns, he, she, him, her, it, they, them.

High The author keeps his/her correct role of either participant or observer throughout.

Middle In autobiography, a few noticeable distracting times the author talks too much about another person's actions; or, in biography, he/she talks too much about his/her own actions.

Low The author talks about himself/herself or others as participant or observer anytime he/she pleases so that you barely tell whether it is supposed to be autobiography or biography. There is a confusion to the author's role. He/she is not consistently either observer or participant.

B. Style or Voice

High The author states what he/she really thinks and feels. Expressing personal experiences, the writer comes through as an individual, and his/her work seems like his/hers and his/hers alone. The voice we hear in the piece really interests us.

Middle The author uses generalizations or abstract language, seldom including personal details and comments. While the piece may be correct, it lacks the personal touch. The voice seems bland, careful, a little flat, and not very interesting.

Low We don't really hear a recognizable voice in the piece. The style seems flat and lifeless.

C. Central Figure

Details about the central figure make him/her seem "real". The character is described physically and as a person.

High The central figure is described in such detail that he/she is always "real" for you.

Middle The central character can be "seen", but is not as real as he/she could be.

Low The central character is not a real living person; he/she is just a name on a page. You cannot see him/her or understand him/her.

D. Background

The setting of the action is detailed so that it seems to give the events a “real” place in which to happen.

High The action occurs in a well-detailed place that you can almost see.

Middle Sometimes the setting seems vivid and real; but sometimes the action is just happening, and you are not really aware of what the setting is.

Low The action occurs without any detailed setting. You see the action, but you cannot see it in a certain place.

E. Sequence

The order of events is clear, giving the reader a precise view of the sequence of incidents.

High The order of events is always clear to you even if at times the author might talk about the past or the future.

Middle A few times it is not clear which event happened first.

Low You really cannot figure out which event comes first or goes after any other event.

F. Theme

The author chooses the incidents and details for some reason. There seems to be some purpose behind the choice of subject matter, some *theme* holding it all together and relating the parts to the whole. There seems to be a point to it.

High The importance of the author's subject is either directly explained to you or it is implied in a way that makes it clear.

Middle You can see why the author's subject is important to him/her, but it is not as clearly stated or implied as it could be.

Low You cannot figure out why the subject is important to the author.

11. Diction, Syntax, and Mechanics

A. Wording

High Words are employed in a unique and interesting way. While some of the language might be inappropriate, the author seems thoughtful and imaginative.

Middle Common, ordinary words are used in the same old way. The paper has some trite, over-worked expressions. The author, on the other hand, may work so hard at being different that he/she sounds like talking dictionary, in which case he/she, also, merits this rating.

Low The word choice is limited and immature. Sometimes words are even used incorrectly - the wrong word is used.

B. Syntax

High The sentences are varied in length and structure. The author shows confident control of sentence structure. The paper reads smoothly from sentence to sentence. There are no run together sentences or sentence fragments.

Middle The author shows some control of sentence structure and only occasionally writes a sentence which is awkward or puzzling. Almost no run-ons and fragments.

Low Many problems with sentence structure. Sentences are short and simple in structure, somewhat childlike and repetitious in their patterns. They maybe run-ons and fragments.

C. Usage

High There are no obvious errors in usage. The author shows he/she is familiar with the standards of edited written English.

Middle A few errors in usage appear in the paper, showing the author has not quite been consistent in using standard forms.

Low The writing is full of usage errors.

D. Punctuation

High The author consistently uses appropriate punctuation.

Middle Most of the time the writer punctuates correctly.

Low The writing contains many punctuation errors.

E. Spelling

High All words are spelled correctly.

Middle A few words are misspelled.

Low Many words are misspelled.

Analytic Scale

	Reader			Paper	
	Low		Middle		High
1. General Qualities					
A. Author's Role	2	4	6	8	10
B. Style or Voice	2	4	6	8	10
C. Central Figure	2	4	6	8	10
D. Background	2	4	6	8	10
E. Sequence	2	4	6	8	10
F. Theme	2	4	6	8	10
11. Diction, Syntax, and Mechanics:					
A. Wording	1	2	3	4	5
B. Syntax	1	2	3	4	5
C. Usage	1	2	3	4	5
D. Punctuation	1	2	3	4	5
E Spelling	1	2	3	4	5

Appendix 17

1) Percentage of post-test essays scores for the experimental and control groups

Scores	Experimental	Control
0-40	0	0
41-50	9.52	9.01
51-60	33.33	36.36
61-70	23.81	36.36
71-100	33.33	18.18

2) Percentage of length of the post-test essays for experimental and control groups

No. of words	Experimental	Control
0-300	0	9.09
301-400	14.29	0
401-500	28.57	54.55
501-600	23.81	9.09
601-700	19.05	9.09
701-800	0	9.09
801 and above	14.29	9.09

The Teacherless Writing Class

I HAVE been speaking till now as though writing were a transaction entirely with yourself. It is a transaction with yourself—lonely and frustrating—and I have wanted, in fact, to increase that transaction: help you do *more* business with yourself. But writing is also a transaction with other people. Writing is not just getting things down on paper, it is getting things inside someone else's head. If you wish to improve your writing you must also learn to do more business with other people. That is the goal of the teacherless writing class.

Imagine you are blind and deaf. You want to speak better. But you are in perpetual darkness and silence. You send out words as best you can but no words come back. You get a few clues about your speaking: perhaps you asked for something and didn't get it; or you got the wrong thing. You know you did something wrong. What you aren't getting is the main thing that helps people speak better: direct feedback to your speech—a directly perceived sense of how different people react to the sounds you make.

This is an image of what it is like when you try to improve your writing all by yourself. You simply don't know what your words make happen in readers. Perhaps you are even taking a writing course and a teacher tells you what he thinks the weak and strong points were and suggests things you should try for. But you usually get little sense of what the words actually did to him—how he *perceived* and *experienced* them. Besides, he's only one person and not very typical of other readers either. Writing is a string you send out to connect yourself with other consciousnesses, but usually you never have the opportunity to feel anything at the other end. How can you tell whether you've got a fish if the line always feels slack?

The teacherless writing class tries to remedy this situation. It tries to take you out of darkness and silence. It is a class of seven to twelve people. It meets at least once a week. Everyone reads everyone else's writing. Everyone tries to give each writer a sense of how his words were experienced. The goal is for the writer to come as close as possible to being able to see and experience his own words *through* seven or more people. That's all.

To improve your writing you don't need advice about what changes to make; you don't need theories of what is good and bad writing. You need movies of people's minds while they read your words. But you need this for a sustained period of time—at least two or three months. And you need to get the experience of not just a couple of people but of at least six or seven. And you need to keep getting it from the *same* people so that they get better at transmitting their experience and you get better at hearing them. And you must write something *every* week. Even if you are very busy, even if you have nothing to write about, and even if you are very blocked, you must write something and try to experience it through their eyes. Of course it may not be good; you may not be satisfied with it. But if you only learn how people perceive and experience words you are satisfied with, you are missing a crucial area of learning. You often learn the most from reactions to words that you loathe. Do you want to learn how to write or protect your feelings?

In the following pages I try to help you set up and use a teacherless writing class. If you are ever confused, remember that everything is designed to serve only one utterly simple goal: the writer should learn how his words were *actually* experienced by these particular readers.

SETTING UP THE CLASS

You need a committed group of people

For a successful class you need the same people writing and taking part every week. People need time to get better at giving reactions and hearing them. Learning to make use of a teacherless class is a struggle. It's too easy to avoid the struggle by letting the class peter out. People have to know the others will be there.

The best solution is to have a few trial classes for people to explore the class. Keep having trial classes and bringing in more people until you finally get at least seven people who will make an explicit commitment for the next ten weeks. Don't start the real class till you have those seven. And make sure everyone has explicitly stated his commitment. It's only ten weeks, but that period is crucial.

You may want to restrict the class to the committed, or else invite in others who are not sure they can come consistently. Two warnings, though: avoid more than twelve in one class; and avoid having people there who haven't put in a piece of writing themselves.

What kind of people?

There are obvious advantages to having friends, colleagues, or people who have a lot in common. If all are working on the same kind of writing, this helps everyone understand each other better.

But I always stick up for the advantages of diversity: different kinds of people working on different kinds of writing. It can make some strain. But the feedback is better. The poet needs the experience of the businessman reading his poem just as the businessman needs the experience of the poet reading his committee report. If each thinks the other's writing has no meaning or no value this is an advantage rather than a disadvantage. Each needs to experience what it was like for the other to find the writing worthless, and where the other sees glimmers. A poet needs the experiences of other poets, but if that's all he gets the range of reactions is crucially restricted: poets are liable to react too exclusively in terms of the tradition—how it follows some poems and departs from others. Whenever people work in only one genre, they gradually become blind to certain excrescences.

What to write?

The main thing is that it doesn't matter so long as you write something. Treat the rigid requirement as a blessing. Since you must crank out something every week, expect some of it to be terrible. You can't improve your writing unless you put out words differently from the way you put them out now, and find out how these new kinds of writing are experienced. You can't try out new ways of generating words unless many of them feel embarrassing, terrible, or frightening. But you will be surprised in two ways. Some passages you hate you'll discover to be good. And some of the reactions which most improve your writing are brought on by terrible writing—writing you wouldn't have shown to someone if you'd had more time to rewrite.

Use whatever procedure you think best for deciding what to write. Write the same kind of thing over and over again—even the same piece over and over again if you wish. Or try out wildly different things. There is no best or right way. If you have the desire to write, there is probably some particular kind of writing you dream of doing. Do it. Or if there's something different you feel you should work on first, follow your own advice.

If you continually have trouble thinking of something to write, you should probably begin to suspect that some part of you is trying to undermine your efforts at writing. But don't spend so much time psyching yourself out that you don't get writing done.

If you are stuck for things to write, here are some suggestions.

Ten-minute writing exercises are probably the best way out of this problem. See chapter 1.

Put words on paper in order to make something observable happen. This gives you a down-to-earth, concrete way of deciding whether the words worked. For example, write a letter asking for a refund on something; a letter to be published in a newspaper; something funny enough to make someone actually laugh out loud; a letter that will get someone to go out on a date with you; a journal entry that actually takes you out of one mood and puts you in another. Try to stop thinking about whether the writing is good or bad, right or wrong: ask whether it *worked* or *didn't work*.

Hand in writing you need for some other purpose, such as for a course or a job. Use it in class first so you can improve it on the basis of reactions. (Watch out here that they concentrate on telling you how they experienced it and not try to tell you how to fix it. You can decide later how to fix it if they'll give you their perceptions.)

Describe a person, place, or incident that means a lot to you.

Describe such a person, place, or incident but from an unfamiliar angle: for example, describe the place as though you were blind and could only know it through your other senses; describe the person as though you had only met him once or as though it were he describing himself; describe the incident as though it had never happened and you were only imagining it.

Describe something while you are in a definite mood. Or pretend to be in that mood describing it. Or write in a particular mood. Don't mention the mood in the writing and get readers to tell you what mood comes through.

Write something in the voice of someone you know. Don't so much try to think about his voice or the way he speaks or writes: just try to be *in* his head and speak onto the paper. Don't tell readers who it is. Get them to describe the speaker they hear.

Write a conversation or a dialogue between two or three people. Again, try to write from within the voices and get the readers to tell you about the voices they hear.

Write about a character or object in a story, movie, or photograph.

Write an important letter. The classic one is a letter of blame to your own parents. Or a letter of appreciation.

Define something that is important to you but difficult to define. Suggestions: how is it different from things that are similar; what is it a subset or subdivision of; what are subsets or subdivisions of it.

Tell a belief or conviction of yours in such a way as to make the reader believe that you really do believe it. (This is what is involved in applying to a draft board for conscientious objector status.) This is not the same as trying to make *him* believe it.

Describe a belief or develop an argument in order to convince someone who disagrees. Keep in mind that this is often impossible.

Write a poem. Suggestions: find one you like and rewrite it, translate it, or write one just like it; write the poem as it would be if it were about a different topic or expressing a different feeling; write another poem this poet would write; write the poem this poet would write if he were you; write the words or lyrics that go with a piece of music; write a love poem.

*Should you hand out copies or
read your writing out loud?*

There are advantages both ways. Giving out copies saves class time: silent reading is quicker, you can stop and think, go back, read more carefully, and if it is a long piece of writing, people can take it home with them and read it there. This procedure may be more possible than you think. Many photocopying processes are cheap: people can easily write or type onto ditto or mimeo masters; it is often possible for members to leave a single copy of their piece where everyone else can read it carefully before class.

But reading out loud is good too. When you read your writing out loud, you often see things in it that you don't see any other way. Hearing your own words out loud gives you the vicarious experience of being someone else. Reading your words out loud stresses what is most important: writing is really a voice spread out over time, not marks spread out in space. The audience can't experience them all at once as they can a picture; they can only hear one instant at a time as with music. And there must be a voice in it.

Reading out loud also gives you a better idea of the effect of your words on an audience: they cannot go back to try to make sure their reactions are more "careful," "correct," or "objective." For example, someone may say "there were no details" when in fact there were quite a few, or "it doesn't have any organization so I felt lost," when in fact you had a careful structure. But this is good. You need to learn that the details or the structure didn't work for that reader. It's more important to learn what actually got through to a real reader than what might get through to an ideal reader. When a listener misinterprets something which he might have gotten right if he'd had a copy in his hands, his mistake is probably evidence of a real undertow in the writing. That undertow

operates even on readers who have the paper in their hands and can read more carefully, but they often don't feel the undertow so they make you pay for it in more mysterious ways: more vague dissatisfactions and misinterpretations.

The nervousness you feel at reading out loud is part of your problem in writing. Even if you don't feel it *as you write*, that only means you've separated your experience of audience from your experience of writing. The fear of the audience is still affecting you somehow: it may be tying your tongue and clouding your mind when you sit down to write; or it may be closing off certain kinds of writing to you. Reading out loud brings the sense of audience back into your act of writing. This is a great source of power. Getting a sense of audience isn't just practice in feeling scared about how they might react. It also means learning how they *do* react. Most people are liberated by finally getting the reactions they fear most—usually extreme criticism or extreme praise. They discover the world doesn't fall apart.

When you read something out loud in class, however, always read it twice and allow at least a minute of silence after each reading for impressions to come clearer in your listeners.

Class time

Find a regular time and stick to it. Otherwise you are asking for trouble.

As to how much time, fifteen to twenty minutes is sufficient for seven people to try to tell a writer how each of them perceived and experienced a short piece of writing. This means a class of eight people should get along with two to two-and-a-half hours a week. More time may be interesting and useful if people can spare it. But the essential process in this sort of class is to get what you can and then move on. You can never finish giving or getting the experience of a set of words. Instead of investing more and more minutes on one particular piece of writing, invest more and more weeks so everyone can begin to get good at this process. Keep the long haul in mind. Don't let the class take up so much time that people find it painful to keep coming. Besides, you usually can not make a significant improvement in your writing in less than two or three months no matter what kind of learning process you use. Learning to write is an exercise in slow, underground learning.

A chairman

A chairman or leader can make things run more smoothly, keep an eye on the clock so that everyone's writing gets its fair share of time, help people overcome unproductive habits like talking too much or too little, and generally keep an eye out. This can make people feel more comfortable.

But it's possible to get along without a chairman too. It puts more of a burden on everyone, but it can also encourage everyone to take more responsibility for how the class goes. Whatever your decision, build in a procedure for periodic re-decision about whether to have one or who it should be.

Reactions to the class itself

Devote the last five minutes of each class to the class itself as though it were a piece of writing. How do the members perceive and experience that class meeting? The reactions can be communicated by speaking, or you can all do a five-minute freewriting exercise and pass them around. Don't think of this as a time for actually solving dissatisfactions. The same learning principles apply here as to writing: what is valuable is shared perception and experience, not advice about how to fix things. Problems will be solved gradually this way, but better.

GIVING MOVIES OF YOUR MIND

As a reader giving your reactions, keep in mind that you are not answering a timeless, theoretical question about the objective qualities of those words on that page. You are answering a time-bound, subjective but *factual* question: what happened in you when you read the words *this time*.

Pointing

Start by simply pointing to the words and phrases which most successfully penetrated your skull: perhaps they seemed loud or full of voice; or they seemed to have a lot of energy; or they somehow rang true; or they carried special conviction. Any kind of getting through. If I have the piece of writing in my hand, I tend to put a line under such words and phrases (or longer passages) as I read. Later when telling my reactions, I can try to say which kind of getting through it was if I happen to remember. If I am listening to the piece read out loud I simply wait till the end and see which words or

phrases stick in my mind. I may jot them down as they come to me in the moments of silence after the readings.

Point also to any words or phrases which strike you as particularly weak or empty. Somehow they ring false, hollow, plastic. They bounced ineffectually off your skull. (I use a wavy line for these when I read with a pencil.)

Summarizing

Next summarize the writing:

- a) First tell very quickly what you found to be the main points, main feelings, or centers of gravity. Just sort of say what comes to mind for fifteen seconds, for example, "Let's see, very sad; the death seemed to be the main event; um . . . but the joke she told was very prominent; lots of clothes."
- b) Then summarize it into a single sentence.
- c) Then choose *one word* from the writing which best summarizes it.
- d) Then choose a word that isn't in the writing to summarize it.

Do this informally. Don't plan or think too much about it. The point is to show the writer what things he made stand out most in your head, what shape the thing takes in your consciousness. This isn't a test to see whether you got the words right. It's a test to see whether the words got you right. Be sure to use different language from the language of the writing. This insures that he is getting it filtered through your perception and experience—not just parroted. Also, try this test a week later: tell someone what you remember of his last week's piece.

Pointing and summarizing are not only the simplest ways to communicate your perception, but they are the most fool-proof and the most useful. Always start with pointing and summarizing. If you want to play it safe and make sure your class is successful, or if you are terribly short of class time, or if your class is coming apart, try skipping all the following ways of giving feedback.

Telling

Simply tell the writer everything that happened to you as you tried to read his words carefully. It's usually easiest to tell it in the form of a story: first this happened, then this happened, then this happened, and so on. Here are two examples of telling (one concerning a story, the other a poem) from tape recordings of actual classes:

I felt confused about the man in the gray suit and the men gathered around you. I suppose they're cops, and the escorts. Because I had first thought the gray suit was a cop, but then I thought he was a dignified person who got arrested. I was uncertain about it. And then you talked about the men gathered around at one point—fairly early. I felt like they were cops, and I wanted you to contrast them to the fantasies. There was one point where you talked about—I think you were going down the stairs—and I felt like that whole part with the father of the bride and the gown was like the flash a person has, supposedly, when he's going to drown and his whole life flows before him. I thought it was like an initiation of a girl—or a woman, particularly—out of her whole parental, social, ball-gown past into this new thing. And I was, I just, I was *surprised*. I didn't expect you to describe things that way. I was really happy. Then for some reason I felt like when you talked about the men who were gathered around—I felt like they were cops—and if I heard it again I might feel like I didn't need to have you say it, but at the time, as you said it, I wanted them to be blue suited or something contrasting. Perhaps that wouldn't be necessary for some other reader.

I had a very sort of happy feeling when you went to drinking songs. But it felt like the whole history of someone's life from being a young bride to becoming an old fishwife. I felt like it was a social comment in a way. One gets brought up and goes from the ideal fantasies to being fat and drinking companion in pubs. And I was just very happy at that change in age. It seemed like the whole thing was—if it were a movie it would be going around like this—but the history of a whole person in a way re-told in capsule form.

I didn't get into it till the middle section with the "one-two"s. I think I'd read down through the first two stanzas and didn't, um, not very much happened. In fact I think I felt it a little bit purple, a little bit corny, a little bit saying to myself "well he's having those nice thoughts, these nice words, but I can't go along. I'm not there." But I think even on first reading, when I got to the "one-two" business, I immediately picked up. Those words somehow made me pay attention. They became quite loud, there was a lot of—they really got me. I really listened to it as an interrogation. But for me it wasn't—as Mary said a minute ago—a standing back from emotions and being logical. It's not that it was so logical. It was like an interrogation, sort of. Like putting your feelings into this funny, numerical, pseudo-logical form. But it's quite hammering. I wrote down "the language is very real." Somehow it's moving. I don't take it as logic. I take it as some very insistent hammering thing.

And from then on I liked it. As I read down to the end I liked it fine. And when I got to the second page, I didn't even recognize that it was the same as the first page. I was starting to write down "I like this one much better," and when I went back to the first

page to compare, I found the two were the same thing. In other words, after the "one-two"s, this thing really worked for me, and I got into it; those words got into my head; although "water brothers forever"—I remain slightly unclear about what to do with that line although it's sort of evocative.

And then the last three lines. Different handwriting, different mode. Again it was a kind of hammering: "Do you understand." I didn't take it as something you were saying to a girl, I took it as something you were saying to yourself, or to the reader, or something. Sort of a kind of screaming. But screaming that works, not just screaming that's just sort of no good.

So then I went back. And when I saw that the first stanza was the same as the last stanza, I tried to figure out why I didn't like it so much the first time. And it was only then that I discovered that you had this great little device in the second stanza—repeating the first stanza with a new line interspersed every other line. I like that as an idea, but as far as the words go, they didn't work on me. I mean, once I perceived that pattern, I felt a kind of pleasure out of the pattern. I think patterns like that are fun. But I still couldn't like it as words. In particular the line "special cuz its hers": I didn't like it. I think part of it is that the abbreviation of 'because' into 'cuz' strikes me as corny and bothers me. It seems trivial but it's true. I don't know, I just didn't like it. "Seek and ye shall find" was maybe the one weak thing I didn't like in the "one-two" part. I ended up taking the whole thing very seriously as a poem.

The important thing in telling is not to get too far away from talking about the actual writing; people sometimes waste time talking only about themselves. But on the other hand, don't drift too far away from talking about yourself either, or else you are acting as though you are a perfectly objective, selfless critic.

To help you in telling, pretend that there is a whole set of instruments you have hooked up to yourself which record everything that occurs in you: not just pulse, blood pressure, EEG, and so on, but also ones which tell every image, feeling, thought, and word that happens in you. Pretend you have hooked them all up and now you are just reading off the print-out from the machines.

Showing

When you read something, you have *some* perceptions and reactions which you are not fully aware of and thus cannot "tell." Perhaps they are very faint, perhaps you do not have satisfactory language for them, or perhaps for some other reason you remain unconscious of them. But though you cannot tell these perceptions and reactions, you can *show* them if you are willing to use some of the metaphorical exercises listed

below. These may seem strange and difficult at first, but if you use them consistently you will learn to tap knowledge which you have but which is usually unavailable to you.

1. Talk about the writing as though you were describing *voices*: for example, shouting, whining, whispering, lecturing sternly, droning, speaking abstractedly, and so forth. Try to apply such words not only to the whole thing but to different parts.
2. Talk about the writing as though you were talking about *weather*: for example, foggy, sunny, gusty, drizzling, cold, clear, crisp, muggy, and so forth. Not just to the whole thing but to different parts.
3. Talk about the writing as though you were talking about *motion* or *locomotion*: for example, as marching, climbing, crawling, rolling along, tiptoeing, strolling, sprinting, and so forth.
4. *Clothing*: for example, jacket and tie, dungarees, dusty and sweaty shirt, miniskirt, hair all slicked down, etc.
5. *Terrain*: for example, hilly, desert, soft and grassy, forested, jungle, clearing in a forest, etc.
6. *Color*: what color is the whole? the parts?
7. *Shape*.
8. *Animals*.
9. *Vegetables*.
10. *Musical instruments*.
11. It is a *body*: what kind of body; which parts are feet, hands, heart, head, hair, etc.
12. Think of the piece of writing as having magically evolved out of a different piece of writing; and it will eventually evolve into some other piece of writing that again is different. Tell where it came from; where it is going.
13. Describe what you think was the writer's intention with this piece of writing. Then think of some crazy intention you think he might have had.
14. Assume that the writer wrote this *instead of* something very different that was really on his mind. Guess or fantasize what you think was really on his mind.
15. Assume that soon before he wrote this he did something very important or something very important happened to him—something that is not obvious from the writing. Say what you think it was.
16. Pretend this was written by someone you have never seen. Guess or fantasize what he or she is like.
17. The writing is a lump of workable clay. Tell what you would do with that clay.
18. Pretend to be someone else—someone who would have a very different response to the writing from what you had. Give this other person's perception and experience of the writing.
19. Quickly make the picture or doodle the writing inspires in you; pretend that the writing was received only by your arm with its pencil: now let them move.
20. Make the sound the writing inspires. Or imitate the sound of the writing. Different sounds for different parts.

21. Jabber it, that is, make the sound you would hear if someone was giving a somewhat exaggerated reading of it in the next room—in a language you had never heard (also compress it into 30 seconds or so).
22. Let your whole body make the movements inspired by the writing or different parts of it. Perhaps combine sounds and movements.
23. Do a ten-minute writing exercise on the writing and give it to the writer.
24. Meditate on the writing and try to tell him about what happened. Don't think about his writing. Try, even, to make your mind empty, but at the same time fully open to the writing. It's as though you don't chew and don't taste—just swallow it whole and noiselessly.

These showing procedures are not much use until you get over being afraid of them and unless you give two or three at a time. Therefore, I make it a rule that for your first four classes you make at least a couple of these oblique, metaphorical statements on each piece of writing. It may well feel strange and uncomfortable at first. Indeed, the reason I make this an explicit demand is that I have discovered that people in some trial teacherless classes were too timid to use them. In other classes where people did use them, almost everyone came to enjoy them and find them useful.

Don't struggle with them. Try to let the words just come. Say the thing that comes to mind even if it doesn't make any sense. And for the first few weeks, don't expect satisfactory results.

There's an easy way to think of the relation between telling and showing. Telling is like looking inside yourself to see what you can report. Showing is like installing a window in the top of your head and then taking a bow so the writer can see for himself. There's no need to try to remember what was happening as you read. Just bow. Showing conveys more information but in a more mixed and ambiguous form.

FURTHER ADVICE TO READERS

Make sure you've had a good chance to read the writing

Otherwise don't even start giving any reactions. If you read it silently in class, make sure you've had enough time to read it twice thoughtfully with a bit of time after each reading to let the words sink in and your impressions settle. *Don't let yourself be hurried.* If the writer reads it out loud, make sure he reads it twice and gives at least a whole minute of silence after each reading. And stop him whenever he reads too quickly or softly. A nervous writer may instinctively try to read it so no one can hear. Don't let him.

One reader at a time or all at once?

There is a lot to be said for each reader giving full movies of his mind—pointing, summarizing, telling, and showing—before any other reader starts in. This gives the writer not just a big mixed pile of reactions but rather a sense of each reader's experience as a whole. But on the other hand, sometimes it is easier for readers, especially in the first few weeks, if they can throw out reactions helter-skelter all together. Or you might do all the pointings, then all the summarizings, and so forth. There is no right way. Keep trying different ways to find what works best for your class.

As long as you are careful to tell your original reaction, it is also good to tell later reactions that may be different. Someone else's report may remind you of a perception you were having too but didn't realize it. Report it briefly even if it's the same as his. The writer needs to know whether a reaction is common or rare. Also someone may convey a perception or experience *different* from yours, but once you hear it you start to share it very strongly. It may blot out or supersede yours. This is also important to tell.

Never quarrel with someone else's reaction

If someone reports something that seems crazy, listen to him openly. Try to have his experience. Maybe what you see is truly there and he's blind. But maybe what he sees is there too. Even if it contradicts what you see. It is common for words to carry contradictory meanings and effects. What he sees may not be the main thing in the words, but because of his particular mood, temperament, or experience, it drowns out for him what you are seeing. Your position may blind you to what he sees. Your only chance of trying to sharpen your eyesight is to take seriously his seeming craziness and try to see what he sees. This may similarly encourage *him* to try to share what you see and thereby help make him a better reader too.

Give specific reactions to specific parts

Not just general reactions to the whole thing. You may have to make a special effort to do this. If you have trouble, try to think back and simply notice which particular passages you remember most. Point them out. Try to tell why you remember them, why they stick out, how you perceive and experience them. Do showing exercises on them. When you tell what happened—for example, "first this happened, then ~~that~~ happened"—try to point to specific places in the writing.

No kind of reaction is wrong

Insufficient, perhaps, but not wrong. There are certain kinds of reaction that don't *in themselves* help the writer much. But they are helpful if seen as part of the larger picture—part of the whole story of what it was like to be you and read his words carefully. So never struggle to *omit* any kind of response; struggle to include more. If it happened, tell it. Here are some kinds of reactions that some class members thought they were supposed to leave out:

1. Some classes got the impression from earlier drafts of this material that it was their business to talk about "how a person wrote something" but not "what he wrote." Not at all. The job is to find out what his words do to real people: *what* he is saying all mixed in with how he is saying it. If you want to quarrel with something the writer says, tell him (but don't go on to *have* the quarrel with him). There's no need to unscramble "style" and "content." Just tell what happened.
2. Odd reactions. Don't try to filter out the nutty parts and give only the "sensible" reactions. In fact it helps if you slightly exaggerate the craziness. It helps the writer break his habit of listening to feedback as though he were listening to his teacher. It makes him automatically realize he's not listening to even-handed judgments, conclusions, and advice—just one unique person's perceptions and experience. And it automatically helps you realize you are not trying to be God or a more-competent-than-everyone-else critic—just one person giving a slant that probably no one else could give. Your odd reactions will also help other readers just be themselves.
3. Advice. It's not valuable *as advice*, but it's valuable as part of the picture of how you experienced his words. Don't look for advice or try to think it up, but if the interaction between you and his words produces the desire to give advice, that's something the writer should know about. Sometimes a piece of writing makes everyone want to give advice; whereas another piece of writing, though it's much less competent, doesn't inspire any advice at all. These are facts the writer needs to know.

Let your advice lead you to the perception or experience behind it. I often find that a desire to advise some change in something I'm reading is my only clue that I'm experiencing those words in a certain way. If I ask myself *why* I want to make the change, I can lead myself back to an interesting and useful perception of the words.

4. Evaluation. Like advice, evaluation in itself has no value. Don't try to figure out an evaluation, but on the other hand don't waste any energy trying to stop yourself. Give it and make it lead you to the perception and experience behind it. For example a teacher after three days of paper-grading sometimes reaches the point where his only response to a paper is to know what grade he wants to give it. This doesn't mean (necessarily) that there aren't rich perceptions tucked away behind

that B minus. If such a teacher in such a state found himself in the teacherless writing class, he ought to start with the B minus and try to follow that string to find all the latent reactions behind it. What he should not do is to hide behind his evaluation and not tell his real experience.

Some people can't read without making judgments, other people seldom make any. The writer should get the feel of both kinds of reader. Even more interestingly, some pieces of writing somehow cry out for judgments—everyone's reaction is loud with them; whereas other pieces get themselves reacted to at great length with no evaluative talk at all.

One exception. I think it's worth banning negative judgments for the first three or four classes. When people get used to the class they can take the strongest kind of negative judgment in stride and learn from it without sweating it. But at the beginning people can be needlessly shaken. It's easy for four weeks simply to skip talking about what you didn't like.

5. Theories are less valuable than facts. But it's hard to keep the two apart. When you tell the writer what happened when you read his words, you are telling him a fact. If you tell him why it happened—why you were bored here or confused there—you are telling him a theory about how language works or how you work. Your facts are much more trustworthy. It's *not* true that tons of adjectives always make writing boring; it's *not* true that the passive voice is always weak; it's *not* true that abstractions are always vague; it's *not* true that examples always make things clearer. *In writing, anything can do anything.*

If *you* were bored by some adjectives, that's important; if *you* felt some particular passage as weak or vague, that's important; if *you* felt some example as helpful, that's important. Tell these things as happenings not theories. Your judgment about piles of adjectives in general, passive voice in general, abstractions in general, examples in general is not worth much. No one's is.

The trouble is that it is hard to keep theories apart from facts. Not only do some of your best facts only come when you uncork your dubious theories; *all* your facts are probably slightly polluted by your theories. If you think flowery writing is weak in general, you probably fool yourself into experiencing all flowery writing as weaker than you otherwise would. So you might as well let your theories show—so the writer can see how to distrust you. Here again, the moral is the same; your theories are not valuable in themselves, but they help give the writer a better sense of what it was like to be you as you read his words.

6. Seemingly irrelevant reactions. For example: "As I read it, all I could think about was what I'm going to do tomorrow" (or what I did yesterday, or how hot it is in here, or the fact that I'm bored by that subject). You might say these are not perceptions of the words at all but rather failures to perceive them. Yet it is crucial to give this sort of reaction. The main thing is that these responses occurred when you read the words and your job is to tell what happened. Perhaps it's your "fault" that you didn't perceive them more, that you daydreamed. Perhaps you should try harder. But there's no way of figuring out whose fault it is. The main fact is that he put words on paper

that were supposed to get into your head and they did not. Different readers often daydream at the same points in the writing—a clue that something funny is probably going on there.

There may be many such irrelevant reactions at the beginning of this kind of class. People are not used to giving reactions; they are self-conscious about it; they feel awkward trying to listen to something read out loud. Nevertheless, if it happened, tell it. This will free you to notice other perceptions that were hidden behind the irrelevant one.

But supposedly irrelevant reactions are not just good for their side-effects. In the majority of cases they are good feedback in themselves. *The basic fact about most verbal utterance is that it doesn't get through.* The main story of words interacting with people is the story of ideas and experiences falling useless on the ground or only faintly heard through the fog: people pretending they heard something when really they only saw someone's mouth moving and guessed what he was saying from the circumstances and the expression on his face. I've discovered that many classes try to ignore this primal fact. Readers try to tell the writer what they perceive or experience, but they are fishing and fumbling and making things up. They don't dare tell the most valuable reaction there is: "I didn't really hear a thing you said." It's no fun to get that reaction if you are the writer. But in the end it's a relief to have out on the table what you suspected was true all along.

*Though no reactions are wrong,
you still have to try to read well*

The class is not an invitation to be merely lazy, sloppy, passive—a bad reader. In one of the teacherless classes I listened to on tape, one man said of a woman's essay, "I stopped reading after the first paragraph. I said the hell with it. It seemed to me like one of those essays in the *Sunday Times Magazine*. I figure if I want to read one of those things, I'll go read it in the *Sunday Times Magazine*." Now that's a good statement of *what happened* when he read the first paragraph. It's a useful thing to say (though not much fun to hear). He doesn't explain why he is so mad at the piece, but that's all right: it's not his job to psychoanalyze himself or to theorize about how words work. He localized his reaction to the first paragraph. That's good.

The trouble is he didn't read the rest. That's no fair. He should have kept reading. Perhaps his reactions would have changed. But even if they didn't, the perceptions of a hostile reader are useful.

When I took literature courses in college I remember that my main experience in reading was the feeling that I ought to have the right reactions. But I could never figure out what

they were. I could scarcely think about what I was reading because I was always worrying about having the wrong reactions. This was no way to be a good reader. I had eventually to learn to be, *in a sense*, more passive and irresponsible—to relax and not worry and let the words do what they want to do. But that doesn't mean I can just sit back and be passive and wait for the words to pick me up and carry me. To be a good reader I must supply great effort, attention, and energy.

Sometimes you may not want to

If you sometimes find you simply don't want to give your reactions, and you don't know why but you just start to clam up and have nothing to say, respect these feelings. They are appropriate. To give movies of your mind is an act of extreme generosity, self-abnegation. You are making yourself a meter, a guinea pig, a laboratory. You're letting the writer use you as a tool for his own ends. For example, perhaps you think his piece is much too long and complicated. If, along with this opinion, you give him movies of your mind and tell him all the perceptions and feelings that are involved (that is, where did it start? were you actually perplexed or annoyed or just disapproving? and so on) you are giving him the opportunity to decide that length and complexity are not really the problem at all. By seeing your reactions more fully, he may even decide that he doesn't need to heed them. *And he may be right.* Yet he can't make this decision well unless you give him all your reactions and not just your conclusions. If you had told him *only* your judgment, you would have been invulnerable and he would have had to like it or lump it.

So it's no joke, this kind of feedback. You wouldn't be human if there weren't some occasions when you didn't feel like it. You might as well admit it. Even act on those feelings and don't tell your reactions. Say you are tired of it at the moment, you pass. This is much better than fooling yourself and going on to give responses that are really a smokescreen.

You are always right and always wrong

You do your job as reader best in the light of this paradox.

You are always right in that no one is ever in a position to tell you what you perceive and experience. You must have a kind of faith or trust: not that your perception is always accurate, but that the greatest accuracy comes from using it more and listening to it better; and that the most valuable thing you can do for the writer is tell him what you really see and how you really react.

But you are always wrong in that you never see accurately enough, experience fully enough. There are always things in the words you cannot get. You must always put more energy

into trying to have other people's perceptions and experiences—trying to make yourself more agile, more flexible, more refined. Don't stubbornly stay locked into your own impressions just because they are yours.

In short, you must be simultaneously sure of yourself and humble. Easier said than done. But it's worth the practice this class provides since it's just what's needed in countless other situations.

ADVICE TO THE WRITER ON LISTENING

Be quiet and listen

For many weeks you may have to bite your tongue. If you talk you'll keep readers from telling you important reactions. Don't give long introductions. In fact, you may learn more if the readers are a little uncertain what the writing is, what it is meant for, who it is aimed at. If they cannot comfortably pigeon-hole it, they may take less for granted and notice more.

You have to keep from making apologies or explanations, for example, "I just wrote this last night, I didn't have much time and didn't revise it at all"; or "I'm really not satisfied with this"; or "I finally got this the way I want it, but I had to do four drafts." Above all, never say what you want your writing to do, how you want your readers to respond. You'll destroy any chance of getting trustworthy evidence of whether you did it. After you get your audience to tell you how they themselves perceived it, *then* you can ask them how they think some different audience might respond.

As they are telling you their experience, you have to guard against being tricked into responding; that is, "What do you wrote right in the first sentence that . . ." After the reactions are in, you can explain what you intended or what you think you've put in it. People will ask you questions: "Why did you do such and such?" "What did you mean here?" Don't answer till after you get their reactions. Get them to tell you what perception, feeling, or uncertainty made them ask. Such questions are often a clue to a reaction that the reader is not otherwise conscious of.

Don't try to understand what people tell you

It will be a mess. Contradictory, incomplete, seemingly nonsensical. Just listen and take it all in. If you try to learn by understanding, you will cut yourself out of half the learning. Your organism as a whole is capable of benefitting from much more than you can understand.

But do try to understand HOW they tell it to you

You can't ask for all the useful information on a silver platter. Notice *how* people tell you about their experience of your words. Sometimes they aren't in a position to say, "Your words made me annoyed at you," but if you only listen you'll see that your words *did* annoy them. Or put them in a good mood. Or made them feel condescending. Or made them feel like not really taking your words seriously. Take it in.

Don't reject what readers tell you

Listen to what they say *as though it were all true*. The way an owl eats a mouse. He takes it all in. He doesn't try to sort out the good parts from the bad. He trusts his organism to make use of what's good and get rid of what isn't. There are various ways in which a reader can be wrong in what he tells you; but still it pays you to accept it all:

1. If he gives you mere evaluations, advice about changes to make, or theories about writing, these are of no value to you in themselves. But don't try to stop him. It will just hang him up and prevent him from going on to tell you more about how he perceived and experienced your words. And besides, if you listen sensitively, you can feel *behind* his evaluation, advice, and theory what the rest of his reactions were like and what it was like to be him reading your words.
2. A reader *can* be mistaken about his own reactions. For example, someone can think he scorns a piece of writing or is bored by it or doesn't understand it when really he is threatened by it but won't let himself feel threatened. You can't eliminate this kind of error, only minimize it. The way to minimize it is to be as open and accepting a listener as possible in order to help the person hear and accept his real reactions.
3. If a reader fails to see or experience something that you are almost certain is in there, in this respect he is wrong. He is blind. He couldn't see something right there in front of his face. But don't make the mistake of concluding that he's therefore wrong about what he says he *does* see. Words usually contain many effects and even contrary meanings. The usefulness of the class is in bringing to light the whole range of possible effects and meanings in this set of words. There may be something very faintly in the words which this reader's situation makes him experience as dominant, but which none of the other readers can see. Of course it may *not* be there. But your only chance of benefiting is to take it in without trying to distinguish the wrong parts.

In fact you should practice a kind of mystical discipline: assume the perceptions or experiences that seem most crazy are really most useful. Those perceptions you need most—that is, those you are least capable of having yourself because of your particular point of view—will naturally seem most crazy to you.

If you are not learning much about how they really reacted it is probably your fault. Not theirs. If you are too afraid of hearing how they really experience your words, that fear will come across and they will find some way of not telling you. Also if you don't really listen or take them seriously, that will get across and they will withhold reactions. If you oversimplify and pigeon-hole everybody—saying to yourself, “this is the grammar nut, this is the sentimental one, this is the overly logical one”—this too is a way of not really listening to them: defending yourself against really having their experience. They will feel it and hold back.

But don't be tyrannized by what they say

You've got to listen openly and take it in, but not be paralyzed or made helpless by it. Otherwise you will *scare* them into holding back. There's a kind of tacit agreement in any good feedback situation: they agree to transmit to you everything that happened *only if* they can see you won't be bamboozled by it.

Suppose they all agree that something you wrote is profoundly lousy. Be clear what that means. It means it didn't work for them. They couldn't get to it or it couldn't get to them. It *doesn't* necessarily mean it's lousy. It might be good. Some of the greatest pieces of writing are hated by most people. Don't look to your readers to find out whether your words are any good. Look to them to find out about what your words make happen in real consciousnesses. The better you get at feeling how your words affect consciousnesses, the better you will be at deciding *for yourself* whether your words are any good.

Suppose some readers think your writing is too sentimental (or too unclear, too intellectual, too ordinary, too whatever). What does this mean? It probably means they were bothered by the sentimentality. But you can bet they sometimes love things that are twice as sentimental (or unclear, etc.) The complaint might disappear entirely if you made some *other* change—perhaps something quite small that has nothing to do with sentimentality. That is why it is no use trying to figure it all out. Just take it all in. Assume that when you write something else—or rewrite this piece—your *own* choices about how to write it will organically benefit from hearing what they are now saying.

Remember who has what job. It's their job to give you their experience. It's your job to decide what to do next. If you start putting decision-making power into their hands, you push yourself out of the picture.

It's not their job to decide what's in your head or even on the page—merely what got into their heads. It's not their job to be fair. It's not their job to cushion you from harsh or incorrect perceptions. If they try to do that, they cannot do their main job of giving you their experience. It's not their job to play teacher or God and try to tell you what the words *might* do if this or that were different. If they get into the business of trying to tell you what other words *might* do, they'll lose their capacity to tell you what these words *did* do. (This is how teachers get into trouble.)

Ask for what you want, but don't play teacher with them

If there's some particular kind of feedback you find helpful, perhaps certain kinds of oblique, metaphorical statements from the "showing" list, ask them. Or ask them, if you wish, for their experience of some particular passage or aspect of your writing. Ask in such a way that they can decline.

But you will defeat yourself if you try to play teacher: asking them leading questions, helping them along, "conducting" them. If someone hasn't managed to give you movies of his mind, tell him. But don't try to tell him how to fix the situation. That's his job. He's the one who can find the best solution even though it might take a number of weeks.

You are always right and always wrong

You, as writer, as well as reader, benefit most if you listen in the spirit of this paradox.

You are always right in that your decision about the writing is always final. They give you their experience, you decide what to do about it. You are in charge. You are the only one making decisions.

But you are always wrong in that you can never quarrel with their experience—never quarrel even with their report of their experience. And you must assume that you are never good enough at sharing their perception—shedding your blinders, getting into their shoes.

Like the reader, you must be simultaneously sure of yourself and humble.

THE CLASS PROCESS

I've been developing this kind of class over a long period; trying things out in my own classes; and listening to tapes of experimental teacherless classes which used earlier versions of

this material. Some classes went well, some adequately, and some pooped out.

Take what follows not as a satisfactory or sufficient map of the path ahead but rather as my attempt to tell you everything I know. You will still feel lost some of the time. It is how I often continue to feel when I participate in this kind of class.

Supplying the ingredients

If you do the following things, you will prevent what I see as the most frequent problems:

- Get a commitment from at least seven people for a ten-week stretch

- Make sure everyone writes something every week

- Make sure everything read out loud is read twice and given a minute's silence after each reading

- Give pointing and summarizing responses to every piece of writing

- Make sure everyone, for his first four classes, uses two showing exercises for transmitting his reactions

- Do three ten-minute writing exercises each week

- Use the last five minutes of each class for reactions to the class itself

Motivation

The main thing this class demands is that you really want to work on your writing. In a regular class you can play this kind of game with the teacher: "Please, teacher, I want to make my writing better. But I don't want to work. Please make me *want* to work. Or if you can't do that, at least *make* me work and let me resent you for it." People who are playing games with themselves may come to exploratory meetings but they won't commit themselves for ten weeks if you make the commitment clear. Soon you have a group of people who really mean business. It's a pleasure.

Down to business

Business is a useful concept here. This class reminds some people of an encounter group because it makes such central use of the reactions of the members. But an encounter group has no business or agenda: whatever comes up is business; there is no such thing as wasting time. That's not true in the teacherless writing class. Here there is definite business. Each

piece of writing must get reactions. The job to be done gives a kind of structure and solidity.

Patience

Though you have to want results and mean business, you can't be in a hurry. Improving your writing is necessarily gradual and erratic. The teacherless class isn't necessarily slower than a regular class but it usually *seems* slower. A teacher can give you something to do and someone to trust while waiting for the slow underground learning to take place. For example, he might tell you to stop using so many adjectives and long sentences, to start using more concrete details, and to give more unity to your paragraphs. Here's something to think about, something to try to do. In a sense it is good advice. You may even make progress toward these goals. By the fifth week you might be able to say to yourself, "Yes, I guess my writing isn't perfect yet, but at least I've gotten rid of some of the adjectives and long sentences, put in some concrete details and paragraph unity." This makes *everybody* feel much better. The trouble is your writing may actually be no better. In a sense worse. True, it's closer to someone's *model* of good writing, but very likely it is no better at actually putting things inside real readers. Besides, these "improvements" probably stop when the course is over.³ The real process by which you generate words is probably unchanged. Writing is probably harder, more painful and more confusing because you're now trying to do certain new things yet your word-production process is unchanged. It's no accident that many people stop writing when they start being taught how to write better.

It takes a long time for the organism to learn new ways of generating words—better ways to make words actually get through to other people. You must be ready for long dry spells, setbacks, and spurts forward when you least expect them. (See the next chapter for a fuller treatment of the learning process.) But remember what you often get from a teacher. He spurs and encourages you: "Don't give up; I know you are discouraged, but keep it up, things are going fine." He is someone to trust. And in some learning situations he can force you to keep going. Learn here to get this support and encouragement—coercion if needs be—from yourself and from the others. It's harder, but when you do it, there is great excitement because you have tapped a new energy source that is extremely powerful and effective.

And while you are working at it, learn to have fun. Enjoy

3. This is one of the findings in *Themes, Theories, and Therapy*, the Report of the Dartmouth Study of Student Writing, Albert Kitzhaber, McGraw Hill, 1969.

getting to know the others well. Trying to see through their eyes is a good way. Enjoy, almost as a game, the feedback process. Think of the class as a group of amateur musicians who get together once a week to play for each other's enjoyment.

A different style of interaction

This class asks you to function with others in a way you are probably not used to. Unless you can change a few crucial gears, the class will fold. I've seen it happen in a number of experimental teacherless classes I've monitored. I can specify better now what those gears are that you need to change.

In a sense it is simply a matter of not arguing. You can argue someone out of an incorrect intellectual position (sometimes). But you can't argue someone out of an incorrect perception or experience. He only discards one when he already has another to replace it with. And the new one must be one *he* is already having and believing, not one being rammed down his throat by someone else. In short, if you want to improve someone's perception or experience, you can't do it by arguing. The best you can do is to persuade him to share yours. The only way to do this, almost invariably, is to go over and share his.

But there's something more central to focus on than arguing. It is the cause of arguing: the impulse to *settle* things, *decide* things. When we are in any class or meeting we tend to feel that the goal is to achieve agreement. We habitually feel frustrated if we have a discussion with great difference of opinion but no final agreement.

The teacherless class asks you to break out of this habit. It brings out the *maximum* differences but it asks you not to fight things out or try to settle on the truth. Only by inhibiting the compulsive urge to settle things can you bring out the maximum differences. The striking thing about most classes, meetings, and discussions—especially in comparison to a functioning teacherless class—is that there is usually such a *poverty* of difference, a poverty of disagreement. Who wants to ruffle things up when it is all for the purpose of having things smoothed down again in exactly fifty minutes? Who wants to play thesis or antithesis to someone's planned synthesis? And even when there is a heated fight, it is usually a fight between two polarized, narrow possibilities. A whole host of interesting points of view have never been raised because there is such an atmosphere of needing to settle things. It's only by tolerating *a lot* of ambiguity for a long time, by living with *a lot* of contradiction, and inhibiting the need to

settle things too soon that you can get your hands on a decent array of data.

So keep two danger signals in mind: the two directions a class is apt to slide in when too many people can't handle their urge always to settle things.

1. *People persist in arguing.* They get mad and waste a lot of time trying to decide what is true. Or else they force themselves to stop overt arguments, but you can feel them still doing it underground. In their heads they're saying, "How can that idiot be so wrong, so blind? What's the matter with him? How come he doesn't admit he's wrong and agree with what I said? He's so *stupid!*" Such underground fuming is exhausting and wastes all available energy and the class breaks down.
2. *Or else people don't argue.* But stopping argument feels to them like a huge giving-in, capitulation. The wind has been taken out of their sails. It feels to them like a merely random, utterly relaxed, gutless activity: "Well, if we're not going to argue things out, if anyone can get away with saying anything he wants, if no one is going to stop people from shooting off their mouths with utter nonsense, then I'll just say what I want, the rest can say what they want. Who the hell cares." Because normal paths for energy are closed off, they withdraw all energy. The class is merely slack, relaxed, boring, unfocussed. It dies.

So the main thing I have finally been able to center on is the peculiar quality of energy and attention this class asks for. It's a great effort. But instead of being directed towards arguing and settling—toward closure—energy must be expended in the opposite direction of keeping oneself open, listening, trying to have other people's experiences—in a sense trying to *agree* with everyone at once. What it feels like, when it goes well, is a sense of attention, of tautness, of great energy invested into one's perceiving and experiencing muscles—all the while keeping the mind from making its instinctive clench.

Bravery

What I hear loudest in the tape of a good teacherless class is bravery. Willingness to risk. The teacherless class makes people nervous. They are on their own. There is no one there who has been there before to tell them when they are doing things right, to reassure them. It's almost as though I can hear someone saying to himself, "Well, it's no use waiting for someone else to do it for us. There's no one special to lead the way. I guess someone has to start. I'll give it a try." And he takes the risk of really sharing his perception and experience.

It is a kind of ice-breaking operation that makes it possible for the others to follow. They discover that nothing terrible happens to the first person. When a class can't get itself going, what I feel is everyone hanging back, waiting for someone else.

This ice-breaking is not once-and-for-all. People don't plunge immediately into utter honesty. A successful class seems characterized by a series of small breakthroughs over a long time. By many increments, they work up to sharing fuller and fuller reactions to the words.

If you want to insure that a class gets going, try to find brave people to be in it: people who are willing to say what they see and feel, and not worry so much about how others will view it. Young children are useful members of a class.

Responsibility

In most regular classes you feel a responsibility toward the teacher, not toward the other members of the class. When you are wavering between going or not going, think how often the inner debate is in terms of "what will the teacher say or think if I don't come." All too often it is *only* the thought of the teacher that gets us to come to class.

With this background, it is hard to learn responsibility to peers. This is why I emphasize the commitment for ten weeks. It takes that long for most people to transfer their responsibility from a teacher to themselves and their peers—to feel and communicate that their learning depends on each other.

When a class works, you can feel people sticking up for themselves; making genuine demands and expectations of others that their time not be wasted, that they learn something. When a class fails, you can feel people failing to take responsibility for themselves. Saying, in effect, "What can I do; I'm helpless; my only choice is to quit."

Although you cannot entirely change the world or transform people at a stroke, this class makes it perfectly obvious that you *can* change instantaneously the way eight or ten people act toward you for a couple of hours a week. If a person has a tendency to talk too much or be bossy, you cannot reverse his personality. But in this class you can stop him from cheating you with his talking and bossiness for a couple of hours a week. You have only to want it and stick up for yourself by insisting on it politely but firmly. The threatening thing about this class is that it faces people with the fact that they are not so helpless as they prefer to think. The idea that classes must always have teachers reinforces helplessness.

How to destroy the class secretly

Here's the most common way this sort of class breaks down. Everyone is a bit nervous and even frightened because it's such a strange and unsettling enterprise. It's almost inevitable. In this situation, what's most soothing is to find someone who likes to talk: someone who likes to ramble on with personal anecdotes, someone who likes to make speeches, or someone who is nervous when there's a silence and just drones on to fill it up. From here it's easy. You just let him go. Encourage him, but not openly. Just let opportunities occur. And most of all, refrain from stopping him from boring you. Pretend you are extremely polite.

Everyone starts saying to himself, "Boy, what a drag this class is! That person just talks and talks. He's ruining it. I can't stand it much longer." This feeling gets in the air and then a couple of people sort of drop out. That is, they don't quite drop out so that you could ask them about it; it's just that important things somehow start coming up to conflict with class meetings. Then everyone can start saying, "Boy this class is discouraging! It feels like it's falling apart. Everyone is down. I'm really discouraged. By the way, I just remembered, I've got an important meeting I've got to go to when the class next meets."

Finally the class breaks up. Maybe you've already dropped out or maybe you're there at the end supposedly feeling bad and supposedly wondering why other people can't stick with something. And you can blame it all conveniently on the poor sucker you got to cooperate with you by being a bore when you invited him to. You couldn't stand letting others enjoy what was too scary for you so you helped destroy it—but secretly. Everyone blames him. He even blames himself. No one blames you.

The moral of the process is that you must take responsibility for what happens in class: if you don't really try to stop it, you must want it to happen.

Diversity

A functioning class exploits the differences *between* individuals to pry open more diversity *within* individuals. When everyone tries to have everyone else's perception and experience, richness is continually plowed back into the group. There is a constantly growing potential for diversity of experience.

But it is not foolproof. I'm sad to say I've seen one teacherless class drift in the opposite direction: toward a sense of conformity, group ideology. Watch out for any drift toward unspoken ideas that certain kinds of feeling or writing are

more acceptable than others: for example, that simplicity is good and complexity is bad; that strong feelings are good and lack of strong feelings is bad; or that seriousness is good, frivolity is bad. It's simply wrong. It's a result of insecurity or fear. The whole usefulness of a group is to reinforce the only trustworthy theory about writing: anything is possible. It's what e. e. cummings meant by the old vaudeville line, "Would you hit a lady with a baby?" "If I had to, I'd hit her with a baseball bat!" In writing, anything can work and anything is right if you make it work.

From : Peter Elbow, *Writing Without Teachers*, New York : Oxford University Press.
1973 : 76 - 116

Sample of post-test essays
Student 1 (Group 1)

(Good)

I have always had a dream to own a house in the English country side. I have never been to one but watching movies shot in those places has encouraged ~~me~~ this urge in me to visit it in the future.

For me to own a house in the country side would just be wonderful. The beautiful surrounding with trees growing all over the place adds the touch greenery to it. I can imagine having a house built near a stream where gurgling sound of the current can be heard. I would love the feeling of sitting by the stream and having a picnic with people that I care for.

Walking up to the sound of birds singing by the window would be a change from the sound of vehicles causing noise pollution. Opening the window to smell fresh mountain air would be a delight. The smell of fresh flowers floating in the air would just be the right thing to wake up from a

"drowsy state early in the morning. The house must be surrounded with beautiful roses, daffodils and other colorful flowers.

A vegetable garden filled with fresh vegetables and fruits would be an added pleasure. Walking around the garden and picking vegetables to prepare meals would be a comfort knowing that no chemicals have been used to spray them. The house has to have a beautiful kitchen filled with all necessary utensils for cooking and also a fireplace for cold days. My favorite place would be the kitchen because I simply love to cook.

When evening comes, I would love to take a stroll in the country side, feeling the cool evening breeze against me and the trees blooming with flowers and also little squirrels running up the trees. Another pleasure would be watching the sunset against the mountains creating a spectacular scenery that is one of God's greatest creations. The feeling

that a day had passed by but another will
 begin the next day will give me a sense
 of anticipation as well as I'll be at a place I love.

well, to me having a house is the worry sick
 would give me a sense of fulfillment and also
 create a peaceful state of mind for me. Being
 away from the hazards caused by air, water and
 noise pollution, will be of great relief. It would
 be lovely to create my own small world at
 my dream house with people I love away
 from hatred and lust I know that it is
 your perfect dream for me but I will never
 give up hope.

I am sitting in the examination hall. When I look through from the place I sit. I saw many empty seat. Although there were empty seat I can imagine that they were somebody sitting there. As the students look very nervous and tension. It seems like today is the end of the world.

It is so quiet I can only hear the sound of paper. The sound from the instructor's footsteps make my heart pump and pump quickly. Some students stared at me I avoid it with my guilty eyesight winged. It is for our fault we ~~can't~~ didn't study prepared yourself with the examination. Some students seems very confident to write down their answer confidently. Some students seem very busy to write or search something from their mind. I don't want to see their reaction anymore. If I continue look at them. My mind very disappeared.

I feel scared and nervous. My face becomes pale. My head became cold. How am I to go through this?

Actually I should be one of them who is busy searching something to put inside my inner paper.

Suddenly I feel my body ^{spread} become warm ~~but something~~ The feeling of warm start from the bottom of my heart to my ~~left~~ whole body I feel hot and sweating. My face become more pale without any blood. My hand become colder and colder I take out a tissue paper to clean my sweating face but my hand seems can't check my order The paper ~~has~~ drop.

The examination hall become more quiet. I can hear the sound of writing from the student who sit next to me. I also can hear my own heart beat. The students who busy searching just now seems had write a lot but what about me? I haven't start yet.

I feel panic again. My head become very heavy just like a fifty kilogram stone put above my head. I'm overthinking. My white shirt become wet. I can't concentrate anymore. I can't see the writing from the question paper jumping out by one The

writing down and singing ' My mind become blank.
 All I know at the moment is the music & note
 'Do, re, me'' My hand is shivering I try to hold
 the top pen but I can't. My hand have lost my
 control. I close my eye ~~and~~ I can imagine
 many stars above my hand. I shout " I hate
 you, Mr. Examination."

(Low)

As a human, there must be a special place that you like. A special place that can give you some kind of effect especially happiness and feel quiet. As for me, I like my previous room at my house. It is because it is a quiet room, it can teach me to be a responsible person and because it is situated at the kitchen I can cook my favourite food anytime that I like.

First of all why I like to be in my previous room at my house is because it is a very quiet place at night. It is situated at the kitchen. That is why it is a very quiet place at night. The reason why I love a quiet place because I must study hard for my Sijil Tinggi Persekolahan Malaysia (STPM) examination. I always stay up until 3 to 4 o'clock in the morning. It is because I cannot study in the day, it is very hot and boring. I always do my homework and assignment in the day. One thing, the style of my study is talking to myself after ^{finished} reading one topic. I will look at a mirror and try to elaborate to myself what I have read. I have a privacy too in my room.

I can do what I want to do without worrying that someone will looked and asked what am I doing. I live to create a song and writing a short story, so I didn't have to worry that my brother or sister hear and read what I have create. I kept ^{it} as my secret.

Secondly, I can build a responsible emotion in my life. I must arranged my room myself and I must cleaned it myself. No matter how busy I am, I must do it because my mother would not do it for me, and in addition I don't allowed anyone to enter my room without permission. It is a very secret place for me. I became more creative when I have my own room. I cleaned it once or twice a week and decorated my room as I want. I ^{have} ~~put~~ my favourite-singer and news presenter posters on the wall. They are my inspiration, I admire their achievement. They are my example to the way to achieve what I have do in my life.

Finally, I like to work at night might be a funny idea but it is real. Sometimes I take a nap at 10 o'clock in the night. When I woke up I feel hungry. Seldom I make 'nasi goreng' or 'goreng pisang', my

favourite food. Sometimes I do it at the mid-night. I do it because I always missed dinner and at mid-night I feel hungry. And sometimes I do it because I feel very sleepy after studying for one or two hours.

I like to my life to be that way. It is very nice to have my ~~room~~ room back but I think I would not get it again. It is because after I entered Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, my brother take the room to be his ^{be} office. For me the memory of that room will always on my mind because that room have thousands memories when I am in form six until I get 5 principals in my 8PM examination.