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META-INSTRUCTION, EXTRA-LINGUISTIC AWARENESS, AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF WRITING SKILL IN COLLEGE-LEVEL BASIC WRITERS

The Ohio State University

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Meta-Instruction, Extra-Linguistic Awareness, and the Development of Writing Skill in College-Level Basic Writers

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate School of The Ohio State University

By

Robert Michael Coughlin, A.B., M.Ed.

The Ohio State University
1982

Reading Committee:
Donald Bateman
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Donald K. Bateman
Adviser
Department of Humanities Education
This work is dedicated to
Margaret Ann Fitzpatrick Coughlin &
Robert Paul Coughlin,
my mother and father.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank Nancy Mack and her Writing Workshop students for their remarkable cooperation in this study of the pedagogy and learning of Basic Writing. I would also like to express my appreciation to the administrators, instructors, and secretary in the Writing Workshop—among them Sara Garnes, Ed Lotto, Chris Hayes, and Debbie Kidikas. I am particularly grateful for the help of my Ohio State University professors and committee members, especially Don Bateman, Victor Rentel, Johanna DeStefano, and Arnold Zwicky. I would also like to thank my closest audience and significant source of intellectual and emotional support—my fellow graduate students in Humanities Education and Reading Education. Finally, I would like to thank Linda Rose Sanders, my wife, friend, and co-conspirator. We are somehow managing to bring from conception to birth—a dissertation and a new baby, almost at the same time.
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PUBLICATIONS


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Linguistics. Professor Arnold Zwicky.

Qualitative Research Methodology. Professors Gary de Voss, Donald Sanders, Donald Bateman, Gail McCutcheon.
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INTRODUCTION

Research issues, like human beings, have histories and contexts. Academic life, with all its faults, has a wonderful tradition of honoring and preserving the genesis of ideas. So before getting into the technicalities of my research, I would like to reflect on the history and context of my research--the principal people, ideas, and experiences that have shaped this project.

At the root of my research and study is an insatiable curiosity about human language. This curiosity was nourished first at St. Joseph High School in Cleveland, Ohio, particularly in my study of Latin and Russian. This interest was developed further as an undergraduate at the University of Notre Dame, where I studied German and French, and in Innsbruck and Salzburg, Austria, where I studied German. For me personally, the study of foreign languages has been valuable in many ways--ways not always reckoned in the calculus of curriculum planners. Another important source of my interest in language was my study (and writing) of poetry at St. Mary's College under the direction of Sr.
Franzita Kane and my work on short story writing at Notre Dame under the direction of Richard Sullivan. These seem to be the principal sources of my own metalinguistic awareness.

In graduate school, my interest in language was linked up with social and political concerns—and I became quite interested in the development of literacy and the relationship between literacy, freedom, and democracy. At the University of Cincinnati, people like Bob Moore and Linda Amspaugh tuned me in to authors like Paulo Freire, Jonathon Kozol, and Elliot Wiggington. At the University of Cincinnati I also came into contact for the first time with the new science of psycholinguistics and with the writings of researchers like Frank Smith, the Goodmans, the Chomskys, and others.

The psycholinguistic, sociolinguistic, and pedagogical issues first encountered at the University of Cincinnati were explored much more deeply and rigorously in my Ph.D. program at Ohio State University—particularly because of my contact with the Humanities Education Department, the Reading Program, and the Linguistics Department. The Humanities Education Department at Ohio State takes a dangerous and marvelous approach towards the education of its graduate students. Instead of prescribing a common course of study for everyone, Professors Rentel and Bateman work with each
graduate student to develop his or her own unique program—one suited to the student's interests, needs, and abilities. The student is encouraged to go outside the department or the college if necessary to get what is needed. The Humanities Education students range far and wide, taking courses in English, Linguistics, Foreign Languages, Anthropology, Psychology, Neurophysiology, Computer Science, etc. This is where a mega-university like Ohio State is at its best. And it is a credit to the Humanities Education professors that they take the risk and encourage their students to cross academic boundaries and exploit the great resources of this big university.

Finally, the greatest influences on my work here at Ohio State University have been my fellow graduate students. My work here began with considerable guidance from Christine Pappas, who is now a professor at the University of Oregon. My ideas really flourished in the context of an informal study group consisting of Jim Zebroski, Chip Edelsberg, Dane Stitts, Nancy Mack, Don Bateman, and others. We examined with great vigor issues of research methodology, the composing process, and Soviet literature and perspectives on psycholinguistics. Several important dissertations are coming out of this study group. Jim Zebroski's dissertation, which should be completed this summer, is probably the
first comprehensive synthesis of the important Soviet psycholinguistic research.

This has been part of the context and history of my dissertation research. My contribution has been to use this context to make a framework for looking closely at how instructors teach composing and how students learn to compose.

* * *

There are two terms in the title of this dissertation that may be unfamiliar to my readers: "meta-instruction" and "extra-linguistic awareness." The term "meta-instruction" sounds complicated and exotic, but isn't. The term implies a kind of instruction, familiar in our schools, in which a phenomenon is objectified and then talked about. In terms of teaching college-level writing, this would mean that besides practicing writing, the teacher and students treat composing as an object—talking about the functions, features, and processes involved. I have used the unfamiliar term "meta-instruction" to connect this particular piece of research to the growing research literature on meta-cognition and meta-awareness.

The other unfamiliar term in my title is "extra-linguistic awareness." This term was coined by Johanna DeStefano in a paper written for the 1979 Victoria Conference on Linguistic Awareness and Learning to Read.
DeStefano's term was coined to provide for a widening of the concept of "metalinguistic awareness." This broadened concept of language awareness takes in dimensions not normally considered part of metalinguistic awareness, and includes a conscious awareness of world knowledge and pragmatic issues related to language communication (a further discussion of these issues can be found in Chapter II of this dissertation).

In the text of my dissertation, I refer to this kind of "extra-linguistic awareness" as "metalinguistic awareness." There are arguments for and against my choice of terms. On the positive side, I am using a term that plays into a growing research literature. On the negative side, I am stretching the definition of this term beyond the arena that most scholars have operated in. Whatever the choice of terms, it is clear that my research deals with an exploration of a kind of meta-awareness on the parts of the students, and connects this awareness directly to the meta-instruction of the teacher.

* * *

This dissertation seems to be composed of two or three very different modes of writing. One mode, which includes Chapters I, II, and the first part of Chapter III, is a rather exotic kind of writing that I call the "Dissertation-Review-of-Literature Register" of the English Language. This kind of writing has its purpose
and place, though it is generally lacking in readability. My goal in these chapters was to bring a theoretical context to my research project. In Chapter III, I try to justify doing my research in a paradigm still new for educational research—ethnography. Catherine Callaghan, an O.S.U. Professor of Anthropological Linguistics who was the graduate representative at my dissertation defense, chided me for the unreadability of these chapters, and told me that the ethnography I've done needs no apology—it is legitimate, good research. Unfortunately, in the field of education we are still fighting for the legitimacy of such kinds of qualitative research. And my literature review, however lacking in readability, may serve to guide some graduate students struggling to communicate the legitimacy of these approaches. It might be possible for readers familiar with the literature on composing and the literature on qualitative research to skim over these first three chapters and get right into the ethnographic portraits found in Chapter IV.

Catherine Callaghan, with her own expertise in anthropology and ethnography, also disagreed with my use of the term "participant observation" to characterize my research. She said it would be more correct to call my work "deep ethnography featuring passive observation." To a certain extent she is correct. I was much
more an observer of the students and the teacher than a student or teacher myself. However, I did play somewhat of a participant role in the curriculum development of this particular course. Many of my comments and suggestions were used by the instructor, Nancy Mack, to alter and improve the course of instruction. The dimensions of this interaction are discussed in some depth in Chapter IV of this dissertation.
CHAPTER I

THE RESEARCH ISSUE


In recent years competence in basic literacy skills has been an important political, pedagogical, and theoretical issue in American society. The issue is alive at all levels of education, from the primary grades through graduate school. To get a sense of the magnitude of this issue at Ohio State University, consider these facts: 1,043 Freshman students participated Autumn Quarter, 1981 in the Basic Writing Program of the OSU "Writing Workshop" (for the entire academic year, about 25% of all Freshmen were in this program). During this same period, 286 students used the services of the OSU "Writing Skills Lab" (Garnes, 1982). Besides these Basic Writing programs, there are hundreds of students at OSU involved in "reading and study skills" classes and English as a Second Language classes. These classes and tutorial services necessitate a very low student-teacher ratio, and are thus quite expensive. These programs at OSU parallel other Basic English programs at colleges all across the country and involve a tremendous number of administrators, professors, instructors, tutors and teaching assistants,
and a large investment of money, materials, and other resources. From the perspective of this massive investment, it is easy to understand the political and economic concerns involved with adult basic literacy education.

The pedagogical and theoretical issues involved in adult basic literacy education can also be tied to the question of the efficient uses of our available resources. Our education system has often taught first and worried about theory of teaching later. Some have thought (incorrectly) that teaching can be atheoretical, guided by a presumably shared common sense. We now know that common sense can mislead us and that every way of teaching reflects an implicit theory of how people learn (see D. Sanders, 1981, p. 8); we also know that there are social and psychological limits on human learning and cognitive functioning, and there are pedagogical methods that can inhibit or nurture learning (Smith, 1978). To put this into the only terms that some people understand: good pedagogical and psycholinguistic theory is also good political and social policy—it's cheaper and more efficient.

A final aspect of Basic Literacy programs that I would like to discuss concerns the social reasons for their existence. Many of these programs grew out of the social and political concerns of the 1960's and 1970's regarding equity of opportunity (see T. Sanders, 1980).
Literacy has been a concern of democracies for a long time, and this concern has blossomed out again in the past twenty years. The interest has not been exclusively American, although some excellent work has been done by Americans (Wiggington's *Foxfire* books, for example). Other signs of this social concern can be seen in The British Bullock report (1975), the work of Paulo Freire, the work of the Cuban literacy workers (Kozol, 1978), etc.

Adult Basic Literacy Education is facing some trying times, with severe financial problems in education, with changing political leadership and shifting social priorities. Whatever the future, this research project will demonstrate the rich contribution adult basic literacy education has made to pedagogical and psycholinguistic theory—information beneficial to all aspects of our society (see Emig, 1971; Perl, 1979; Berkenkotter, 1981).

A Theoretical Context for this Research.

Janet Emig (1971) points out in the literature review of her seminal book that almost all research in composition up until 1971 had focused on the written *products* of composing rather than the *processes* of composing. Rhetorics had been based upon post-facto logical analyses of texts produced by professional writers, and composition manuals were based largely on rhetorics and a mechanistic view of the writing process. The few works that dealt
with the writing process were also based on the post-facto explanations of professional writers and the research and inferences of literary critics (e.g., Cowley, 1958; see Emig's literature review). Unfortunately, many professional writers maintain their fictive personas in their writings and talk about their writings. Ciardi calls these musings "lies," and Eliot aptly refers to them as "raids on the inarticulate" (Emig, 1971, p. 9 and 10). Until Emig's work, there were few systematic, disciplined, pedagogically-useful studies of the writing process. As a matter of fact, understanding of the composing process is still in its infancy, and the exploratory design of this research project acknowledges that fact.

Research in linguistics and psycholinguistics in recent years has shown clearly why the distinction between product and process is important. Some early psychological research on language and cognition assumed the psychological reality of linguistic models. Many of these models were based on logical analysis or on demands of computer models. Recent work has shown that the human mind doesn't always work that way—it often takes heuristic shortcuts and draws on expectations based on a broad-based world knowledge—areas where logical models and computer models have trouble (see, e.g., the work of Kimball, 1973 or Clark and Clark, 1977; see also Flower and Hayes' (1981) comments on the inappropriateness of
linear cognitive models for the writing process).

The end-product of this research was the discovery that psycholinguistics is a field separate from linguistics and psychology, and the study of how people acquire and use language diverges from the structural or logical analyses of the products of language use. To understand language we need to look at both product and process.

The composing process is a vast and complex area of research, and this research project can only focus on an aspect of that process. This particular investigation looks at the role of certain aspects of metalinguistic awareness in the learning and development of composition skill in college-level basic writers. The definition and description of this phenomenon will be explored in considerable depth in Chapter II of this dissertation. At this point, I want to sketch out a rough definition and trace the major theoretical interest in this topic. Simply put, metalinguistic awareness is..."the ability to make language forms opaque and to attend to them in and for themselves..." (Cazden, 1974). Metalinguistics is a branch of metacognitive studies (E. Clark, 1978, p. 33; Flavell, 1976). The Greek root "meta" suggests a study that is a step beside or behind the phenomenon in question. The word suggests a kind of philosophic transcending of a phenomenon, an abstraction and a self-conscious awareness. Meta-awareness is a very human process, at
the heart of our philosophy, history, art and science. Developing meta-awareness seems to be the goal of much of our schooling efforts and seems to be one of those unquestioned axioms in our implicit theory of how people learn.

It should come as no surprise that studies of meta-awareness have a long history in the Soviet Union. The Marxist concept of historical materialism is very much tied up with the goal of controlling history and destiny by becoming aware of the forces involved in shaping them (Sarup, 1978; Heilbroner, 1980). There is clearly an ideological dimension in Vygotsky's belief that conscious awareness becomes an important tool for the development of literacy and thinking skills. Vygotsky is quite clear about his belief that metalinguistic awareness is an important, and probably necessary condition for the development of skill in writing (1962, p. 98-101; 1978, Ch. 7).

The more recent interest in the role of metalinguistic awareness in literacy development can be traced quite directly from Vygotsky to present-day researchers like Bruner (in his Introduction to Thought and Language), Downing (who has worked with Elkonin, the Soviet reading expert), John-Steiner, and others. Many people feel that metalinguistic awareness plays a role in the development of skill in reading and writing. The recent research has shown that there is much to be discovered about that
relationship—it is more complex and more non-linear and interactive than had previously been imagined (T. Sanders, 1980).

The Specific Questions for this Research.

The principal question posed by my research is this: what role does metalinguistic awareness play in the development of writing skill in college-level basic writers?

From this principal question follow a number of subsidiary questions and problems. Among these are: a) what is "metalinguistic awareness" as defined in this research? b) how is metalinguistic awareness discovered or revealed? c) what are the principal metalinguistic goals of the teacher of this class? d) what is the metalinguistic awareness of the students being studied? e) how does the level of metalinguistic awareness relate to the texts produced by the students? f) is there growth in metalinguistic awareness over the course of the period of direct instruction, and is that growth reflected in the students' written texts?

The Approach to this Inquiry

This research explores an aspect of the composing process that is not well-understood. This research is therefore more descriptive and exploration oriented—an attempt to discover what Julienne Ford calls the
"figuration of facts (Ford, 1975), and what Suppes (1974) calls "deep-running theory" (see also D. Sanders, 1981). My interest is more in hypothesis-generation than hypothesis-testing. For these reasons, and for other reasons which relate to my philosophic bent and the mode of inquiry most appropriate to my way of knowing the world (Mooney, 1975), I have chosen a qualitative research design that employs ethnographic techniques and a case-study approach. The result, it is hoped, will be a richly contextualized study, written in the tradition of "thick description" (Geertz, 1973; Kantor, et al, 1981), with the potential of communicating with clear internal validity to teachers and other educational practitioners concerned with adult basic writing (D. Sanders, 1981).

A special feature of this particular study is that it involves a degree of collaboration. Nancy Mack, the Writing Workshop teacher of the basic writing class involved in this study, functioned very much like a co-researcher. She helped me with data-collection, consulted on design decisions, and helped with triangulation of the ethnographic observation data. This kind of collaborative study offers unique perspectives and insights in qualitative research projects, and also serves the pedagogical function which is the goal of "action research" and "developmental research" or "evolutionary experimentation" (see D. Sanders, 1981, for an excellent discussion).
For an excellent discussion of this relatively new research paradigm, see the Kyle and McCutcheon article. An extraordinarily successful example of a collaborative research project in the field of writing was the 1980 dissertation of Charles Edelsberg.

**Overview of Chapters Two Through Six**

Chapter II will review the literature on metalinguistic awareness and come up with the working definition of that phenomenon as employed in this research. Also to be reviewed is the literature on the composing process and literature relating to the problem of evaluating and analyzing the students' written products.

In Chapter III, the rationale and theory of my chosen research methodology will be discussed. Following that, the data gathering and interpreting methods will be explicitly set down and illustrated.

Chapter IV will contain many of the findings of the research. In this chapter, a case-study of the class (as a functioning whole), a case-study of Nancy Mack, the teacher, and case studies of five of the fifteen students will be presented. Within the students' case-studies there will be profiles of their metalinguistic awareness presented side-by-side with profiles of selected texts they produced. The metalinguistic awareness levels will be graphically and narratively related to these texts.
In Chapter V I will attempt to interpret the data, making whatever general statements are warranted. I will discuss patterns and trends as well as surprises arising out of my ethnographic observations. From this, I will attempt to link my research findings to a model of the learning-to-compose process. My observations will also generate certain suggestions for the pedagogy of writing. Finally, I will address the limits of this research and explore areas where further research might be fruitful.

The last chapter (VI) functions like an appendix, containing full transcripts of composing protocols, interviews, journal writings, and written texts produced by one particular student. The purpose of this chapter is to more fully contextualize the data and conform to the ethnographic concerns of "thick description."
CHAPTER II
REVIEW OF THE RELEVANT LITERATURE

In this chapter, the literature relevant to this research will be reviewed. The chapter will begin with a review of the literature on metalinguistic awareness and its possible connection to learning how to write. Then the literature on children's transition into literacy will be reviewed. Following this, some of the important literature on the composing processes of adults will be discussed. The literature involved with my methodological choices and procedures will be reviewed in Chapter III of this dissertation.

The Literature on Metalinguistic Awareness.

Some of the earliest modern concerns with the relationship between metalinguistic awareness and the development of literacy skills were expressed in the works of the Soviet psychologist, Lev Vygotsky. Vygotsky was particularly active in the 1920's and died in the early 1930's. His works appeared in English in 1962 and 1978 and since then have had considerable impact on Western psycholinguists. In *Thought and Language* (1962), Vygotsky differentiates between two stages of knowledge acquisition.
In the first stage, children develop concepts in a rather spontaneous and unconscious manner. Later, when children begin to learn to read and write, conscious attention must be focused on the language itself (see also Ryan, 1980, p. 39). I would like to quote extensively from Thought and Language to show how clear Vygotsky was on the need for metalinguistic awareness in the development of writing skill:

Our investigation has shown that the development of writing does not repeat the developmental history of speaking. Written speech is a separate linguistic function, differing from oral speech in both structure and mode of functioning. Even its minimal development requires a high level of abstraction... Our studies show that it is the abstract quality of written language that is the main stumbling block, not the underdevelopment of small muscles or any other mechanical obstacles... Writing also requires deliberate analytical action on the part of the child. In speaking, he is hardly conscious of the sounds he pronounces and quite unconscious of the mental operations he performs. In writing, he must take cognizance of the sound structure of each word, dissect it, and reproduce it in alphabetical symbols, which he must have studied and memorized before. In the same deliberate way, he must put words in a certain sequence to form a sentence. Written language demands conscious work because its relationship to inner speech is different from that of oral speech...(1962, pp. 98-9).

As part of the critical awareness needed to learn to write, Vygotsky also mentioned the child's need to be conscious of a motivation or purpose for writing: "Our studies show that he [a child] has little motivation to learn writing when we begin to teach it. He feels no need for it and has only a vague idea of its usefulness" (1962, p. 99).
Many of these hunches and insights on the importance of purpose and intentionality in the development of language arts skills, first expressed by Vygotsky in 1934, have been confirmed and clearly demonstrated in recent years. One need only examine the works of Olson on the differences between oral and written language, as well as recent works on early writing development done at Ohio State University (King and Rentel, 1981; Pappas, 1981; Pettegrew, 1981). The insight on the role of purpose and motivation in reading has been demonstrated over and over again. In 1979, Downing said: "Probably the most important single fact about the process of reading is that the purpose of the reading act is inextricably interwoven in its technique (1979, p. 12). Some of the most recent work on composing by Flower and Hayes (1981) also demonstrates the crucial impact of purpose and motivation. For Vygotsky the issue of conscious awareness and control of language had several intertwining dimensions: it was an ideological and political issue, connected with the Marxist concept of historical materialism, the desire to take control of human destiny by controlling the tools of our lives (language and writing are seen by Marxists as exceedingly powerful "tools"); it is a psychological issue, connected with observations and experiments on how children develop control over language; and finally, it is a pedagogical issue for Vygotsky (as it is for modern-day Soviet students
of Vygotsky involved with the pedagogy of language arts—people like Elkonin (1973) and Markova (1979)).

This concern of Vygotsky about metalinguistic awareness has been pursued in the past ten years by a number of Western psycholinguists concerned with literacy development and psychologists concerned with cognitive and skill development.

Before getting into the most recent work on this issue, we must consider the problem of defining and describing the phenomenon of metalinguistic awareness.

The term "metalinguistic awareness" was introduced by Cazden in the early 1970's and defined as "the ability to make language forms opaque and attend to them in and for themselves" (1972; 1974, p. 29). The term is related to the term "linguistic awareness," used earlier by Mattingly (1972, p. 139). A similar concept was developed by Klima (1972) and termed "accessibility." Accessibility, according to Klima, involves the ability to use and have access to the implicit grammar of one's language. It involves the ability to make judgements of grammaticality and well-formedness, but, in Klima (and in Mattingly's 1979 reformulation) does not involve the ability to consciously state a linguistic rule. George Miller has noted the similarities and differences between linguistic accessibility and linguistic awareness: "It should be pointed out, I think, that what he [Mattingly] called 'awareness'
and what Klima called 'accessibility' are related but not identical concepts. That is to say, I can conceive of some level of linguistic processing being accessible, in the sense that special transformations, like spelling or versification, could take advantage of it, yet it might not be describable at the level of conscious awareness" (1972, p. 378).

As can be seen in this discussion, the term "metalinguistic awareness" is more complicated and problematic than one might have suspected. The early discussion of the concept was carried out very much in the paradigm and in the vocabulary of Chomskian linguistics, particularly the distinction between competence and performance and the claims that language speakers have in their heads implicit internalized grammars (Kavanagh and Mattingly, 1972). Since the excellent article by Cazden in 1974, the paradigm and the vocabulary for this discussion have shifted considerably, and the term "metalinguistic awareness" is understood more from a psychological and child-development perspective.

Important contributions to the definition of the phenomenon of metalinguistic awareness were made at the University of Victoria Conference on Linguistic Awareness and Learning to Read (1979). It was at this conference that Mattingly revised his concept of "linguistic awareness" in the direction of the concept of "accessibility"
put forth by Klima in 1972. He was really taken to task for this by Carol Chomsky (1979) and Johanna DeStefano (1979). Chomsky argued that genuine **consciousness** and not just accessibility, is relevant to linguistic awareness. Chomsky discussed how the notion of awareness had too narrow a context as described by Mattingly. It should include not only the ability to make grammaticality judgments (an ability that doesn't seem to develop fully until fourth or fifth grade), but also a sense of **pragmatic** and **semantic appropriateness** and a consciousness of language at the level of sounds and phonetic properties.

DeStefano took this even further, arguing against the narrow context of Mattingly's definition. DeStefano discusses the expansion of the notion of "linguistics" towards a more comprehensive semiotics, saying, "there has been a major shift from what is basically a transformational-generative grammar definition of 'linguistic' toward the centrality of the semantic system in defining 'linguistic' with 'cognitive aspects of meaning' as basic to the semantic system" (1979). DeStefano's argument draws on the powerful insights of researchers in comprehension and language study who have found that world-knowledge, expectations, presuppositions, intentionality, and pragmatics are as integral in language as syntax and phonology. For this reason, DeStefano proposes a term that expands the concept of linguistic awareness--
"extralinguistic awareness." She defines the term as "knowledge about events, relationships, objects, individuals, and so on, and expectations or presuppositions, as they are called in pragmatics, about how all those factors interact appropriately" (1979). This redefinition moves metalinguistic awareness towards a concept of meta-awareness of "communicative competence," the term used by Dell Hymes (1971).

Downing seems to accept this broader definition of metalinguistic awareness in his 1979 book on reading. Downing prefers the term "cognitive clarity" to "metalinguistic awareness." And he includes in this term an awareness of the functions, as well as the features of reading. In my own definition, I have included an awareness of the process of reading and writing. This is not ignored by Downing or Clay (1972) or Sanders (1980), but perhaps I give it more stress. My research clearly shows that knowledge of the writing process is crucial to successful progress in developing composing skill.

Downing's 1979 book has some important limitations for my purposes. For example, it seems to be chiefly interested in awareness of orthography and sound-letter relationships, and its focus is on the awareness needed by children in learning to read. In spite of these limitations, it makes some very important contributions to the understanding of the concepts "metalinguistic awareness"
and "cognitive clarity," and does an excellent job tracing the research history of these ideas. I would like to briefly trace out some of the most important sources found in Downing's literature review.

An important reference cited by Downing (as well as by Cazden, 1974; T. Sanders, 1980; Britton, 1978, p. 24; Flower and Hayes, 1981) is the philosopher M. Polanyi's distinction between focal awareness and attention and subsidiary awareness and attention. Focal awareness involves attention to the ends or goals of an activity. Subsidiary awareness attends to the intermediary means. Translated into the terms of my research, focal awareness is attention to the communicative functions of a particular writing activity and takes into consideration genre, the designs and demands of the task, and the expectations of the teacher (or other audience). Subsidiary awareness would concern issues like syntactic construction, rhetorical structure, lexical choice, etc. The fascinating thing about reading, writing and other language activities is that the focal goals often determine the subsidiary issues. This is true in oral language development (see Halliday's Learning How to Mean, 1975), and in reading, and in writing. This focal/subsidiary distinction has also been made in comprehension and reading research. Unfortunately, the terminology used is not consistent but the ideas are generally the same (see Smith, 1978; Flower and Hayes,
Another important issue addressed by Downing is the perceived relationship between **cognitive confusion** (a misunderstanding of language features, functions, and processes) and failure in reading. This relationship was noticed by M.D. Vernon in 1957 and Jesse Reid in 1966. This issue has its analogue in research in composing. Cognitive confusion, often attributable to mis-teaching, has a negative effect on the development of mature reading skills and writing skill. This issue will become clearer in Chapters IV and V of this dissertation.

Another interesting issue explored in Downing's literature review relates to the nature of all complex skill learning in human beings. Fitts and Posner (1967) claimed that a **cognitive phase** is characteristic of all complex skill learning in human beings. This "cognitive phase" of complex skill learning can be related to the idea of metalinguistic awareness of the features, functions and processes being necessary for development of literacy skills. This is a very powerful idea, and has incredibly broad applications--from how Jack Nicklaus practices golf (by imagining and representing a match in his head before actually playing), to the way adults write essays. The idea of a cognitive phase for the secondary language activities is central to this research, and is an important part of the learning-to-write model that will appear in Chapter
Besides the issues raised in Downing's book, I would like to address briefly some crucial works on this issue by Eve Clark (1978), Tobie Sanders (1980), Cook-Gumperz (1977), and Scardamalia and Bereiter (in press). Eve Clark's work appears in an important book edited by Sinclair, Jarvella, and Levelt and published in 1978. Clark explores the issue of metalinguistic awareness and addresses the very tricky issue of how one discovers this awareness (especially in children). Clark comes up with a rough and ready developmental taxonomy of metalinguistic awareness (p. 34). This taxonomy has implications for discovering such awareness in children. The taxonomy moves from a) monitoring one's ongoing utterances, to b) checking the result of an utterance, c) testing for reality, d) deliberately trying to learn, e) predicting the consequences of using inflections, words, phrases, or sentences, and f) reflecting on the product of utterances.

Clark's suggestions do not form any kind of precision instrument for discovering metalinguistic awareness, but they are helpful. It is probable that there cannot be any kind of precision instrument for discovering metalinguistic awareness—the phenomenon is far too complex, diverse, and subtle for that. There are a couple of standard instruments used with children regarding readiness for reading (Clay, 1972 and Downing et al, 1981), but
these don't presume to measure but a fraction of awareness.

Tobie Sanders, in her 1980 dissertation, made use of Clark's suggestions, and used some other interesting techniques for discovering young children's awareness. She made use of adult-to-child interviews, near-to-peer interviews, and discourse analysis (as well as Clay's test and classroom observation) to discover children's metalinguistic awareness.

Sanders' work offers some sobering cautions on our expectations for a clear, causal relationship between metalinguistic awareness and success in literacy skills. Sanders' conclusions were that "not all aspects of metalinguistic awareness advance literacy" (p. 125). She noted with some surprise how "the subject with the lowest overall literacy learning success rate demonstrated the highest level of metalinguistic awareness near the end of the academic year" (p. 122). In spite of these findings, the issue of the relationship between metalinguistic awareness and skill in reading and writing has not been settled. There is good reason to believe that some aspects of metalinguistic awareness are more crucial than others, and some aspects of the process are truly not accessible to consciousness or accessible only during a critical learning period.

Commenting on how children learn to write, King and Rentel say, "What children learning to write must grasp
is how to take what is implicitly obvious in the context and render it explicit in text. Cook-Gumperz (1977) characterized this trait as the ability to appreciate language as a structure separate from action" (1981, p. 3). In the same vein, Flower and Hayes (1981) comment on yet to be published articles by Marlene Scardamalia and Carl Bereiter (in press) saying "[they] have looked at the ways children cope with the cognitive demands of writing. Well-learned skills, such as sentence construction, tend to become automatic and lost to consciousness. Because so little of the writing process is automatic for children, they must devote conscious attention to a variety of individual thinking tasks which adults perform quickly and automatically" (see also Mattingly's remark (1979) along these lines).

To conclude this section, there is still good reason to believe that metalinguistic awareness is crucial for the development of reading and writing skills. But by now it is apparent that the relationship is complex and not yet mapped out. This dissertation will begin to explore and map out this relationship, in the context of college Freshmen learning to write according to college standards and expectations.

It seems apparent that the term metalinguistic awareness must cover a continuum of awareness, stretching from accessibility and performance (where actual awareness
can only be inferred) to conscious verbal utterances about language. Besides verbal utterances about language, one must consider the possibility that gestures and behaviors can also indicate a meta-awareness of language. For operational purposes in my research, metalinguistic awareness will be limited to clear and explicit statements, either oral or written, about language—and in particular about the functions, features, and processes involved in composing (Downing, 1979; Clark and Clark, 1977, Ch. 1).

Chapter VI will contain grounded metalinguistic categories derived from the classroom ethnography, and these categories were used in the case studies found in that chapter.

As a postscript I would like to mention one other area of evidence of metalinguistic awareness, and that is the fascinating and fruitful area of study involving children's speech play. This issue was taken up by Courtney Cazden in 1974 as she made the connection between metalinguistic awareness and speech play. Speech play takes language outside of its normal pragmatic and mathetic functions (Halliday, 1975). Such play may be at the root (or at least a major contributing factor) of explicit metalinguistic awareness and the ability to model and represent reality in the head. Cazden (1974) cites Erickson (1973) in Childhood and Society: "The child's play is the infantile form of the human ability to deal with experience
by creating model situations and to master reality by experiment and planning." A similar role for play was seen in Vygotsky's excellent discussion in Chapter VII of *Mind in Society*. It seems very possible that conscious awareness and metacognition has its ontogenesis in child play. Cazden acknowledges this likely connection and extrapolates on the role speech-play might have in the later development of literacy skills.

There are many fine works that have explored children's speech play. Among these are Opie and Opie (1959), Wolfenstein (1954), Sanches and Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (1976), and McDowell (1979). These would be excellent sources to consult for research into the connection between speech-play and childhood cognitive development.

**The Literature on the Composing Process: Children's Transition into Literacy.**

In recent years there has been some important work on the transition into written literacy by children. This work isn't wholly transferable to the development of college-level written literacy in adults, but has established an important groundwork and parameters that are useful in understanding adult development. Much of this work with children has been a natural extension of language acquisition studies, moving into the development of discourses and texts, both oral and written (King
and Rentel, 1981; Pappas, 1981; Pettegrew, 1981). Two of these studies (Pappas, 1981; King and Rentel, 1981) have applied their discoveries to an interesting model of language development—the synergistic, variable model outlined by Lois Bloom in 1976. Many of the findings of my research with adult writers reflect on, and to a large extent, support this model—this will be discussed at length in Chapter V of this dissertation.

The research mentioned above has steered my own investigation away from some dead-end avenues of inquiry. One important finding from the childhood studies is that the development of written literacy skills in children will very probably be different from the improvement of such skills in the adults that are represented in my study. The children studied by King, Rentel, Pappas, and Pettegrew were moving from oral language strategies, functions and textual devices to written strategies, functions and devices. And to a remarkable extent, this basic transition is fairly complete at the end of first grade. A good example of this transition can be seen in the features involved in text cohesion. Pappas (1981, p. 98) reported a result that was contradictory to her expectations—"It had been hypothesized that children's use of restricted exophora [reference that depends for interpretation on a non-textual mutual understanding and sharing of context devices] might have been an important
factor in assessing narrative capabilities. However, only nine instances of such devices occurred in the thirty-three texts produced by the children in the three contexts."

In other words, even first graders are able to produce text appropriate (at least in some respects) to the needs of an audience or listener who doesn't share the speaker or writer's context. This goes contrary to certain expectations many researchers had about children's egocentricity and supposed lack of ability to decenter and take an audience's point of view (but, see M. Donaldson, 1978). Similar results were attained by King, Rentel, Pettigrew and Pappas regarding the development of sense of story structure in children. By grade one, children seem to have already developed a pretty solid sense of narrative structure. Both of these findings were confirmed in my pilot study with adult basic writers. Restricted exophora was exceedingly rare, and didn't seem to show much promise of being a measure of the students' developing writing maturity. And all the adult students seemed to have a kind of narrative competence (as a matter of fact, many seemed to compose primarily in the narrative mode--see also Pianko, 1979). To sum up, this research on child development showed us what would likely be unfruitful areas for research into college basic writers.

There are other findings from research in children's transition into written literacy that have more positive
(in a sense) implications for my work with adults. Already mentioned in this regard is Bloom's synergistic-variable model of language development, Scardamalia and Bereiter's findings on awareness and automaticity in learning to write, and Cook-Gumperz's characterization of learning to write as the "ability to appreciate language as a structure separate from action." Not yet mentioned is the insight of Pettegrew that there can be no single, universal, or simple measures of writing maturity--because measures of communicative competence vary tremendously with the content and the context of the language task (Pettegrew, 1981; see also Witte and Faigley, 1981). This same point has been made by Halliday who discussed three aspects of context (field, tenor, and mode) which affect the linguistic devices found in a discourse (Halliday and Hasan, 1976; discussed also in Pappas, 1981, 20-1). The literature on children's transition into literacy has also made very important contributions regarding the pedagogy of writing. Halliday (1975) showed how communicative goals and needs preceded (and perhaps generated) the linguistic forms needed to fulfill these goals and needs. Pettegrew (1981) found the same thing, and makes this strong statement: "...the literature suggests that language develops out of a need to communicate within the socializing contexts in which humans find themselves. Context shapes language and determines text. As contexts
change and present new demands, language expands to meet these new demands as long as the activity makes some sense to the individual" (p. 108). Pettegrew also found that it is futile to make certain cause and effect statements about the relationship between development and learning (p. 107). The relationship involves a dynamic interaction—a synergy in the terms of Bloom and Pappas. It is interesting to see the close relationship between the discoveries of Pettegrew on the growth and social context of literacy in children and the socio-political theories of literacy development expressed by Elsasser and John-Steiner (1977) and Paulo Freire (1970 and 1973). It seems like there is psycholinguistic support for the social and political literacy theories of Freire.

To conclude, the literature on children's transition into literacy has given a framework for adult writing studies, and has shown what lines of research will likely be futile and which should be fruitful.

Studies on the Composing Processes of Adults.

Early writings on the composing processes of adults focused on the analysis or introspections of the processes of expert writers (Emig, 1971). Classic examples are the Paris Review interviews, edited by Malcolm Cowley in 1958. Such introspections are useful, but they have limits for the study of basic writers (Shaughnessy's term, 1977).
An interesting aspect of many of these interviews addresses how writing can lead to intellectual discovery— it can be a way of thinking. Another interesting aspect revealed in these interviews is the variability of the composing process in regard to planning. Some authors outline in detail, some meditate, some scribble down a few guiding notes.

The poet John Ciardi (cited by Emig, p. 10) makes an interesting comment on the role of subsidiary awareness and automaticity in his composing of poems: "Let me put it this way, the least a poem can be is an act of skill. An act of skill is one in which you have to do more things at one time than you have time to think about." It seems that an expert writer cannot always hold in consciousness the multivarious subsidiary issues involved in his text—issues of syntax, semantics, lexical choice, style, idea development, prosody, etc. At the same time, a writer must afterwards play the role of critic, reading his or her writings as if an outsider, giving conscious consideration to the various components of the text. Regarding automaticity and consciousness, Scardamalia and Bereiter (in press) have found differences between expert and beginner writers. Flower and Hayes (1981, p. 374) say that Scardamalia and Bereiter "have looked at the ways children cope with the cognitive demands of writing. Well-learned skills, such as sentence construction, tend
to become automatic and lost to consciousness. Because so little of the writing process is automatic for children, they must devote conscious attention to a variety of individual thinking tasks which adults perform quickly and automatically." In other words, what is automatic for John Ciardi, may be in the forefront of consciousness for one of Nancy Mack's basic writers.

The disciplined study of the processes of non-expert writers began, for all practical purposes, in the early 1960's and 1970's. In England, James Britton (1975) and his colleagues began studying the stages of writing development of secondary school students. Britton looked at student writings from the perspective of function (the function for the composer) rather than from the perspective of traditional rhetorical categories. Britton found that the students' writings could be placed along a continuum of function, extending from transactional to expressive to poetic functions. He also observed that the development of writing skill involves moving from oral and expressive language forms and functions to the special functions and features of written text. Britton found speech to be the primary resource of writers, and the narrative expressive mode to be the basis for all further writing development. These findings about the basicness of the narrative mode have also been found by many other researchers, among them Perl (1979), and Pianko (1979). Many of the writings
produced by Nancy Mack's students were also narratives, irrespective of the teacher's task instructions (see, for example, Brad's exam #3 in Chapter IV).

The seminal work on the texts, problems and composing processes of college-level Basic Writers is Mina Shaughnessy's *Errors and Expectations* which came out in 1977. Shaughnessy's students were primarily open-admissions students attending the City University of New York during the 1970's. Many of these students were severely unprepared for college writing--historically, such students had never attended college in any great numbers until the open-admission policies of the 1960's and 1970's. Shaughnessy notes how the composition teachers of these students were stunned by their lack of skill and bewildering writing problems. Many of these teachers had no idea how to begin teaching these students to write according to traditional college standards.

One important lesson of Shaughnessy's book was that these students were teachable, but only when teachers learn to view the attainment of writing skill as a truly developmental process. The realization that language arts skills reflect developmental processes may be the most significant psycholinguistic and pedagogical principle arising out of language studies in the past twenty years. Shaughnessy reeducated us about the nature of language "errors" (an area of psycholinguistic study that has
blossomed in the past 10-15 years with the work of Good­man, Fromkin, Zwicky and others). She showed how the bewildering variety of errors made by Basic Writers fell into comprehensible patterns. She also showed that what appeared to be similar errors (at the surface level) could have different explanations and ontogeneses (this is the genotype-phenotype distinction made by Vygotsky).

Another seminal book on the writing processes of adult readers is Janet Emig's 1971 work, The Composing Processes of Twelfth Graders. Emig was one of the first researchers to do a disciplined study of composing processes rather than products. Like my own project, and like most of the research studies on adult composing processes, Emig worked with only a handful of subjects (eight). This kind of focus is necessary and unavoidable in the early stages of research and in an area that yields so much perplexing data as process study. The danger in a study with a low number of subjects is generalizing beyond the limits of your population--and this kind of overgeneralization is seen in the work of Emig and of Sondra Perl (1979). This problem is not fully mitigated by rich description and contextualization--as it might be in ethno­graphic research on composing. Both Emig and Perl's research would have been improved by richer contextualiza­tion and more modest generalizations.
Despite these problems and limitations, Emig's work is quite valuable and instructive. She developed the technique of tape-recording oral composing protocols—an attempt to exteriorize composers' thoughts, to get into the normally hidden thought processes involved when we write (see Chapter III of this dissertation). Emig found some significant contradictions between what good students and established writers actually do while composing and what textbooks and teachers say they ought to do. This is particularly true in regard to the planning of a composition. Emig found two basic kinds of writing in the students she studied: reflexive writing (personal, narrative, close to personal experience and feelings), and extensive writing (impersonal, expository, divorced from experience). The composing processes varied with mode, the reflexive writing benefitting from more personal commitment, more pre-writing, planning and revision. Extensive writing was characterized as a school-sponsored activity, written for an audience of one—the teacher. On the whole, Emig is very critical of writing pedagogy as it proceeds in our schools: the teachers and textbooks misrepresent the process and evaluate the products primarily in terms of the "accidents" rather than the essences of discourse (Emig, p. 93). It is no surprise that high school students are perplexed by the writing process when their teachers are in a state of
"cognitive confusion" about the process.

Two studies on the composing processes of college Freshman writers appeared in 1979 (Pianko and Perl). Pianko's study looked at both traditional college writers and at remedial (or basic) college writers. Although her study reports some interesting and useful findings, it has some significant limitations and problems. Among the chief problems is the lack of ethnographic context and the short data collection and observation period (five weeks). Only seventeen subjects completed the study, and from these few subjects, Pianko did extensive statistical analysis and made fairly broad generalizations. The observations involved in her experiment occurred outside of a normal classroom context, and one wonders if the texts and processes she found are truly representative of what goes on in college writing classes.

Here are some of Pianko's principal findings: the students usually chose to write in the narrative mode, irrespective of the teacher's assignment. The products and processes and knowledge of the remedial writers differed from those of the traditional writers. The traditional or "good" writers were more focused on ideas and messages while the remedial writers focused more on mechanics and surface errors. She characterized the poor writers as having underdeveloped composing processes and underdeveloped understandings of the composing process (p. 20). The
poor writers do not spend enough time reflecting on what they have written and planning what they will write next. As for pedagogical comments and suggestions, Pianko offers these: "If teachers are to affect a positive change in students' written products, they must change the focus from the evaluating and correcting of finished papers to helping students expand and elaborate the stages of their composing processes" (p. 21). Pianko also decried the lack of commitment students demonstrate towards school-sponsored writing and says this lack of commitment interacts with their writing processes and products. Undoubtedly, she is on to something there, but the lack of commitment she observed may well be an artifact of her study design. The most valuable insight from this research is the effect of "cognitive confusion" (on the parts of both students and teachers) regarding the composing process on the written products. A distorted sense of the writing process can ruin your writing products.

Sondra Perl's study on unskilled college writers also appeared in 1979. Her work involves case-studies of five unskilled college writers, the data gathered using composing protocols and interviews. Unfortunately, the data was gathered outside of the normal classroom context of college basic writing programs, and that limits its usefulness somewhat (Perl met each subject for five 90-minute sessions). In spite of these contextual limitations, Perl
made several very important discoveries. She found (like Pianko, Britton, and many others) that composing processes vary with mode (she found two basic modes: extensive and reflexive). She also found that "composing does not occur in a straightforward, linear fashion" (p. 331). She describes the process as a "shuttling back and forth, projecting what would come next and doubling back to be sure of the ground they had covered" (p. 330). This finding jibes with almost all recent descriptions of the writing process--the process is interactive, dynamic, or synergistic (see Flower and Hayes, 1981; Pappas, 1981).

Perl also has fascinating information on how one student ("Tony") tries to come to terms with the given writing task. Tony struggles to link up a given assignment with his own experience and knowledge. Perl comments: "...the more distance between the topic and himself, the more difficulty he experienced, and the more repetitive his process became. Conversely, when the topic was close to his own experience, the smoother and more fluent the process became..." (p. 326). Perl also found that Tony made different assumptions regarding his audience depending on the mode he was writing in. His reflexive-mode writings were not as autonomous as his extensive writings--they demanded more personal knowledge and context from the reader.
Perhaps one of Perl's most significant findings was that these college-level basic writers had fairly sophisticated writing procedures and strategies—a fact that marks them as quite different from the children represented in the transition-into-literacy studies. In this regard, Perl states: "A major finding of this study is that, like Tony, all of the students studied displayed consistent composing processes... This consistency suggests a much greater internalization of process than has ever before been suspected" (p. 328).

Many of the insights and discoveries on the composing process found by Britton, Emig, Pianko, Perl, Scardamalia, and Bereiter are seen in a comprehensive, new light in the recent work of Linda Flower and John Hayes on a "cognitive process" model of composing (Flower and Hayes, 1981). In this article, Flower and Hayes explain very well the heuristic benefits of using a model in doing research: "A model is a metaphor for a process: a way to describe something, such as the composing process, which refuses to sit still for a portrait. As a hypothesis about a dynamic system, it attempts to describe the parts of the system and how they work together" (p. 368). Flower and Hayes build their model from data gathered by the technique of protocol analysis. They argue quite forcefully and convincingly for the superiority of this technique: it avoids many of the inaccuracies found in post hoc
introspective analyses, and it gets at kinds of awareness used in composing which fade quickly after a particular goal or issue has been dealt with.

There are three basic components of their model, and each component consists of multiple subroutines. One component is the "Writer's Long Term Memory" and consists of stored knowledge of topics, audience, writing plans, language, etc. This information can exist outside the writer's head in books and in other media.

A second major aspect of this model is called the "Task Environment" and consists of the rhetorical problem (and all the topic and audience issues associated with that) and the actual written text produced by the writer. These two components of the "task environment" are in a constant dynamic state of interaction during the act of composing.

A third major aspect of this model is termed "Writing Processes" and takes in several subprocesses. One subprocess is called "planning" and takes in idea generation and organization and goal setting. Another process is called "translating" and involves putting goals and ideas into actual written text. Another subprocess, called "reviewing," deals with evaluating and revising the text produced in the "translating" process.

As described so far, the Flower and Hayes model seems to offer little that is new. There are four key elements that make the Flower-Hayes model unique and extremely
powerful:

1. Writing is best understood as a set of distinctive thinking processes which writers orchestrate or organize during the act of composing (p. 366);

2. The processes of writing are hierarchically organized, with component processes embedded within other components (p. 375);

3. Writing is a goal-directed process. In the act of composing, writers create a hierarchical network of goals and these in turn guide the writing process (p. 377);

4. Writers create their own goals in two key ways: by generating goals and supporting sub-goals which embody a purpose; and, at times, by changing or regenerating their own top-level goals in light of what they have learned by writing (p. 381).

The points of this model have wide-ranging explanatory potential. The hierarchical and dynamic nature of the model contradicts linear stage-models of composing, and explains the observation that idea generation, problem redefinition, planning and revision can occur at any place and at any time during the composing process. This dynamic and hierarchical dimension relates this model somewhat to the spiral model of development mentioned by Vygotsky and the synergistic-variable model of language development proposed by Lois Bloom (1976).

Another very significant dimension of this model is that it incorporates the idea that a writer's intentionality is of central importance. It has long been thought that intentions, goals, and purposes were closely connected to cognitive, memorial, and linguistic functions. The
Flower-Hayes model is one that finally begins to incorporate and explain this connection.

This model also distinguishes between higher-level goals and more local or subsidiary goals (as does Polanyi, Frank Smith, and others). This distinction proves useful in showing some of the major differences between the composing processes of good and poor writers. Maintaining the delicate, dynamic balance between global and local goals is a major factor in the quality of a text produced by a writer. The Flower-Hayes discussion on the role of process goals also sheds light on the devastating effect of "false awareness." Speaking of the false consciousness regarding process goals held by poor writers, Flower and Hayes say: "they [poor writers] too are working under a set of implicit process goals which say 'write it as it comes'; or 'make everything perfect and correct as you go.' The problem then is not that knowledge or the text has taken over, so much as that the writer's own goals and/or images of the composing process put these strategies in control" (p. 381).

Finally, the Flower-Hayes model explains a phenomenon often remarked on by writers--writing helps one to think, discover, and learn new things. It is not a mechanical, totally pre-planned activity. Instead it is a dynamic process in which the problem is frequently redefined and revised, and where goals and purposes can change. It is a
process than can actually aid thinking and discovery.

I have found the Flower-Hayes model to fit with many of the phenomena observed in my own research and with my suspicions about the role of metalinguistic awareness in the development of language skills. In Chapter V of this dissertation, I will comment on how my own discoveries jibe with their model, as well as with the models of Vygotsky and Bloom. And at that point, I will offer some tentative modifications to these models of language development.
Chapter III
CONDUCTING THE INQUIRY: RATIONALE AND METHODS

I. A Theory for this Research

What is Research?

There are many legitimate ways of gaining new knowledge, getting to know and understand the world. And there are many worthwhile ways to communicate this knowledge to others. "Doing science" is not the job only of scientists—it is a basic, even mundane human activity, probably related to human survival. Ways of doing science can extend from classical controlled experiments, to quasi-experiments, to description buttressed by sophisticated statistical treatments, to the kinds of characterizations and categorized description done in ethnographies. Dell Hymes (1977) would not have us stop there: "If we are to extend our understanding of language to the full, so that we can fully comprehend its role in schooling, in education, in social life, in our own lives, we have to find a way to come to terms with the validity of uses of languages that are aesthetic" (p. 175). In other words, narratives, fiction and even poetry might serve the scientific function of discovering and communicating new knowledge. This point has been made in the past by Ross Mooney (1975),
and is presently being made, with great vigor and success, by educational researchers like Elliot Eisner (1981), and Gail McCutcheon (1981).

Most definitions of research take it a ways beyond the mundane (but critically important) process of finding out about our world. Michael Quinn Patton speaks of research as involving the application of critical intelligence to important, carefully-defined problems (Patton, 1975; Edelsberg, 1980, p. 77). Donald Sanders (1981, p. 9) says that science is "a process... a way to establish the reliability ("truthfulness") of claims to know..." Most definitions emphasize discipline, rigor, truth claims, etc. In the tradition of what is called "positivistic" science or "normal" science (Kuhn, 1970), terms like nomothetic, law-like, generalizability, validity, reliability, and scientific method are used to describe scientific research (Rist, 1977).

In examining the literature on methodology, one discovers, rather surprisingly, that there is no consensus definition of science and research--not even of "qualitative research" (see Eisner, 1981). And as Thomas Kuhn (1970) has so brilliantly pointed out, the "scientific method" is only one of many possible paradigms or disciplines for the discovery of knowledge--and it is a paradigm like all paradigms--with opportunities and limits. It can answer some questions and it fails to answer others.
Kuhn also points out that not only does the "scientific method" of "normal, puzzle-solving" science not have a hegemony on truth-discovering, but it also tends to mislead us on the nature of the discovery process. Even in the hard sciences, discovery and research is more sloppy, serendipitous, and non-linear than published research reports lead us to believe.

This brief discussion has been intended as a groundwork, a rationale for doing research in another tradition—a tradition that answers different questions and offers another piece of the puzzle on educational and psycholinguistic phenomena. An examination of the recent literature on qualitative research shows that people working within this paradigm have been put somewhat on the defensive. Not only do they have to define the terminology used in their research, they seem to have to define "science" and "research" and address the principle research issues of "normal" science (e.g.: generalizability, reliability, validity). I too will address these concerns, but I would also like to explain a problem. Probably not all these issues can be explained to the satisfaction of people working in the traditions of normal science. There is a level at which these two research paradigms cannot yet communicate (see Rist, 1977). And this is probably because each system is based on different epistemological and ontological assumptions. I will explore some of these problems
in more depth later in this chapter. For excellent, in-depth discussions of this communication-gap, see Rist (1977), Ford (1975), and Kuhn (1970).

Qualitative Research: Assumptions, Goals, Methods, and Terminology.

The term "qualitative research" is probably as misleading and presumptuous as the term "scientific method."

Certainly all approaches to research aim for quality and warranted "claims-to-know." And like good qualitative research, the best quantitative research is aware of its assumptions, the limitations of its inferences, and the effect of the context of the research (for a good example, see Pettegrew, 1981). The term "qualitative research" serves as an umbrella term and obscures some very different kinds of inquiry. Eisner clarifies one important distinction in his 1981 article. Eisner identifies two contrasting strands in qualitative research: the artistic and the scientific. The artistic approach is one of the most ancient human research traditions, and is related to art and literary criticism and hermeneutic interpretation. This tradition has been found to be a powerful tool in educational research, particularly when curriculum evaluation is involved. The artistic approach to doing and reporting research varies on almost all dimensions from our traditional concept of research: it reports findings
differently, it asks for different criteria for evaluating its findings, has different methods for finding out about phenomena, and is often based on different ontological assumptions. The assumptions of many "educational critics" are based on phenomenological or Marxist world views--and there is not so much interest in building what Suppes (1974--cited by Rist, 1977, p. 43) has called nomothetic "theoretical palaces." Instead, phenomenological researchers are concerned with how people make meanings, how they go about interpreting and acting on their socially and culturally-constructed reality. The task of the educational critic is to penetrate the "emic" reality of the actors or subjects, interpret and understand it, and communicate it to others. (I will explain the term "emic" later in this chapter.)

Artistic approaches to educational research really diverge from "scientific" approaches on how they report and communicate their findings. Their goal is not so much generalizability and objectivity, but what they term "intersubjectivity," a kind of shared understanding. Regarding this, McCutcheon says: "When we interpret, we can also provide shared understandings by presenting sufficient evidence and sharing our line of reasoning. In this fashion, interpretive work is intersubjective; potentially, the audience can share the understanding and the interpretation the researcher has constructed" (1981, p. 9).
McCutcheon goes on to describe the hoped-for audience response: "Because of intersubjectivity, an audience reading an interpretive study personally generalizes from what is being read to their own case. While certain aspects of the setting or characteristics of the participants may differ from those of the audience, the audience may be able to generalize from parts of the study to their own situations" (1981, p. 9).

To promote this intersubjectivity, educational critics will often attempt to write in evocative language, making use of metaphoric, poetic, and even fictive techniques. The goal is to discover and communicate the essence of a situation, and Eisner cites Aristotle's claim that poetry can be even truer than history (Eisner, 1981, p. 7). There are good reasons to use the approach of educational criticism—not the least of which is its ability to communicate to a much wider audience of parents and teachers. And the approach has been used successfully by novelists, poets, and even anthropologists (see Hymes, 1977, p. 175). But for the purposes of my own present research, I will work more in the tradition of the scientific rather than the artistic strand of qualitative research. I think both traditions have much to offer, but I also think it is useful to keep certain elements of the strands separate.
The other strand of qualitative research mentioned by Eisner is the scientific, and it is particularly well-represented by the anthropological technique of ethnography. While not all "scientific" qualitative research is ethnographic, most borrow methods and terminology from ethnography.

Erickson (1979, p. 2) borrows two definitions of ethnography. One, (Bauman, 1972) describes ethnography as "the process of constructing through direct personal observation of social behavior, a theory of the working of a particular culture in terms as close as possible to the way members of that culture view the universe and organize their behavior within it." Erickson also cites Peggy Sanday's definition: "a way of systematically learning reality from the point of view of the participant." It is clear that these researchers are interested in the phenomenological meanings constructed by the participants. These meanings have been termed "emic realities" and are often contrasted with "etic realities" which are views from outside. For an excellent discussion of this distinction, see Pappas (1981, pp. 106-7), as well as Algeo (1974) and Pike (1967).

Anthropologists have a long tradition of using ethnographic techniques. It is a rigorous discipline that traditionally demanded an extended period of field study in a far-away culture very different from the researcher's own.
There have been problems involved with the borrowing of this research paradigm by educational researchers: many have not learned the discipline or studied the methods, rationale and history of ethnography. Worst of all, some people have attempted what Rist (1980) called "blitzkrieg ethnography"—bypassing the essential immersion for a considerable period of time into the research setting. Perhaps educational researchers should exercise considerable caution in calling their studies ethnographies. Instead, they can claim to have borrowed some of the useful techniques, and claim that their studies have employed some ethnographic data collection and analysis.

An essential aspect of this anthropological research tradition has involved the role of the researcher. In contrast to "normal" science, where the researcher strives to be invisible and non-reactive, the ethnographic researcher becomes a part of the phenomenological reality of the research scene—he or she becomes a participant-observer. This is a necessary step in penetrating the emic realities of the scene—discovering the participants' meanings.

The ethnographer takes many facts for discovering the etic and emic realities of the research scene. Wilson (1977, p. 255) describes some typical data sources for an ethnographer:

"1. Form and content of verbal interaction between participants;
2. Form and content of verbal interaction with the researcher;
3. Nonverbal behavior;
4. Patterns of action and nonaction;
5. Traces, archival records, artifacts, documents."

Since facts and meanings do not speak for themselves, the ethnographer uses a technique of triangulation to get corroboration of meanings and facts. Triangulation simply means that issues are looked at from multiple perspectives (both etic and emic) before settling on an interpretation.

Another aspect of ethnographic research that differs from traditional "normal" research involves reporting and communicating results. Because of their concern with individual cases and phenomenological reality rather than broad generalizations and multiplicative corroboration and reliability, ethnographers attempt to recreate context so that the reader might gain an intersubjective understanding of the situation. This rich recontextualization has been called "thick description" by Geertz (1973). Rich contextualization and "thick description" cannot be seen as an accidental quality of ethnographic work. Rather, it can be seen as an essential criterion for judging the adequacy of ethnographic reports. Without "thick description" there is no question of developing intersubjectivity or communicating the parameters of generalizability.
To conclude this section, let me reiterate the basic elements of qualitative research and contrast it with basic elements of much "normal" science. Qualitative research comes out of a different scientific paradigm than most quantitative research, and this fact, as demonstrated by Kuhn (1970) and Ford (1975) has surprisingly broad implications. Qualitative research, as it is usually done, seems to be based on a phenomenological world view, rather than the law-like nomothetic view of normal science. This world-view lends itself especially to different research questions than is typical of normal science--an emphasis on existential, phenomenological reality as created by human beings acting on their powers of will and intentionality. This difference in epistemology and ontology between qualitative and normal science is the basis for understanding many of the differences between qualitative and normal science. Rist (1977) sums these up as the following polarities of emphasis:

Table 1
Qualitative Research Compared to "Normal" Science

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Qualitative research</th>
<th>Normal science</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>validity (internal or construct)</td>
<td>reliability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>subjectivity (personal &quot;verstehen&quot; or interpretation)</td>
<td>objectivity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>intersubjectivity</td>
<td>generalizability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>holistic analysis</td>
<td>component analysis</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Each of these paradigms is tight and consistent within itself. And each element listed above is related necessarily to the other elements, and comes out of the ontological assumptions. Thus a qualitative researcher tries to penetrate socially-constructed reality by means of an interpersonal relationship ("verstehen" or participant-observation), preserves the context by doing field-work in a naturalistic setting and by reporting and communicating results with "thick description," attempting to establish an intersubjectivity with the research audience so that they might be able to judge the validity of the interpretation and get a sense of the limits of generalizability of the case being studied. The same kind of consistency comes out of positivistic science. The communication gap that results when these two paradigms clash is discussed very well in Rist's 1977 article. At this point in time, it is hard to see a synthesis for this paradigm dialectic.

Collaborative Research.

An aspect of my research project that makes it differ from much other research (either quantitative or qualitative) is that there was an important degree of collaboration between me, the researcher, and Nancy Mack, the teacher of the class I researched. Researcher-subject interaction is rigorously avoided (to the extent that is possible) in positivistic science, but it is essential to the
ethnographic method of participant-observation. And it also has a tradition in educational research—"it is kin to "action-research" (McCutcheon and Kyle, 1982).

Action research has the goal of increasing a teacher-practitioner's understanding of an educational problem, and the improvement of pedagogy. Action research has also generated and tested educational theory—and it tests educational theory in its own dynamic, complex, and natural setting. The problem with traditional action research is that it was done alone by the teacher. The teacher is so immersed in the interaction that ritualistic, habitual and commonplace events often go unnoticed (McCutcheon and Kyle). Another problem is that many teachers are not tuned into current educational theory and literature, and they don't have as much access to scholarly journals and meetings for communicating their insights.

Many of these problems can be addressed by doing collaborative research—teaming up teacher-practitioners with outside scholar-researchers. The literature and theory brought by the researcher can connect with and contextualize the classroom practice, and the classroom practice can test and modify the theory. The fact that one researcher is an outsider and one an insider can add a dimension of triangulation and help discover both etic and emic realities of the educational scene.
This form of insider-outsider collaboration is in some ways an improvement on ethnographic research. This point was made by Frederick Erickson (1979) who criticized the passive description made by most ethnographers. He felt that "mere" ethnography tends to "portray the individual as a passive recipient of multiple external influences, those of socialization and social structure. Individuals portrayed in this manner cannot be seen as actively choosing anything" (p. 6). Erickson feels this perspective cannot help improve our schools and solve our critical educational problems. Erickson calls for an increased degree of participant-observer collaboration, one that will promote the Marxist concept of praxis, a term he defines as "the dialectical process of personal and societal transformation in which, mutually, practical action is influenced by reflective insight and insight is influenced by action" (p. 8).

Very similar proposals are brought up by Sanders (1981), who calls for "developmental research" and Bronfenbrenner (1976) who calls for "ecological experimentation." The goal of all of these people is to improve educational practice, and to breach the chasm between educational theory and practice.

A good description and history of collaborative research can be found in the McCutcheon and Kyle article, and a good rationale in the writings of Sanders (1981),
Bronfenbrenner (1976), and Erickson (1972). An excellent example of a collaborative research project on the composing process is Edelsberg's 1980 dissertation. More recent writings on ethnographic and collaborative research in composing can be seen in the December 1981 issue of Research in the Teaching of English, especially the articles by Pettigrew, Shaw, and Nostrand, and Kantor, Kirby and Goetz.

The actual description of Nancy Mack and my research collaboration will appear later in this chapter.

Some Criteria for Judging Qualitative Research

Since qualitative research comes out of a different cosmology than much quantitative research, and since it takes a different angle on issues like reliability, validity, generalizability, and the researcher's role, different criteria must be established for evaluating the quality of qualitative research. The following criteria are intended to correspond to the description and characterization of qualitative research already made in this chapter.

The first criterion deals with how well the research addressed the issue of "appropriateness" (see the conclusion of Chapter III). Was the research question, methods, and reportage consistent with the researcher's epistemological and ontological assumptions (as well as these can
be known)? Was qualitative methodology appropriate to the nature of the research problem? This question is important because the way research questions are framed determines to a large extent the kind of methodology needed to answer the questions. And finally, was the research problem and methodology appropriate to the researcher's personality? Ross Mooney (1975) makes a strong case that there is an important connection between the researcher-as-a-person and the research problem being addressed. Research is not a value-free enterprise that can be disconnected from the personality of the researcher or the lives of the people who will be affected by the research. All scientific inquiry has cultural, moral, political, and historical dimensions.

Besides these three general questions of appropriateness, one can ask if the research met certain more specific criteria. The first issue to consider relates to two important issues of "normal" science—validity and generalizability. Most qualitative research doesn't claim to look at a representative sample of a given universe—instead it looks in depth at a few cases of a certain phenomenon, making no claims for broad generalizability. To communicate the dimensions, parameters, and limits of these cases, qualitative researchers strive to recreate a rich context (via
"thick description" of the phenomenon), in an attempt to establish intersubjective understanding with the readers of the research. Since this intersubjectivity can only flow from thick description and adequate recontextualization, these characteristics are essential for good qualitative research.

Thick description is a necessary but not sufficient condition for winning an audience's intersubjective agreement. McCutcheon (1981, p. 8) adds the following: "Four criteria we could employ to judge interpretations are (1) whether the line of reasoning is sound, (2) whether sufficient evidence is presented in support of the interpretation, (3) whether the interpretation is in accord with what else is known about schooling, (4) whether the interpretation promotes significant understanding." In regard to the first criterion, McCutcheon says that the researcher should expose his or her thinking process and line of reasoning. This will enable the reader to "follow along with certain parts of an interpretation, disagree with others or to agree totally with the line of reasoning and, hence, with the interpretation (p. 8)." In other words, this kind of reportage will establish the limits of intersubjectivity and will demonstrate to the reader aspects of the validity of the research findings. Gordon Allport (1942, p. 128; cited also by Edelsberg, 1980, p. 119) gives some
suggestions for supporting the validity of a study and thus augmenting its intersubjectivity:

(1) As in everyday life the general honesty and credibility of the report can be relied upon; this is the ad hominem test. (2) The plausibility of the document in terms of our own past experiences, as they are relevant, can be considered; even if our past experience is meager we know something of the range of human potentialities by which we can judge the probable truth of an account. (3) The test of internal consistency or self-confrontation has to be widely relied upon. A document that hangs together, that represents a structured configuration of human life and harbors no impossible contradictions has at least a prima facie validity.

The above process describes a kind of 'structural corroboration' of internal validity. Again, this is a necessary, but not sufficient condition. As McCutcheon points out, even very ill paranoids can show in their delusions remarkable internal consistency (1981, p. 8). What is also needed is a kind of external validity, where the research in question is corroborated by other studies and other warranted beliefs about the phenomenon in question. This kind of external validity also addresses, to some extent, the normal science concern for reliability. The external corroborations function somewhat like multiplicate corroborations of normal science. To sum up, qualitative research demands two kinds of triangulation to support validity, reliability and intersubjectivity: \textit{internal triangulation} and corroboration, coming from multiple perspectives.
and various kinds of internal structural consistency, and external triangulation, where the research is connected up with the findings and observations of other scientists. In this dissertation, the external validity is accomplished primarily in Chapter 2; the internal validity is addressed throughout the dissertation, but particularly in Chapter 4.

A final criterion that flows from the others just mentioned is that qualitative research must "stay within its limits." It must stay very close to its data and develop its categories and theories primarily from the data (although, for reasons of external validity, categories must also be developed in the light of warranted findings from other research). "Staying within limits" also applies to how far the researcher pushes his or her generalizations. In this dissertation, the development of grounded categories will be explained in Chapter IV. A critical reader should be able to see if my categories are warranted by the data. A critical reader can see whether or not my generalizations remain within the limits of my research setting by examining Chapter V.

Almost all these criteria boil down to these two questions:

a) have I met the criterion of appropriateness?
b) have I established intersubjectivity (regarding assumptions, goals, validity, and parameters of generalizability) with my readers?

Conclusion: The Principle of Appropriateness

Paradigms are normative; they tell the practitioner what to do without the necessity of long existential or epistemological consideration. But it is this aspect of a paradigm that constitutes both its strength and its weakness--its strength in that it makes action possible, its weakness in that the very reason for action is hidden in the unquestioned assumptions of the paradigm (Patton, 1975, p. 9).

One of the painful, but ultimately most worthwhile aspects of doing qualitative research is that it forces you to be on the defensive, forces you to examine those unquestioned assumptions covered over by established research paradigms.

From my own study of these issues, it seems to me that there is one key issue at the heart of one's choice of research methodology--the issue of appropriateness.

The issue of appropriateness is relevant to at least these three issues: world view, nature of the problem, and researcher's personality. Most likely these three issues are interconnected and inseparable. World view and personality could be intimately connected, and these would guide one in the choice of research problem.
It seems to me that these three dimensions of appropriateness do not automatically intersect. And their intersection or lack thereof offers an important criterion for judging a research effort. Also, it seems that not every research problem can be addressed by a single paradigm. There are issues and questions appropriate only to quantitative analysis and there are issues appropriate only to qualitative analysis. As Rist (1977, p. 42) says, "...no one methodology can answer all questions and provide insights on all issues."

I believe that, based on my world view, personality, and the problem (as defined in Chapter I), qualitative research is the most appropriate choice.
II. Data Collection

The Pilot Study.

A pilot study for this research project was undertaken in Nancy Mack's Writing Workshop class (English 100.01) during the autumn quarter of 1981. I had several important goals for this pilot study, not least of which was clarification of my research problem. My general problem had always been to explore student metalinguistic awareness and relate it to written texts produced by the students. I was to find out that the traditional ways of exploring metalinguistic awareness, as suggested by Cazden (1974) and E. Clark (1978), would be inadequate for my needs. I also discovered that structured classroom discourse analysis, as put forth by Sinclair and Coulthard (1975), didn't help much to address my research issues. A third expectation that didn't pan out involved analyzing the students' written texts in terms of Halliday and Hasan's (1976) system of cohesion analysis. This system seemed perfect for getting at audience awareness, the transition from oral language to written text, and the development of writing maturity—but, as discussed in Chapter II of this dissertation, cohesion analysis proved inappropriate for my research purposes. To sum up: the pilot study helped me find out what data collection and analysis procedures wouldn't work.
In a more positive vein, the pilot study helped me to establish a research role in the classroom and a collaborative relationship with the teacher, helped me learn about my effect on the teacher, the students, and the general classroom interaction, helped me to discover the most promising ways to explore metalinguistic awareness, and gave me much-needed practice in classroom-ethnographic procedures. Another important benefit of the pilot study was the development of a preliminary taxonomy of classroom-interaction categories for this particular setting. This taxonomy was developed using the constant-comparative approach (Glaser 1969) for developing grounded, close-to-the-data categories for social phenomena.

Below are some of the principal classroom-interaction categories found in the pilot study:

Teacher-Initiated Activities

I. Development of Classroom Atmosphere
   A. teacher-expectations
   B. student-teacher relationship

II. Teaching of Writing
   A. meta-instructional utterances
      1. purpose of class activities and exercises
      2. the nature of schooling
   B. instructional "visuals" and direct instruction
      1. the nature of the writing process
a. generation of ideas
b. purpose
c. planning
d. audience/point-of-view

2. rhetorical structure
   a. topic sentence
   b. subtopics
   c. transitions

C. practice in writing
   1. free-writing
   2. in-class essays and tests
   3. in-class revision

D. addressing false-consciousness

This is a partial list of the grounded categories. The taxonomic form represented above could be somewhat misleading. These categories overlap, and teacher actions and utterances often served many simultaneous goals (e.g.: simultaneously establishing social relationships, giving information about the writing process, and addressing false consciousness or false-metalinguistic awareness). These ethnographic categories proved useful for me in my actual study: pinpointed potential data sources, avoided some dead-ends, and showed me how my comments to Nancy Mack and my presence in the classroom affected (and sometimes changed) the interaction. Besides all this, the pilot study gave me crucial
practice in ethnographic procedures.

**Overview of the Data Sources**

In the sections of Chapter III to follow, I will discuss the collection of the data used for this study: the classroom ethnography, the interviewing of students, the oral-composing protocols, the texts produced by the students, and the use of some informal procedures. In order that the reader might understand and get a feel for these data, samples for one student are reproduced in Chapter VI of this dissertation.

**The Classroom Ethnography**

The classroom ethnography became the principal data source for the categories of metalinguistic awareness used in this study (see Chapter IV). The classroom ethnography also was an important source for the metalinguistic goals of the teacher, and the metalinguistic utterances of the students. Besides this, the classroom ethnography gave a setting and contextualization for data collected outside the classroom (e.g.: the oral composing protocols and the interviews), and it was the collection point for the student-produced texts. It was also a principal information source on my effect on the teacher and the students.
My procedure was to attend every class session during the quarter (the class met every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday from 12:30 to 1:30). A couple of class sessions were missed because of illness or other commitments. I received briefings on and tape-recordings of these sessions. I also attended during only one of the three exams—at first because of fear, on the part of both Nancy Mack and me, that my presence would harm the students' performance during the writing of the exam. Normally, I sat in the corner of the small, windowless basement classroom. Although I was in the corner, I was not outside the scene of interaction because the seats were arranged around the perimeter of the room, and all sixteen seats were occupied. During class, I sat at my desk with my yellow pad, furiously taking notes, while my tape recorder recorded verbal interaction, serving to back-up or correct my handwritten notes.

My notes were written on the right-half of each sheet of paper—the left half being saved for after-class meditations, comments and notes from my meetings with Nancy Mack (for a sample of these notes, refer to Chapter VI). During the class I tried to note down teacher and student utterances (with particular attention paid to metalinguistic utterances), non-verbal interaction, use of visuals, blackboard notes, and the like.
I also collected certain "artifacts" to supplement my notes and tape-recordings. Among these were all the worksheets and dittos received by the students. I also have copies of virtually every bit of writing produced by the students in the class (these will be discussed later in this chapter).

After many of the class sessions, Nancy and I would go our separate ways, looking over our notes for one-half hour or more, trying to get a sense of what happened that day, contemplating our future research needs and directions, or jotting in our research journals. The journals were kept sporadically, and are much more personal and less formal than the ethnographic classroom interaction notes. These contained feelings, hopes, frustrations, hunches, and ideas for pursuing the research. My journal contains numerous drawings and diagrams where I try to clarify my problem and figure out how to collect the data that I need (for a few sample pages, see Chapter VI).

After this private time of meditation and writing, Nancy Mack and I would meet and discuss the class. I would go over my notes, and she would corroborate, contradict, or supplement my observations. These meetings were valuable lessons in the power and need for triangulation. They were also a kind of etic-emic confrontation--my "etic" perspective confronting Nancy Mack's emic
interpretations, goals, and intentions. There were many times when we discovered problems with my own observations--distorted and biased by my expectations. These meetings helped us get a sense of what the facts were, helped us to speculate about student impressions, clarify our collaborative research roles, plan our research activities. In addition to this, Nancy Mack often used my comments to augment the effectiveness of her teaching by modifying her practices (I'll discuss this again in Chapter IV). These meetings clearly demonstrated to me that I wasn't just an observer in this classroom--I was a participant who affected the classroom practice. The dimensions of this participant-observer effect are critical information in qualitative research. This effect shows the relationship of our collaborative research to what Don Sanders (1981) called "developmental research," what Bronfenbrenner (1976) called "ecological experiments," and to Kyle and McCutcheon's (1982) discussion of action research and collaborative research for pedagogical improvement.

The Interviewing of Students

As my research progressed into the third week of the academic quarter, it became clear that not enough information on student metalinguistic awareness could be gained from the classroom discourse alone. I
decided to do some direct interviewing.

There are dangers in accepting at face value information gained via interviews. This is well-known in ethnographic circles, and measures can be taken by the interviewer to ensure the quality of the data (Becker and Geer, 1957). The principal measure that must be taken is to contextualize the interview responses in ethnographic participant-observation. In this way, one becomes aware of possible distortions, aware of sensitive and taboo areas, and one knows how to interpret (and even "translate") some of the interviewees' terms and expressions. There are a couple of particular problems in post-hoc interviews in composition research (Flower and Hayes, 1981). The first is that the interviewer sometimes gives the researcher the presumably orthodox answer, based on the interviewee's understanding of school expectations. A second problem is that memory and awareness of certain local decisions in composing (like lexical choice, syntactic structure, etc.) fade very quickly and often cannot be reconstructed in post hoc interviews. Such issues are best understood by examining the oral protocols recorded as the person composes.

With these limitations in mind, an interview was designed to get at the following issues: 1) The Context of Composing and the Student's Rhetorical Problem Representation. This has been seen as a crucial element
in the composing process by almost everyone who has studied that process (see Emig, 1971, p. 34; Berkenkotter, 1981; Flower and Hayes, 1981). This issue relates to the writer's global or high-level goals and purposes, and instructs the ways (subsidiary or local goals) the writer chooses to address these goals.

2) **Prewriting and Planning Activities.** I wanted to explore how students actually prepared to write (this issue was explored very nicely by Janet Emig, 1971).

3) **The Connection of Language and Thought.** Such questions were designed to look at the genesis of ideas and to see if ideas changed and developed as a function of the writing process.

4) **Relationship to Audience.** These questions were designed to probe the writer's awareness of his or her audience. What is the reader like? What does the reader know and understand? What must be made very explicit to the reader? These issues have been addressed in the literature by Ong (1975) and Berkenkotter (1981).

5) **The Relationship Between Oral and Written Communication Modes.** These questions attempted, without much success, to get at the transition from oral communication to literacy and the different structures and demands necessitated by that transition. These issues have been prominent in composing literature (see Olson, 1977; King and Rentel, 1979; Flower, 1979).

6) **Editing and Proofreading.** I wanted
to see if the writers proofread, edited, and revised their texts, and to observe what elements they changed. There is research that says Basic Writers do little editing and less revision (Perl, 1979). Other questions asked in this interview attempted to get at the influence of Nancy Mack and other teachers on the writing, the development of the student's writing skill (or problems), and the student's attitude towards writing.

Besides these rather general issues, the students were taken through one of their recent compositions and asked about specific local composing decisions such as rhetorical structure, sentence structure, lexical choice, reference, cross-outs, etc. The particular questions asked here were always a function of the features and errors found in a particular piece of writing.

In this interview, I attempted for each question to move from fairly general and vaguely worded questions down to more specific questions. I did this so as not to lead the student on, not to put my answer into his or her mouth. I did not use terms from the "Language Instruction Register" (DeStefano, 1972), that is, the technical terminology of composition, until the student introduced them. (I am thinking here of terms like brainstorming, freewriting, outline, narrative, expository, topic sentence, subtopics, etc.) If such terms
were never introduced, I would then directly ask the student about them later in the interview. The interview structure was loose enough to allow for serendipitous low-up to any of the student's responses.

A second interview took place at the end of the ten-week academic quarter. This interview addressed some of the same issues found in the first interview, but didn't take the students through a text in an attempt to explore local composing decisions. Here are the basic questions addressed in the second interview: 1) What kinds of writing problems did you have before coming into this course? 2) What are the principal areas of progress for you in your writing this quarter? Where have you improved the most? 3) Are there any aspects of your writing that are still weak, that still need some work, that still worry you? 4) How does a person become a good writer? How will you become a better writer? What would you have to do? 5) Is there anything unique about Mrs. Mack's way of teaching writing? As far as you can tell, what are her main concerns? What kinds of things done by Mrs. Mack do you find most helpful? 6) How do you prepare to write a paper? How do your ideas develop? 7) What are some of the various kinds of writing that you have done this quarter? How do these differ from each other? 8) What are the various building blocks of a piece of writing? 9) What do you
do when you are finished writing? 10) How do you personally know if something you've written is good or not? 11) To you personally, what makes for a good piece of writing? What is important to you in writing? What is unimportant, what do you not worry about? 12) What has been my (the researcher) effect on the class?

These questions attempted to get at the students' writing history, their sense of strengths and weaknesses, their sense of how one learns to write, their understanding of and response to their teacher's goals and methods, their sense of the process and structures of writing, and their feelings about my presence in the classroom.

Both of these interviews provided valuable information on the students' history as writers and their awareness of global and local composing issues. These interviews had structures that were open enough that they could generate some surprises—some important discoveries and insights. To give one terrific example—a practice interview was conducted with Wendy W., a student from Nancy Mack's other section of Basic Writing. During that interview, I asked Wendy about her remarkable word-choices. She told me why she chose to use such words and how she learned to tune in to the power of good lexical choices. It turned out that her good friend in high school taught her to be aware of words, and taught her where to find new words. From Wendy's responses, Nancy
Mack and I discovered that not all learning proceeds via official school channels, and we learned about the power and efficacy of peer instruction.

Sample transcripts of both the first and second interviews (of Brad ) can be found in Chapter VI of this dissertation. The information gained from these interviews helped build the profiles and characterizations of the students' metalinguistic awareness--described in Chapter IV's case studies.

Oral Composing Protocols

One of the principal goals of this research was to penetrate and discover the emic realities of student writers. I hoped to gain information about their composing processes, in particular the role that metalinguistic awareness plays in their composing. One approach to uncovering the mysteries of thinking is to ask students to exteriorize their thinking--think aloud as they compose. This procedure, oral composing protocols, has a significant history in recent research on composing processes as well as on other cognitive processes (see Flower and Hayes, 1981, p. 386, footnote 10).

The procedure works like this: a student is given a tape recorder and asked to think aloud as he or she composes. Describing the instructions, Flower and Hayes (1981), p. 368) say: "We ask them to work on the task
as they normally would--thinking, jotting notes, and writing--except that they must think out loud. They are asked to verbalize everything that goes through their minds as they write, including stray notions, false starts, and incomplete or fragmentary thought. The writers are not asked to engage in any kind of introspection or self-analysis while writing, but simply to think out loud while working like a person talking to herself." Janet Emig used this procedure in the late 1960's and early 1970's. Sondra Perl (1979) also used this procedure as have Linda Flower and John Hayes (1981) and S. Pianko (1979). Flower and Hayes (1981, p. 368) contend that such protocols have advantages over after-the-fact introspective analyses. Introspective analyses can be inaccurate, influenced by writers' notions of what they should have done. Another advantage that oral protocols have is that they capture awareness of issues (what Flower and Hayes might call lower-level goals and others have called local or subsidiary awareness) which fades soon after the immediate problem is resolved. Of course, it would be naive to think that the task of composing aloud and the presence of a tape recorder don't introduce some bias and artifact into the data--there exists no way to directly perceive cognitive processes. Still, oral composing protocols yield one excellent source of data--a source that
will be triangulated against data from classroom interaction, interviews, journals, etc.

The products of oral composing protocols are the following: a tape recording of exteriorized thinking; a written text, accompanied by written planning sheets. A transcript of portions of one student's oral protocol is included in Chapter VI along with the written text produced by that student. These protocols were examined for metalinguistic awareness, and thus constituted important data for my case studies. The writing task given the students involved preparing the first draft of their third edited paper. For this particular paper, the students could write on any topic they wished, as long as they wrote in an expository mode. As for motivation to do these composing protocols, Nancy Mack offered to give each student credit for five journal entries for the one or two-hours it took to do the procedure. The students had to do forty one-page journal entries for the quarter, and were usually happy to trade an interview or a composing protocol for journal credits. Both Nancy Mack and I felt that such a trade with students was legitimate--after all, the students were quite busy and had very little free-time. And besides, the interviews and protocols served some of the same pedagogical functions that the journals did. Nancy Mack and I sensed remarkable cooperation and interest from the
students in regard to their participation and motivation in our research efforts. Nancy developed a remarkable relationship with her students, based on mutual trust, respect, and shared goals. This relationship survived the incredible work demands she placed on the students, and the demanding grading policy she uses. Both Nancy and I respected the students' opinions, needs, and time limitations—and that respect was returned in their excellent attitudes and cooperation towards our research.

Written Texts Produced by Students

There is abundant evidence in the research literature on composing that composing context is a major factor in shaping the characteristics of the texts. Some important dimensions of this context include the field, tenor, and mode of the discourse in question (Halliday and Hasan, 1976; Pappas, 1981). The three issues are manifest in things like the following:

a) The social relationship between the writers and the reader;

b) The writing task as presented by the teacher;
   1) the composition topic;
   2) the rhetorical mode requested by the teacher;

c) The problem or task representation, as constructed by the writer;

d) Whether or not the writing is graded.
To put these contextual factors into more concrete terms, consider the various kinds of writing done by Nancy Mack's students:

1) **Journals.** The journal writings are personal reflections, written in what Britton (1975) has called the "reflective" mode. The journals were not graded, but checked and responded to by Nancy Mack. The primary audience for a journal is the author himself, but the teacher must also be considered part of the audience. The journals need not be written in full sentences or in a formal school register. Their purpose is to develop fluency in writing, and to serve reflection and thought.

2) **Brainstorming and Freewriting.** These writings and jottings are turned in to Nancy Mack, but are not graded. These constitute part of the composing process and are preliminaries to formal writings. These can be extremely personal and idiosyncratic.

3) **Prewriting and Planning.** Although prewriting and planning sheets are turned in to Nancy Mack, they are not graded and not considered formal or public writings. These are elements of the writing process and are expected to be idiosyncratic.

4) **In-class Exams.** For such writings, the rhetorical modality is predefined and the topic sometimes prespecified. These exams must be planned, written, and edited by
the student in a one or two-hour testing session. These need to be written in a formal school register, and the reader is assumed to be the teacher.

5) Edited Papers. For such writings, as for the in-class exams, the rhetorical modality is defined and the topic sometimes prespecified. Edited papers are often products of multiple drafts and are possibly affected by peer-tutoring, teacher-tutoring, etc. These papers are considered formal and must be written in a formal school register. Naturally, the teacher is assumed to be the principal audience for the edited papers.

Each kind of writing presents limitations and opportunities, as far as my research goes. For example, journals are worthless for getting at the ability to handle rhetorical structures and features of the formal school writing register. On the other hand, the journals can be excellent sources for insight into the genesis of ideas, attitudes towards writing, feelings about the pedagogy, etc. Certainly they can be excellent sources for discovering the students' metalinguistic awareness—particularly because Nancy Mack often urged the students to reflect on the writing process in their journals.

The in-class exams and the edited papers are the best data sources for insight into formal written language performance. One could examine these for
rhetorical structure, lexical choice, syntactic complexity, use of transition devices, elements of textual coherence, logical development, etc. I have chosen to do my text analysis on the in-class exams, even though there are some compelling reasons to consider doing the analysis on the edited papers. The point has been made to me that almost all public and professional writing goes through extensive drafts, revision and editing. While this is true, I feel that I cannot be sure of the mediation that went into the final drafts of the edited papers. These papers may have been shaped in part by tutors, roommates, parents, etc. Therefore, the text analysis part of this dissertation will make use of the in-class exams.

Examples of all these types of writing for one particular student can be found in Chapter VI of this dissertation.

Conclusion

I have described the principal sources of data used in this research. But there are other less formal data sources—all fair game for ethnographic studies. These include informal talks outside of class with Nancy Mack and with the students in the class, and the reading of Nancy's writings. These informal data sources are important elements of context that shed light on, and sometimes triangulate with, the more formal data sources.
CHAPTER IV
ETHNOGRAPHIC INTERPRETATIONS AND CASE STUDIES

Overview of the Chapter.

The last three chapters of this dissertation will be markedly different from the first three chapters. For the most part, the early chapters served to set up this research, and represent my synthesis of other people's ideas. These last chapters will display and organize my own discoveries. Chapter IV represents the ethnographic part of this dissertation and features many ethnographic case studies and characterizations. The chapter begins with a listing and explanation of the principal categories of Metalinguistic Awareness that form the basis for the rest of this study. This section is followed by a case study and characterization of Nancy Mack, the teacher of the Basic Writing class involved in my research. Included at the end of this case study is a brief self-portrait written by Nancy Mack to serve as a kind of triangulation for the readers of this dissertation. Following this, there will be a characterization of this class as a functioning whole. Here classroom ambience, student-teacher relationships,
instructional procedures, and researcher's role will be discussed. After this comes the case studies of five students from this class. These studies will focus on the metalinguistic awareness of each student, and will attempt to relate that awareness to the texts produced by these students.

For the most part this chapter will be written in a narrative style supplemented by quotes from the oral interaction and the written texts. The oral interaction quotes will come from my written notes and will thus be approximations. When the exact wording is crucial to the meaning, I will transcribe the utterances verbatim from the audio tapes. I will also use some charts and graphs in this chapter when it proves helpful in clarifying and organizing the data. Even with these graphs, the emphasis here will be on a narrative characterization arising out of my many data sources (classroom notes, discussions, interviews, protocols, etc.).

Metalinguistic Awareness Categories.

The seventeen principal categories of metalinguistic awareness that will be used in my case studies of individual student writers have been derived directly from my ethnographic classroom-interaction field notes. These "grounded" categories were developed using the constant-comparative approach recommended by Glaser
(1969), and represent what he calls "saturated categories." It is important to note that these metalinguistic issues were derived directly from Nancy Mack's teaching. One of the goals of organized teaching and schooling is to develop various kinds of meta-awareness in students (see Bruner, 1973). I have decided that the categories of metalinguistic awareness that I wanted to look for in these students would be the categories represented in Nancy Mack's teaching. Other approaches to generating metalinguistic categories are possible and might be fruitful in other research projects. These approaches might rely more on searches of linguistic, psycholinguistic, and rhetorical literature. The disadvantage of these approaches might be that they couldn't examine as directly the link between pedagogy, learning, and performance.

The fact that I have limited my metalinguistic categories to seventeen is itself an example of compression and organization of the data. A cursory glance at any college writing handbook or rhetoric reveals that one could isolate hundreds or thousands of metalinguistic categories. Of course, Nancy Mack didn't address that many issues—that would be a pedagogic disaster, terribly overloading the students' (and the teacher's) cognitive structures, and ignoring the fact that even the poorest students bring considerable linguistic
I am going to list and describe each category. The list and rough taxonomy that I will present do not begin to show the most basic truth about these categories. The data clearly show that these categories are not discrete and non-overlapping. Their overlappings and interactions are amazingly complex and serve to show the dynamic, interactive, and holistic nature of composing and the myth of discreet subskills.

The first group of categories deals with awareness of the composing process:

1. Idea Generation and Development. This category covers the growth, development, and changes in the ideas and topics used in essays. This was one of the main issues addressed by Nancy Mack, and was a theme that ran from the first day of class until the final exam. Nancy believes that writing is a way to generate, clarify, and make more precise one's ideas and thoughts. Many students came into the class chinking that they had no original ideas or having hopelessly muddled ideas. They were unaware of any techniques for generating and clarifying ideas, and felt that one comes to a writing situation with an idea full-blown and perfectly ordered. To combat this destructive false-awareness, Nancy frequently discussed the relationship of thought to writing, and gave the students exercises to help discover this relationship.
Some of these exercises included brainstorming, free-writing, journal writing, revision of rough drafts, and classroom discussion.

2. **Audience Awareness.** Another major category that came up day after day throughout the quarter involved the writer's sense of audience, his or her responsibilities to that audience, and the psychological needs of that audience. This category addresses some of the particular demands of written text, and how it differs from oral interaction. This category is particularly fascinating because it interacts so directly with almost all the other categories. For example, one's sense of audience affects the angle or point of view taken by the writer; it affects rhetorical structure in the way ideas are organized and developed; it affects sentence structure, word choice, and even punctuation and spelling. Nancy Mack did a remarkable job in explaining something as mundane as comma-usage in terms of the psychological comfort and needs of readers. She also excelled in teaching students how to be good readers--of both their own and other students' essays. Audience awareness and related issues are dealt with primarily in the proofreading, revision, and peer-editing exercises done by the class.

3. **Angle.** "Angle" is Nancy Mack's term for a category that is exceedingly complex and addresses issues like
writer's stance, point-of-view, attitude, feelings, emotions, and interest. Nancy borrows the journalism term of "angle" because it brings home the idea that one's perspective affects the organization, interpretation, interest level, and audience impact of a group of mere facts. "Angle" is another interactive and dynamic category, affecting many other categories. First of all, it deals with an author's relationship to a topic. Nancy urges: "You have to have a firm commitment to a topic--a topic you believe in." "Angle" also affects whether your writing is bland and boring or whether it is interesting, reflecting the author's commitments, emotions, and feelings. Nancy shows how an author's angle affects issues like rhetorical structure and word choice: "[It] lets you know what to keep and what to throw out... what's important for your story."

4. Heuristics. This is a rather peculiar category--but it is an issue brought up by Nancy Mack many times, and is something that affects significantly the quality of writing. By "heuristics" I mean the understanding that many of the rules and teachings derived from Basic Writing instruction must be looked at as useful rules-of-thumb or heuristic devices, and must not be reified into commandments. Here are three quotes from Nancy Mack which bring home this point: "There are steps to go through in writing a paper. But there isn't a fixed
list of steps for everybody." Referring to the idea that there is a specific number of subtopics needed for adequate paragraph development, she said: "This isn't gospel truth." In regard to some boring, but "correct" student essays, she once said: "I've made you into little machines...I've made you subtopic addicts...this hurts your writing because it makes you just try to satisfy the teacher." The basic message of all this seems to be: be aware of these heuristic rules-of-thumb, but don't allow them to control your goals and ideas--writing is not a mechanical act. Incidentally, Nancy doesn't use the technical term "heuristics" in her Basic Writing instruction, but does use it in her more technical writings and presentations.

5. Proofreading/Revision. This process-category deals with Nancy's concern that the students understand that good writing is not an instant product of a first draft, but the culmination of a long process involving idea generation, composing, proofreading, editing, and revision. Nancy is also concerned that the students differentiate between "re-visions" where significant changes in logic, presentation, and organization are made, and the surface-structure proofreading often taught in high school and reinforced by composition teachers' evaluation procedures.
6. **False Awareness.** I've included in the process categories an interesting issue which I've termed "false awareness." By this I mean awareness of mis-teachings and incorrect notions about the functions, features, and processes involved in composing. Throughout the entire quarter, Nancy addressed these incorrect notions because she felt that they inhibited or destroyed the students' written texts. Below are some of the incorrect notions that Nancy wanted students to be on guard for: the idea that you always must write from a detailed outline; that writing is an instant thing, that good writers can get it exactly right on the first draft; that ideas and topics are received full-blown; that avoiding mechanical errors like misspellings and wrong punctuation are the main concerns of writers; that certain length or word-count measures define a paragraph; that commas are put in places where a reader would naturally pause. Misconceptions such as these are at best nuisances, causing mechanics errors. At worst, they can make writing flat, insipid, or sometimes impossible. John Downing (1979) called such misconceptions "cognitive confusion" and linked this confusion to reading failure. Cognitive confusion about the functions, features, and processes of composing also cause problems.

The next eight metalinguistic awareness categories deal with issues of the rhetorical structure of
written discourse. These issues are relatively unproblematic—addressed in almost every rhetoric or writing handbook. The categories are: (7) Narrative Mode, (8) Expository Mode, (9) Topic Sentence, (10) Topic Development, (11) Narrative Climax, (12) Subtopics, (13) Transitions, and (14) Conclusion. These terms are used in Nancy Mack's teaching, and thus form part of her "Language Instruction Register" (DeStefano, 1972). Many of the students pick up on this technical vocabulary, and display it as part of their metalinguistic awareness. Although the descriptions of these eight rhetorical structure categories are relatively unproblematic, it is interesting to note that these categories, like the process categories, are dynamic and interactive. A good example is "topic sentence." Nancy Mack makes it very clear that this rhetorical issue is related to the author's "angle," and is a function of the author's "audience awareness." In addition to this, "topic sentence" can certainly be linked to the categories "idea generation and development" and "word choice." Another interactive category is "transitions." Transitions are rhetorical links between subtopics or between paragraphs. Nancy Mack often mentioned how transitions served the psychological processing and comprehension needs of the audience. Besides this relation of "transitions" to "audience awareness," there is a link to the
category "word choice." This is true because transitions are often signalled by a select group of adverbial conjunctions (since, however, therefore, although, etc.).

The final two major categories are (15) **Punctuation** and (16) **Word Choice**. Like most of the other categories, these can be intensely interactive. These categories are not taught as mere mechanics conventions, learnable only by rote memory. Nancy Mack approaches punctuation from the issue of audience awareness and audience needs. Commas are seen to have psychological functions for readers. Commas, periods, semi-colons, etc., are seen as roadsigns for the readers, telling them how to read, process, and organize the information that follows. For Nancy Mack (and hopefully some of her students), even mechanics are not mechanical.

The seventeenth and last category is termed **Minor Categories**. This term reflects the time and energy expended on these issues in Nancy Mack's class, and not the relative importance of the issues. Included here is metalinguistic awareness of spelling, sentence structure, paragraphs, unity, and logical organization.

Of the thousands of possible metalinguistic awareness issues, these seventeen represent the focus and emphasis of Nancy Mack's instruction. These categories are intensely interactive and show that in
writing, the whole is indeed greater than the sum of its parts. To speak of subskills in writing is to use a useful (perhaps) heuristic--it is not, however, the gospel truth.

On the following page is a rough taxonomic diagram of these seventeen categories of metalinguistic awareness. What is missing from the diagram is the complex interaction of these categories.

Text Analysis Categories and Issues

One of the principal goals of this dissertation is to see if the students' developing metalinguistic awareness has an impact on the quality of their written texts. The metalinguistic issues I have chosen to look at come directly from Nancy Mack's instruction, so I am also attempting in this dissertation to examine the links between pedagogy and text quality. To make this linkage more direct, it seems necessary to find an approach to text analysis that connects the quality and features of texts to the identified metalinguistic awareness issues (and thus to Nancy Mack's instruction).

Obviously, there is no such ready-made approach to text analysis. There are some extraordinarily sophisticated approaches that get at some important qualities of texts, but these could address only a couple of my
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<th>Awareness of Writing Processes</th>
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<td>6. False Awareness</td>
<td>14. Conclusion</td>
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<td>(spelling, sentence structure, paragraphs, unity, logical organization, etc.)</td>
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Figure 1
Metalinguistic Categories Derived From Nancy Mack's Teaching
identified issues. I am thinking here of cohesion analysis, as pursued by Halliday and Hasan (1976), Pappas (1981), Pettegrew (1981), and King and Rentel (1981). Cohesion analysis can get at some aspects of audience awareness, word choice, and transitions (to cite three of my metalinguistic categories). However, with all its complexity and sophistication, cohesion analysis cannot address all the issues and problems for even these categories. Barbara Pettegrew (1981) made a very strong statement on the limitation of cohesion analysis (or any other system of discourse analysis). She said that there can be no single, universal, or simple measures of writing maturity (see also Witte and Faigley's (1981) remarks). One of the principal reasons for the impossibility of a single, universal measure of text maturity is the impact of context on text. Halliday and Hasan (1976) claim that three dimensions of context (field, tenor, and mode) interact to shape texts. These three aspects of context were not (and probably could not be) held constant in this Basic Writing class.

In light of these problems, I chose to handle the student texts in the following manner. I made up a checklist of text characteristics that corresponded to my identified metalinguistic categories. On that
checklist, I made note if the characteristic was present or absent, and I followed this up with comments and examples. The text characteristics that I looked at included: appropriate use of reference; clear and interesting angle; evidence of editing and revision; presence of narrative structure or expository structure; presence of topic sentence; presence of subtopics; presence of transitional devices; presence of a conclusion, etc.

Of course none of the text issues mentioned above is unproblematic. But in the absence of a reliable coding procedure to get at all of these issues, I made use of my own critical judgement (of course even the most sophisticated text analysis procedures must in the end make use of critical judgements).

The text characteristic checksheets were considered preliminary analysis data, and were not reproduced in the case studies found later in this chapter. The information on these checksheets was used to develop the text critiques found in the case studies. An examination of these critiques shows that I attempted to do a kind of literary criticism of the students' texts. Although my text criticisms and comments did not involve the crosschecking and interrater reliability checks often found in quantitative studies of
text development, I did have Nancy Mack's remarks and grades available for triangulation. I did not look at Nancy's remarks and grades until after I analyzed and critiqued a text. And I found that her comments didn't always agree with my own.

This approach to text analysis seems appropriate to the broad and general goals of this dissertation. But it certainly would be useful, in other studies, to identify only one or two textual features, and examine texts for them with all the rigor of a particular coding system. Going in another direction, there also seems to be a need for Basic Writing research that examines texts in the traditions of literary criticism. Such analyses might be more holistic, looking at the communicative and even artistic impact of a whole text rather than analyzing particular "parts" or a text.
Case Study of the Teacher--Nancy Mack.

**Introduction.** In this case study I intend to narratively describe and characterize Nancy Mack--the teacher of the class of Basic Writing that has been the focus of my research. I will discuss some elements of her personal history, in particular her educational and teaching background. From her statements, actions, and writings, I will infer her pedagogical theory and goals and her theory of the learning and teaching of composition skills. Then I will discuss the teacher-student relationship that I have seen develop in her classes, and will discuss student responses to Nancy's efforts and demands. Finally, as a form of triangulation, I have asked Nancy to write a brief self-portrait, addressing some of the above issues. The information included in this case study comes from classroom notes and observations, conversations with Nancy Mack, and a familiarity with her academic writings and classroom materials.

**History.** Nancy Mack was born in a lower middle-class neighborhood in Dayton, Ohio, and was educated in the local public schools there. She received a B.S. in Education from Bowling Green, and an M.A. in Education from Ohio State. After graduating from Bowling Green, she taught English for many years in middle and junior high schools in the Columbus, Ohio area.

In recent years she has alternated between teaching college-level Basic Writing to Freshmen at Ohio State
University and to prisoners at the Marion Ohio Correctional Institute. She likes both educational contexts, but has some preference for teaching in prison. The prison is a demanding place to work; the prisoners can really be highly motivated to learn and really need and want the instruction. Their passions and needs often contrast sharply with the Freshmen at Ohio State's Columbus campus, where the students are younger, less desperate, better prepared academically, and often less motivated. The main campus students are often less demanding than the prisoners—more docile in the face of mysterious bureaucratic procedures, and less inclined to ask why they are being called upon to do some seemingly strange activity. Nancy believes the prison teaching keeps her sharp: she learns not to take much for granted, and how to teach things graphically, dramatically, and meaningfully so that they will be remembered. Besides these things, the prisoners have taught her always to explain why an activity is being done. Nancy's basic pedagogical theory and practices are clearly shaped by her prison work.

Besides her work teaching in middle schools, college, and prison, Nancy Mack is quite active in giving in-service teacher training and academic presentations. She does this many times a year, and she is often paid for these as a consultant. Apparently these presentations
and workshops are quite enthusiastically received—she is constantly getting requests for these educational services.

Nancy Mack is presently a Ph.D. candidate in the College of Education at Ohio State University. She is doing an ethnographic research project on methods of teaching college-level Basic Writing. Much of her data was collected during the Winter quarter of 1982 when I was engaged in my own research. We are sharing much of the same data base, but are going in very different directions with it. Nancy's dissertation, which is being pursued under the guidance of Professors Don Bateman and Gail McCutcheon, will probably be completed late in 1982 or in 1983.

Pedagogical Theory and Goals. It is rare when any teacher explicitly knows or tells his or her pedagogical (much less ontological) theory. And even if a teacher were to explain such a personal theory, it would be wise to see if that theory were put into practice. In this section, most of my inferences are drawn from Nancy's teaching practices. Occasionally I will compare and contrast her practices with her verbally expressed theory.

A good place to begin this discussion is to explore her attitudes towards developmental education—does she believe these students are capable of academic success
and capable of learning to write well? One would expect that all developmental teachers would hold that as a basic belief. But from my discussions with other Basic Writing instructors, that is clearly not the case. I think that from her words and actions, Nancy believes most of her students can make it. And early in the quarter, she brings out into the open this question which seems to be on every student's mind. In the second class of the quarter, Nancy asked the students why they were placed in the lowest English class. She then talked a little about the placement process, mentioning ACT scores and the English placement essay. Here is some dialogue from that class:

Nancy: "Are you in 100.01 because you're stupid?"

"No... everybody comes here thinking they're not as bright as the other guy."

"It's not the smart people who make it in college--it's the people who work hard. It has more to do with your guts than your brain, possibly."

Besides this talk about intelligence and hard work, Nancy seems to lay much of the blame for her students' academic failure on the secondary school system and the teaching practices found there. She discusses the "false-awareness" about the writing process taught at many schools, and how these wrong ideas can inhibit and
destroy good writing. She criticizes the schools for direct grammar instruction—something Nancy believes to be futile and unhelpful for making progress in composing skill. She is also very critical of the fact that the students didn't write much in high school. Nancy mentions over and over again that practice is an essential ingredient in developing writing skill: "If you want to learn to write, you have to write."

Nancy communicates to the students all throughout the quarter that guts, organization, a clear concept of what you want and where you're going, and some basic study skills will lead to academic success. To this end, she spends considerable time discussing attitudes, emotions, and behaviors that will help them make it through college. She also gives them practical study skills and mnemonic devices. To conclude, Nancy Mack certainly seems to believe that these students can be successful. She backs up her beliefs by giving the students the technology (ideas, attitudes, and techniques) for college success. Sometimes this aspect of her pedagogy comes across as preachy, but the students never doubt her sincerity (this comes across very clearly in my interviews of students).

As I mentioned before, Nancy Mack's theories of how people learn have been influenced by her work with prisoners. One aspect of her theory must be: teaching (and
learning) will fail if it is boring. Being boring must be one of the cardinal sins for Nancy Mack. She doesn't want to see it in her teaching, and she doesn't want to see it in her students' writing. I think Nancy's teaching style and activities have developed in light of this injunction "not to be boring." In front of class, Nancy often becomes a flamboyant actor. The flamboyance is reflected at times in the clothes she wears, but more often in her voice modulation, non-verbal actions, teaching "visuals," and class activities. She uses her voice in a very skilled manner. When she wants to address "false awareness," she puts on her affected, mocking "teacher voice." This voice is a signal to the students to be aware of and disdainful of wrong-headed ideas they were taught in high school about the composing process.

Besides her acting and clever use of voice modulation, Nancy uses flamboyant and unusual visual aids. She takes a multi-modality approach to the teaching of composition. She is particularly interested in getting ideas across through use of non-verbal visual images. The "visuals" are usually cartoons she has drawn to illustrate her points. Some examples of these visuals, along with the points they make are:
a. "Thought and Writing" Visual. This visual was quite simple, consisting of a blue sheet labelled "write" laid over a yellow sheet labelled "think." When these two sheets were overlaid and projected on the overhead, the new color green was produced. The point made by the visual was that writing can be a way of thinking and discovering something completely new.

b. "Idea Generation" Series of Visuals. This was a series of four visuals which were intended to reveal aspects of the writing process, in particular how ideas are generated and developed in writing. The first visual dealt with free-writing, picturing the procedure as a kind of "memory dump." The visual showed a guy's head opened up. Inside there was a dump-truck pouring out memories. The second visual pictured TNT and ammunition inside the guy's head--these were to be put to good use later in the edited writing. The third visual pictured a light bulb in the guy's head along with some socks and keys which had been lost. The point was that the memory-dump and free-writing processes had led to rediscovery. The final visual in this series pictured gears working in the guy's mind. The point was simply that free-writing helps to get the thinking process started.

c. "Writing-is-not-an-Instant-Thing" Visuals. This series of visuals compared the composing process to having a baby. One visual showed a baby vending machine. Nancy commented on the absurdity of this idea, and said that it is equally absurd to expect one's mind to be some kind of instant theme-machine. Then Nancy showed a cartoon in which a man had a very swollen head--his mind was "pregnant with ideas."

These are only a few of the many visuals used by Nancy Mack in this class. The visuals were dynamic "visual performances," accompanied by oral narrations. The brief prose renderings given above do not begin to show the fun, humor, power, or teaching potential of these visuals. For a fuller rendering of these "visual metaphors," see Nancy Mack's dissertation (to be completed in 1983).
Besides these cartoons, Nancy also includes as "visuals" certain dramatic actions she stages to get across an important point. One fun example occurred late in the quarter when seemingly out of the blue, Nancy pulled a large, bloody, smelly carp out of a bag and said: "Here is a perfect example of what you did wrong on your last exam." After the wild student response, Nancy explained the purpose of her "visual." She said students often throw out vivid and dramatic examples in their expository essays, but often don't develop and explain their points. She compared this to her throwing a bloody, dead fish into a classroom--dramatic and interesting, but what does it mean, what is the point? The students will never forget Nancy's fish. But interestingly enough, they didn't remember the exact point Nancy was making. As they reconstructed the incident from memory, they said the point was:

"Don't be boring." (Scott)
"Don't have a dead topic." (Susan)
"Have vivid detail in your writing." (Barry)
"Our papers stink." (Scott)
"Something in a paper has to have a reason for being there." (Reg).

All these issues were themes running through Nancy's instruction, but only Reg's remark reflected Nancy's explicit goals for this visual. The issue of how
if) these visual cartoons and activities teach is being explored in Nancy Mack's own dissertation.

There is one unwished-for side-effect of Nancy Mack's flamboyance and acting. And that is, sometimes she dominates the class, inhibiting student discussion and interaction. And this contradicts some of her expressed goals of generating classroom dialogue and of learning from the students. During the first class Nancy said: "Since this is a writing class, we'll be doing a lot of writing in class. I won't be lecturing as much as I am today." My interaction notes show that this didn't turn out to be the case. Not much writing was done in class during the quarter, and much of each classroom lesson was taken up by Nancy's lectures and presentations.

Two other aspects of Nancy Mack's teaching that are worth mentioning are her grading policies and the amount of work she asks from her students. Nancy is a rather difficult grader, but ironically her grading standard does not seem to elicit much complaining. Grading is an issue brought up frequently by her (and by the students) throughout the course. In her own words, Nancy wants to make grading as "fair as possible," and make the criteria clear and understandable. For this reason, she prefers to hand back graded essays in a personal conference with the student where the attempt
is made to establish some kind of intersubjective understanding of the grade. Nancy's grading system puts more weight on papers done later in the quarter, in deference to the expected learning and development of the students.

In spite of all her efforts to be clear and fair, I personally could never grasp the existence of perfectly fair and clear grading criteria. I often disagreed with her evaluations. Perhaps this a function of the fact that I didn't participate in the "negotiation of meaning" regarding grades that took place in private student-teacher conferences. In spite of this, Nancy's efforts to establish intersubjective understanding with her students about grades must have been fairly successful--my ethnographic observations, conversations, and interviews found very little grumbling and dissatisfaction in this area.

As aspect of this course that I found truly astounding was the amount of work Nancy was able to get from the students. The students wrote four exam essays, four edited essays, and forty journal entries (of one page each). Besides this, there were in-class freewritings, some grammatical skill work for people having certain problems, and the preparatory work for the exams and edited papers. This preparatory work included brainstorming, freewriting, outlines, rough drafts, drafts of topic sentences, etc. A rough estimate of the
number of words written by a student (Brad) in this one-quarter course--14,000. There was some grumbling about this work load, particularly in light of the typical heavy academic loads of Freshmen, and the fact that most 1982 Freshmen are holding part-time jobs. Even so, only two or so of the fifteen students in this class had chronic problems in keeping up with the work demands. I believe Nancy was able to ask so much from her students because: a) it was clear that she returned, in energy and hours worked, more than they were asked; b) it was clear that if they did the work, they would pass the course; c) they felt that the work would pay off in their becoming effective writers and successful students. The best student remark on this was from Clayton: "It's not so bad [the work demands]...you have to write a lot to get good at it. She's just trying to prepare us for English 110."

Theory of Composition Instruction. An important element of Nancy Mack's theory on composition instruction has already been addressed earlier in this chapter when the principal metalinguistic awareness categories were discussed. These categories represent the focus and emphasis of her teaching, and probably are a function of the needs and levels of the students in that class. Besides these metalinguistic categories, there are a number of other things that can be said about her
implicit theory of composition learning and instruction. First of all, she seems convinced that it is important for writers to have a clear sense of the functions, purposes, and processes of composing. In the process of generating the true picture of composing, she often fights false notions about the composing process that were picked up in the students' previous schooling. In this regard, we can see concerns Nancy Mack has in common with John Downing (1979) who argues that "cognitive clarity" about the reading process is crucial to reading success.

Another motif of her instruction is that one's writing is somehow connected to one's emotions, feelings, and attitudes about the world. Writing disconnected from such things is bloodless, boring, uninteresting, mechanical. One step in the process of becoming a good writer is getting to know your own mind, what she calls "developing a repertoire of your 'youness.'" I have already mentioned earlier in this chapter the impact this can have on angle, audience awareness, idea development, topic sentence, word choice, and punctuation. To help them develop a "repertoire of their 'youness,'" Nancy has them do many different sorts of activities. One thing done all the time is brainstorming. Brainstorming is sometimes accomplished in the dynamic of class discussion. Ideas are explored, developed, and
challenged in the classroom interaction. Other times, brainstorming is done with pencil and paper, in individual contemplation. Besides brainstorming, the students are required to keep a journal. The journal is graded only as present or absent so that ideas could be developed more freely and so that risk-taking and experimentation might occur. Nancy tells her students via an interesting handout she has developed that the journal is like an artist's sketch pad. It's a place to explore, practice, and try out ideas, a place to reflect and begin to understand yourself (see Figure 19 in Chapter VI).

Another composing activity used by Nancy Mack is freewriting. The goal here is to free-up the student's writing, develop fluency, and begin to see writing as a way to think. This process didn't work for me, and didn't work for some of the other students. But some students did incorporate freewriting as a preparatory step in the development of their papers. Many of the activities like brainstorming, freewriting, and journal writing had another goal besides developing thought and getting the students in touch with their ideas. That goal was to communicate that "writing is not an instant thing." There is abundant preliminary work behind every final draft.

A final aspect of Nancy Mack's theory of how people learn to write that I would like to discuss involves the
role of errors and risk-taking in the process. Nancy made clear many times that errors are a normal, even critical, part of the learning process. Nancy expected that the gross number of errors would even increase as the students struggled to incorporate the new ideas that they were being exposed to. Nancy decried "safe-writing," where students took no risks for fear of making surface-structure errors. She found that risk-free writing often had no angle, and was insipid and boring both to the writer and the reader. Nancy rewarded the risk-takers and gave poorer grades to student writers who played it safe with shallow, uninteresting compositions.

_Nancy Mack's Self-Portrait._ The essay that follows was written for me by Nancy Mack in July, 1982. The essay was written before Nancy had read any of my dissertation writings.

** * * * **

Although I have spent numerous years as a student of education in various institutions of higher learning, I have found there is no source of education more valuable than a teacher's own classroom. Regretfully, teachers frequently program themselves for the day's activities before entering the classroom, precluding the opportunity for truly interacting with their students. Since I have all this edifying information about education available to me in my classroom, I take total control over the proceedings. I try not to let the demands of others pressure me
into doing something in which I do not believe. To take full responsibility for one's actions as a teacher is no small task. It is much easier to do what most other teachers do or to fulfill the expectancies of others. Breaking through cultural beliefs about education requires a shattering of false consciousness. What is commonly held as "good" for the student may be far more destructive than most teachers care to see. Before meaningful classroom activities can be designed, the motives for traditional practices must be analyzed. An activity or policy which is carried out without a clear intent will simply become something else--most likely a mindless act, as is the case with most classroom activities. Similarly, it is not enough for teachers to know why they have created an activity or policy; the students must understand the reason and hopefully agree with its intent--otherwise the students' participation will become pointless. Teachers must constantly lay their cards on the table: the student must know "why we're doing this." Both the teacher and the students are intentional beings (to paraphrase Sartre); this being so, they must both have reasons for their actions, a method to the madness.

In this respect, the teacher must be constantly working out his or her own authenticity. I would call this activity of penetrating experience and using that wisdom to guide further actions as the act of research. I see my
classroom as offering a constant opportunity for research. I try not to restrict myself with inflexible lesson plans. At one time I even held out the hope that I could create the one great lesson plan which once manufactured could then be used over and over again. Now I look at methodology as an ongoing discovery process, a puzzle with my solutions, created daily, as the only valid ones. I have learned to have faith in my own guidance system; starting each journey accordingly without pushing my rudder against the currents, I try instead to allow the climate and the winds of the classroom to assist in my steering or to use a popular phrase: I try to go with the flow.

By necessity basic writers are a motley crew. They are often people in stress trying desperately to escape the societal forces which are pressuring them to assume an undesirable position in the social structure. I realize that society is structured in such a way that these students are not meant to succeed. For this reason, I want to get my students to try again at the game of school. But in the same respect I want them to participate in the game with the added wisdom that, after all, it is only a game. The fact that one fails is no measure of one's intelligence; it is merely a measure of whether one can play this particular game well or not. Most basic writers are not even aware that there is a game,
let alone one with hidden rules.

It is my belief that all my students are capable of writing interesting, meaningful prose. The basic writer's problems are caused by the system rather than the student. I believe that all my students are intelligent enough to master any abstract concept. The trick is to make the concept concrete enough to discuss it in the first place. Language provides this power; through it one can analyze and discuss concepts which are undescRibable in concrete terms, such as love, truth, beauty, justice, etc. When a person comes up against the undescRibable, one can resort to metaphor. For this reason and others too complex to go into here, I try to bring to the classroom concrete representations of an abstract concept which I wish to discuss. If I can provide a visual metaphor for a concept which can become a gambit for discussion and thought, then my students may become conscious of that aspect of writing and thereby gain control over it in their writing. I do not hesitate to teach semicolons, transitions, introductions, and other topics which my colleagues feel are too difficult for the remedial writer. Unless they are exposed to the richness of the possibilities of language, they will be relegated to mindless tasks like digging ditches or circling nouns.
It is my job to interfere in the process of writing. After a work of art is finished is hardly the time to criticize. Quite logically, the student may complain, "Well, why didn't you tell me all this stuff before I wrote this?" The writing teacher must wade into the mess at the draft stage and help with the tidying up. Even at this point the suggestions can only be broad ones, focusing the student on global improvements rather than surface errors.

At the same time, each writing experience must be analyzed and generalized from so that the student can raise his or her consciousness about writing rather than merely cranking out one isolated paper after another. Each assignment must be analyzed in terms of what it has taught the student about the writing process. As the teacher, I must constantly relate what the students are doing in their drafts to a larger generalization about writing. Each student's struggle becomes public knowledge so that we can all glean something from the experience. Some of my best classes are those where I feel like I am conducting a symphony: I point to each student's draft as an example of a recurring composition refrain; each student plays his part in the opus; each student's work combines with others to build to a crescendo--a generalization about the writing process.

I have gotten ahead of myself because before all the laborious drafts and revisions there is an important part of writing that is often referred to as prewriting. But I do not believe that prewriting comes before real writing.
Prewriting in this way is segmented and carries the stigma of being something other than real writing. Thinking, brainstorming, exploring, freewriting and talking are all writing. Writers don't discover their intents before composing; they discover their meaning as they make it. Perhaps the greatest lesson that I learned from my class winter quarter was that when a writer truly knows his/her feelings about what he/she is going to say, then a writer has a mental image for the whole paper against which all composing efforts can be measured; otherwise, any old scribbling could be accepted as satisfactory. Writing is a process of discovering one's point of view. When this has been accomplished, writing can be controlled because the writer knows enough about where he/she wants to lead the reader in order to guide the way. The greatest reason for writing might just be in the writing itself, because it is through writing that the writer becomes conscious of what he/she wishes to say. This intrinsic motivation, to discover what one has to say, is far superior to the extrinsic motivation of pleasing the teacher. Students often turn to canned essays about topics far removed from their immediate concerns. Students then become alienated from the experiences within their own lives, for it is the ability to become conscious of one's own experiences which builds the foundation for becoming the master of one's own fate. Most students do not know how to go about creating their own content. Too many have been trained to be xerox machines and parrots. Writing requires thinking; that's the hardest part.
Case Study of the Class as a Functioning Unit.

Introduction. An aspect of this dissertation that differs from the research of Britton, Emig, Perl, and others is that my findings on the writing process are placed in the perspective of a day-to-day classroom context. I have been able to observe the pedagogy and learning of composing in its natural complexity, and hope to organize for myself and my readers a few important aspects of that complexity. In this section of Chapter IV, I will attempt to describe this Basic Writing class as a dynamic, functioning unit. I intend to examine the classroom's physical and emotional environment, look at some of the classroom procedures, discuss student-student and student-teacher relationships, and inquire into my role and effect as a researcher in this classroom.

Physical Environment. The physical environment of this Basic Writing class can only be described as grim. The classroom is a small, stuffy, windowless room in the basement of Pressey Hall—a building on the West (or Freshman) Campus of Ohio State University. The room's dimensions are approximately 20'x12'. As you enter the room, you find a teacher's desk in front of a chalkboard, and approximately sixteen school desks along the other three walls of the room. One student remarked to me that the rooms are such that teachers
don't have to worry about kids looking out the windows. During the Winter Quarter, the students sat in this stuffy room in their heavy winter clothes. This, along with the fact that the class was held right after the lunch hour (12:30-1:30 p.m.), made for very sleepy students and difficult teaching conditions. All in all, this room made for a difficult but not impossible instructional environment—at least the students' desks were not bolted to the floor as they are in some O.S.U. classrooms.

**Interactional atmosphere.** The minutes before the first class of the quarter began with an eerie silence. Fifteen Freshmen sat next to each other in a small room for almost ten minutes without uttering a word. There was no small talk, no jokes, no sense of community. By week ten of the quarter, half of the students (and Nancy Mack and myself) took a class field trip to a bizarre beer, pizza and entertainment establishment called "Chucky Cheese's" for an evening of food, talk, fun, and comradery. A sense of community did develop in this class, but it developed very slowly. And, I think, without the intentional efforts of Nancy Mack, very little community would have developed at all.

Nancy Mack begins her attempts to build classroom community by nurturing solidarity in the classroom. Through her classroom comments and discussions, and particularly in her one-on-one conferences, Nancy
communicates that she understands the students' academic and social needs and goals. She communicates to them that she wants them to succeed and has certain "tools" to help them succeed. Nancy Mack communicates an intense personal loyalty to her students—a loyalty that persists long after the academic quarter is over. Former students meet with her all the time, both for social and academic reasons. This loyalty is returned in kind by the students. I have reprinted in Chapter VI a journal entry by Brad that demonstrates, in a not untypical manner, the student loyalty to Nancy Mack.

Another way that Nancy Mack builds classroom community is by her style. Her teaching style includes a good measure of humor, and lots of acting. Much of this humor and acting is directed at helping her students get new perspectives on everyday occurrences. One such hilarious routine might be called (in Nancy's own words) "Mrs. Mack's Butt." The routine imagined an alien creature landing on planet earth. The alien was confronted with current "preppy" fashions—people wearing alligator insignias on their shirts, and names (Calvin Klein, Jordache, etc.) on the seats of their tight jeans. Nancy acted out the alien's attempt to discern the meaning of having somebody's name on your butt: is it the name of a god? a harem keeper? a tribal identity?
The same kind of humor came through in Nancy Mack's visuals. Her cartoons were usually funny and memorable, addressing important issues in composition. Her activities (like the presentation of the bloody carp) often elicited outright laughter and catcalls--breaking up the smothering silence, and shaking up the students' expectations about classroom formality and student-teacher relationships.

Other activities which improved the interactional atmosphere were student meetings with me and tutorial meetings with Nancy Mack. The students seemed to enjoy their formal and informal meetings with me, in part because they had the status of research subjects, and in part because I respected (and was eager for) their own opinions and constructions of the learning and teaching process. The students' tutorials with Nancy Mack were very important: they established a personal relationship with her, they were the source for important feedback and information, and they established the intersubjective contracts (on performance, grades, etc.) between teacher and student.

Solidarity developed slowly but surely in this classroom. And it was not just a superficial add-on, there to help the teaching go more smoothly. The development of solidarity was an essential ingredient for successful instruction and successful learning. Without
trust and solidarity, Nancy Mack could never have asked for and received so much quality work from her students. The development of solidarity and trust is a uniquely human aspect of teaching, and not something that can be taken over by computers, self-teaching modules, or teaching manuals. The development of solidarity and trust in the classroom must be acknowledged as important for student success as teaching methods, theories, and materials.

Classroom Procedures. I have already discussed earlier in Chapter IV some of the important classroom activities and procedures used in this class of Basic Writing (see the case study of Nancy Mack). Here I would like to focus on three particularly important procedures: classroom discussion, peer instruction, and exam procedures.

As I mentioned before, classroom discussion didn't occur in this class with the regularity promised and intended by Nancy Mack. But when it did occur, it was used to good effect. The discussion was multifunctional, serving to develop classroom solidarity, audience sensitivity, idea generation and planning, and the testing of ideas. A common practice was to ask if any student needed help in clarifying an angle, topic sentence, narrative climax, etc. A frequent volunteer for help was Barry. Barry would orally relate in a rambling
style an incident that he wanted to develop into an essay. Once, in the midst of a loose story, the entire class spontaneously laughed as he narrated an incident about plowing the neighbor's snow and snow blowing into his face. Suddenly, everyone realized that the laughter signalled the climactic incident of the story and gave clues to the angle Barry should take in writing it. Another example of how this form of classroom discussion worked also involved Barry. He was discussing an unfocused idea about an essay on rubik's cube. In the middle of this rambling talk, Reg became very excited—he discovered an angle that Barry could exploit. Reg remarked how Barry could play up the angle of obsession in his essay on rubik's cube.

Classroom discussion provided for these students an initial sense of audience response to their ideas. Nancy felt the students could learn a great deal from their classmates in these discussions. Early in the quarter she explained to them the importance of knowing what other people are writing on and encouraged them to get a sense of the suitability of their topics and approaches by listening to their classmates' ideas. In other words, a teacher can never directly define and spell out all the criteria for good performance. Some of it had to be inferred from the classroom discussion, from the Reprints anthology, and from Inprints, the
Writing Workshop's newspaper which published student writings.

The classroom discussion became an important kind of peer instruction, but there were some other even more direct peer-instruction activities. Informally, several students revealed that before a paper was turned in, it would be read and critiqued by roommates, parents, or friends. Formally, Nancy Mack arranged for students to exchange papers with other students. Once Nancy Mack made a game out of peer-editing. The game involved playing cards, and the stakes were credits for journal entries. For each mistake a student found in his or her partner's paper, he or she could claim one of the partner's cards. Everyone won, in a sense, because errors were found before the final drafts of the paper were turned in, allowing corrections to be made. This game produced interesting results: Scott, who was so verbal and forward in his display of metalinguistic awareness, was seven cards in the hole to his partner Marie, who had fifteen cards to the good. Even though she seemed so reserved and so inarticulate in regard to metalinguistic awareness, she was quite a good editor. The relationship of explicit metalinguistic awareness to composing performance was often that complicated and baffling.

Nancy Mack encouraged peer editing and proofreading for all student papers. She often mentioned that when
you proofread your paper, you have to read it "with the eyes of a stranger." She told them that sometimes it is best to actually ask someone else to read over your paper—we all have perceptual blindspots.

A final classroom procedure that I want to discuss here involves the writing of in-class essay exams. The approach and practices Nancy Mack took to the exams necessarily affect their rhetorical structures. First of all, the students never came cold into an exam. A week before the exam they would be told approximately five general topics—three of which would appear on the exam in slightly different forms. Students were then required to write on one of these three issues come exam day. Thus, the students had a sense of the exam topics, and could prepare to write on these topics. Nancy asked the students to brainstorm and freewrite on these five topics, and, if possible, to write topic sentences for them. They were also to plan the climax (if the topic involved a narrative) or the subtopics (if the topics called for expository writing). In sum, the students, depending upon personal diligence, could come to the exam with a reasonably complete plan for the essays. The structuring of their writing processes was also going on during the one-hour exam period. Every few minutes, Nancy Mack would announce what part of the process the students should be working on (e.g.: This is your planning time...
about this time you should be working on your topic sentence...it's time to proofread). The students were not permitted to use their pre-made brainstorming sheets, freewritings, or topic sentences while writing the exam. They were allowed to use the so-called "Glue Word" sheet (a list of useful subordinating conjunctions and adverbial conjunctions), a dictionary, and a thesaurus. Clearly the students were given help in thinking about topics, structure, and process during the exams. They didn't come cold into these exams, and yet the results show a great range of performance. Nancy's structural and process helps didn't do much good for students who were in some way or another unprepared to write the exam.

Student-Teacher Relationships. As I mentioned before, Nancy Mack did many things to restructure the students' expectations about student-teacher relationships. Here I would like to try to describe the new relationship she hoped to create. First of all, Nancy Mack taught the students to refer to her as "Mrs. Mack." She did this by referring to herself as "Mrs. Mack." One might infer from this an element of distance and formality seen by Nancy in the teacher's role. She in turn referred to the students by their first names. She seemed to know every student by name from the very first class, and was able to discuss in class from memory ideas and problems found in each student's writing.
From the first day of class Nancy did several things to address the issue of student-teacher relationships. An expression she often repeated was something like: "I can see it from your perspective--I know how you feel." Nancy also welcomed and rewarded honesty from students, even when it came in the form of criticisms of her teaching. Another thing she always tried to do was to clarify why she was asking the students to do something--what her goals were, and how she expected these activities to improve their writing. In addition, Nancy tried to clarify her grading criteria, and often discussed the thinking teachers go through in assigning grades. All of these activities opened up the usually secretive activities of teaching, and these went a long way towards establishing a trusting relationship in this class.

Besides Nancy's utterances and style, her actions helped clarify the student-teacher relationship. The students were impressed by how much work went into her teaching. Her lectures and presentations were almost always well-organized and accompanied by her cartoon visuals. There were numerous hand-outs. Nancy read, commented on, and evaluated all their writings within a short time after receiving them. And every student benefited by frequent tutorial meetings with Nancy. Almost surely these students never received such individual attention before. Nancy's actions communicated the
following expectations: give lots of energy, work hard, and get the work done on time.

Another thing that helped define the individual student-teacher relationships were the journals kept by the students. The students were required to turn in five one-page journal entries per week. And these journals often were quite personal and reflective. Besides addressing school issues, these journals helped develop portraits of the personal needs and problems of these students. The inevitable result of this is that Nancy Mack came to know the students personally as well as professionally. Of course, the students didn't have the same opportunity to read Nancy Mack's journal and know her in that kind of personal way. To remedy this situation somewhat, Nancy would often talk in class about her husband, her history, her failed first marriage, her work in prison, her problems in graduate school, and her research. One time Nancy even brought her sick four-ear old daughter to class. The students got the chance to see Nancy Mack as a mother.

To sum up this section, Nancy Mack intentionally brought personal issues into the classroom. She walked a difficult balance between her sympathy and understanding for the students' needs and problems and her demands for a large quantity of good work. Nancy was quite successful in these efforts: all of her students in the
class I observed completed all of the course requirements, and all passed the course.

**Researcher Effect.** The effect of my presence in this classroom was an issue that I often discussed with Nancy Mack. It is also an issue that I brought up in my interviews and discussions with students. I did not often speak out in class, except once to discuss my research goals, and occasionally to remind students of appointments with me. My daily procedure was to sit in the class with my tape recorder obviously present on the floor, and my note pad on my desk. As the quarter progressed, the students accepted me as an ordinary part of the classroom scene--their remarks show me that my tape recorder became almost invisible. As the quarter progressed, the students got to know and like me, greeted me when they saw me on campus, and talked to me in the snack bar. My participation in classroom discussion was quite limited, though I occasionally volunteered a response or an opinion. I occasionally chatted with or helped students sitting to my left and right. In general, my interaction within the class was not unlike that of a typical quiet student (like Brad, for example).

My presence and after-class collaboration with Nancy Mack also had an effect--an effect probably unknown to the students in this class. In our after-class triangulation meetings, Nancy and I would discuss what happened in
the class. At that time I would sometimes offer my opinions about the instruction or tell her how the students seemed to be reacting to the instruction. To my surprise, I would commonly find that Nancy made adjustments in her syllabus or instruction in light of my comments. My presence, then, had a profound impact on this instructional scene—changing, and sometimes improving, the instruction. This effect is in line with qualitative, action, and collaborative research paradigms.

The most astounding effect of my presence was revealed during my second interview with Jake when he said: "I kind of like the interviewing...it kind of helps me remember some of these things." At that point I suddenly realized that my (and Nancy's) research presence and activities were actually increasing the metalinguistic awareness of the students. I also discovered that the students were quite proud of their status as participants in two research projects. This pride led to their help and cooperation with all our requests, and probably led to greater effort and awareness. This researcher effect might be considered a dangerous artifact by scientists wording in a different paradigm. But this is an expected phenomenon in qualitative research. Nancy and I were mostly interested in discovering the effect of our presence, and we never were under the illusion that our presence had no effect. I think Nancy also consciously made
use of the researcher effect to further her pedagogical goals--the students' increased awareness and effort helped them, perhaps, to become better writers than they might have become if we hadn't pursued our research goals.
Case Study of Brad

I will include five case studies of individual students in Chapter IV. Each case study will examine a particular student's metalinguistic awareness, making use of the information in the two interviews, the protocol, classroom interaction, and journal entries. For the preliminary analysis of metalinguistic awareness, I have used a category checksheet. For reasons of space, I have decided not to include these checksheets (or similar text characteristic checksheets) in the final case study reports (there would be a total of forty such checksheets for the five students). Along with examining each student's metalinguistic awareness, I will examine written texts produced by that student. These texts correspond very closely in date to the interviews and protocols, and should thus give some sense of the relationship between metalinguistic awareness and the texts produced by the students. Because of space constraints, I will not reproduce all the texts, protocols, interviews and journals produced by each student—for each student I have a very thick folio of these data sources. However, I have included in Chapter VI partial protocol and interview transcripts, as well as several texts and journal entries produced by one student--Brad. These should give the reader the "flavor"of this data and my interpretations and
characterizations of the data. I have changed the names of the students included in the case studies because of the sensitive and personal nature of some of their reflections.

**Introduction.** Brad is an eighteen or nineteen year old Freshman from the Zanesville, Ohio area. He is Caucasian, and his speech is clearly influenced by the Midland dialect of Eastern Ohio. He is a graduate of Zanesville High School, and performed adequately there. In high school he took one year of French and four years of English, earning A's, B's, and C's. Brad's ACT score was not all that good (13), and his English placement essay was judged to include him in the beginning Basic Writing class.

Brad was chosen as a subject for my case studies for several reasons. First of all, he seemed to be a rather typical Ohio State student, in a sociolinguistic sense. He's a young white male from an average rural, middle-class background. Secondly, Brad seemed to be a student who was docile in the sense that he was open and responsive to instruction. Brad seemed to be amazed and grateful that writing could be demystified. Thirdly, Brad entered Nancy Mack's course with very little metalinguistic awareness about the processes and structures of college writing. In sum, Brad was chosen as a principal subject because it seemed likely that his
development would yield a rather clear-cut case for or against the role of metalinguistic awareness in the development of writing skill.

First Interview. My first interview with Brad occurred in the fourth week of the eleven week quarter. The interview was structured, but loose enough to follow up his responses and capable of pursuing serendipitous remarks (see Chapter III of this dissertation). Within this interview, Brad was asked to read orally his first in-class exam, and I asked him several questions about the process and features of this piece of writing. Below I will discuss certain themes that were prominent in this interview.

Brad's oral reading of his exam was fluent and expressive. His text read just like one of his oral stories and didn't make use of the more formal register of written English. In the interview Brad talked very much about his lack of experience in writing. His last "paper" was probably written in tenth grade--his high school English classes spent most of their time on reading and book reports. The idea that one could have a strategy or procedure for writing was completely new to Brad--a direct result of Nancy Mack's instruction. These new procedures included planning, idea generation (via journals and freewritings), and proofreading. Brad was also developing an awareness that writing is
structured. His sense of structure at this point was still rather vague, and took in concepts like topic sentence, narrative climax, and conclusion. These concepts, part of the Language Instruction Register of this course, seemed to be in his passive vocabulary or on the tip of his tongue.

Brad did not have much of a sense that his ideas developed or changed during composing—probably because in this instance his writing was a fairly straightforward transcription of an oral story based on his experience. Brad seemed quite pleased that he could write an essay based on his own understanding, knowledge, and experience.

In this interview, Brad showed some awareness of the needs of his audience. His audience, like the audience for most of the boys in this class, consisted of Mrs. Mack alone. Brad was aware that he used some terms that Mrs. Mack might not understand. He was also conscious of avoiding certain slang terms that she might not understand.

Brad was grateful for the help Nancy Mack gave him in attacking a writing assignment and structuring a piece of writing. He felt that he could improve his writing by improving on his spelling and drawing out the narrative climax. These comments showed an interesting mix of sensitivity to the essential and the accidental ingredients of writing.
To sum up, Brad showed a moderate but growing meta­linguistic awareness. He was clearly using this awareness in the process of composing and the structuring of his compositions. He did not yet "talk a good game" (i.e. he didn't demonstrate a good command of the LIR). Brad had plenty yet to learn about composing, but was making excellent progress. A fairly complete transcript of this first interview appears in Chapter VI of this dissertation.

First Exam. (See Chapter VI for the text). This essay, discussed in my first interview with Brad, was written on January 27th, in the fourth week of the quarter. It is a narrative based on personal interest and experience, and appears to come from one of his oral stories. Brad met the minimum requirements for this assignment, and received a grade of C- for this effort (an average grade in Nancy's system for early essays).

This essay has all the basic parts needed by narratives, and doesn't have an overabundance of mechanics errors. There are many spelling errors, and some usage errors which might be related to reliance upon his oral language strategies.

The essay seems to fall short of college standards in a couple of significant areas. First of all, it doesn't "sound" like writing--it sounds like oral
transcription. Reliance on one's ear is, of course, a good strategy for a beginning writer. But one must move rather quickly to the syntax and vocabulary—the special register—of formal, written English.

Secondly, this essay expresses Brad's enthusiasm, but doesn't seem to effectively involve or convert the reader to that enthusiasm. That is a serious flaw, but natural enough for a beginning writer.

This essay didn't get any major revision, and certainly could have benefitted from intelligent revision. The problem is that Brad probably did not have the skill to do major revision at that time.

To conclude, this essay seems to represent the best Brad could do at the time. He used his growing understanding of the processes and structures of writing, and relied on the strengths he brought to these new writing tasks: his experiences, sense of story structure, and his oral language. This resulted in an essay that is acceptable, but still a long way from good college prose.

**Oral Composing Protocol.** The most fascinating of all my data sources are the oral protocols. Brad's protocol, which is reproduced in part in Chapter VI of this dissertation, sheds considerable new light on his composing processes and yields information either unavailable or even contradictory to his interview responses. I will discuss the points of his protocol in the order
they are presented on the audio tape.

Brad began his introspection by trying to come to terms with the mode of the assigned writing task: "This has to be expository." He then mentioned the need to "brainstorm" a topic and spent considerable time doing just that. He ran through different topics from hunting, school, food and eating, dieting, to roommates. The process reminds me of the associative-complexive thinking described by Vygotsky (1962). Thoughts of his audience interacted with his possible topic choices: "No... everybody writes about school... my paper has to be different from everybody else's."

Once Brad settled on the topic of roommates, he immediately began to ponder the "proper and acceptable" structure for such an essay. Brad searched for a structure and an "angle" almost simultaneously (because the angle interacts synergistically with the choice and order of subtopics). He was quite aware of the need to give his essay an internal structure: "OK, I got my three subtopics... I'm gonna need a topic sentence and a conclusion." These thoughts seem to indicate that Brad has reified, to some extent, Nancy Mack's heuristic instruction about the structure of essays. Perhaps this reification and formulaic approach to writing is a stage beginners must pass through.
At this point Brad began an incredible struggle to come up with a topic sentence. The struggle showed the complexity, importance, and synergy involved in composing a topic sentence. The decisions involved here include issues like word choice, angle, general topic, mode, etc. It is interesting to note that Brad doesn't begin his essay writing process with the writing of the topic sentence. By this time he was already twenty minutes into the process, and had already struggled with issues of angle, theme, subtopics, etc. It is also interesting to watch his ideas and angle develop and change. Contrast this process with Brad's remark in his first interview when he stated that his ideas are stable, full-blown and unchanged in the writing process. A couple of possibilities: either Brad was wrong about his idea development in the first interview, or his processes have changed with the more sophisticated demands of college expository writing.

After an amazing struggle, Brad finally crafted a topic sentence. The sentence he came up with seemed to fall short of his intentions and goals, but it really freed up the process. His writing became very fast and fluent, and it wasn't long before he finished the entire essay. Along the way, he did give some (but not much) thought to editing and proofreading. Brad struggled somewhat with his concluding sentence, but this was not
nearly the struggle he had with the topic sentence. Interestingly enough, Brad went back to his topic sentence after writing the conclusion and made some changes in it. Brad seemed to show a rather sophisticated sense of the importance of unity in essays and a sense of how the "parts" of an essay must work together.

Upon finishing the essay, Brad reread his writing. Many of the mistakes present in his written text were read as if they had been corrected. This common miscue phenomenon demonstrates the perceptual difficulties involved in proofreading. Upon finishing his reading, Brad wondered if he should revise his angle and point of view. Then he said, "But this is just a first draft. I'll work on it later." This statement seemed to indicate that Brad did indeed understand the need for revision, and understood that "re-vision" is a deeper process than surface proofreading.

This amazing protocol shows that Brad was certainly making use of Nancy Mack's instruction, that he was developing a clear metalinguistic awareness and an explicit metalinguistic vocabulary on composing (LIR). Brad had gained a sense of the process and structure of writing, and had developed definite strategies for accomplishing his tasks—something he lacked when he entered this course.
Protocol Text. The text accompanying the oral composing protocol (reproduced in Chapter VI) was written from scratch in one hour. This short time for idea generation, planning, composing, proofreading, and revision almost certainly affected the quality of the text.

In this text, Brad demonstrates quite a good sense of the process and structure of writing. His writing is clearly expository, with a topic sentence, three sub-topics, and a conclusion. But his exposition is still clearly influenced by what seems to be one of the most basic kinds of writing--story or narrative mode.

This essay does show pretty good (although somewhat rigid and mechanical) structure. Brad knew the importance of topic sentence and conclusion, but still didn't possess the skill to pull off and say exactly what he wanted to say.

He still has problems with phrasing, and his writing still sounds like oral language. He was more successful in this essay at involving and interesting the reader, but he certainly could improve in this area.

This essay is certainly better than his narrative of January 27th. He seemed to be making use of Nancy Mack's instruction, but was still reifying her heuristic suggestions. Brad's use of Nancy's instruction, and the abundant writing practice he was getting, was indeed yielding positive results.
Second Interview. Brad's second interview, recorded during the tenth week of the quarter, contrasts sharply with his first interview. In the second inter­view, Brad seemed almost eager to display his knowledge of the process and features of writing. His comments covered almost the full range of the metalinguistic issues I've identified, and his comments displayed considerable knowledge of the concepts as well as the LIR of composing.

Brad seemed to have a much-improved sense of the process of writing, with procedures for generating ideas, composing and organizing text, and for proofreading what was written. This process knowledge seemed to be a great revelation to Brad, and made composing much easier and less mysterious for him.

Besides this process knowledge, Brad had a much improved sense of audience. His actual audience earlier in the quarter included only Nancy Mack. The audience for his later drafts included friends and roommates. Brad also spoke out about responsibilities to his audience: he does his best to maintain interest, humor, and suspense in his essays; he tries to make his subtopics focused and specific; he tries to maintain a consistent and clear point-of-view towards his topic.

Brad also was quite aware of the structural features of text and the distinction between narrative and
expository essays. His discussion of features seemed to focus more on surface structure issues like spelling, punctuation, comma usage, run-on sentences, etc.--but he didn't ignore the elements of structure that are more critical to communicating ideas.

A theme that ran through this second interview was his lack of preparation and instruction in writing in high school. According to Brad, they almost never wrote in his high school (Zanesville High School).

Brad is a teacher's dream student in many ways. He entered the course with very little explicit knowledge of composing, and was humble enough and willing enough to accept instruction. He found the instruction very useful. It was almost as if a light bulb went off in his head--"Aha! Writing has structure! One can have strategies for writing!"

**Third Exam.** Brad's Third Exam was written on March 3, 1982--right around the time of his second interview. This essay is basically a narrative put into an expository structure (a very common pattern among the Basic Writers I've observed). The structuring involves a topic sentence, three subtopics, subtopic sentences, transitions, and a conclusion that harks back to the topic sentence. There is evidence that Brad had a clear and appropriate angle on his topic, and this is communicated in part by his word choice. This essay shows
evidence of preplanning and appropriate use of reference. It is quite a good job and shows how much progress Brad made during this quarter, but it is certainly not free of errors. There are errors in spelling, apostrophe usage, tense consistency, etc. Perhaps his biggest problem is still his phrasing and the fact that his written essays still read like his oral register. Brad did spend time in proofreading this essay, but certainly missed a number of surface-structure errors.

**Classroom Interaction and Journals.** Brad is a very shy person, and rarely spoke out in class. Thus, the classroom interaction notes reveal very little about his metalinguistic awareness. On the other hand, the journals offer some very interesting insights (five of Brad's journal entries are reproduced in Chapter VI of this dissertation).

In his journals, Brad speaks often about the process of writing, especially how ideas are shaped through brainstorming and freewriting into essays. This process is new, and rather amazing to him. He is aware that there is quite a difference between the initial ideas generated in brainstorming and the final draft of a paper. This must represent a triumph for Nancy Mack over the false awareness about process that most students bring into this course.
Brad's journals also show that he is quite aware of the wants and needs of his reader. Brad wants to create texts which are interesting and humorous. He also is concerned to maintain some kind of suspense in order to hold onto his reader. Brad wants to write texts that he himself would enjoy reading.

Structural issues also are prominent in Brad's journals. He mentions narrative and expository mode and the structural elements that go into such modes. An interesting, and possibly important remark was made by Brad when he referred to his writings as "stories." Brad's writings are indeed almost all stories from his real life experience--either straight narratives, or narratives fit into expository structure. He does not seem to have a feel for expository essays which don't build on narrative experience.

Another significant area of Brad's awareness involves pedagogical issues. First of all, he has become aware that learning to write in a college style demands abundant practice--practice not done in his secondary school. And secondly, Brad demonstrates an amazing gratitude for Nancy Mack's instruction--she has given him the motivation to practice, shown him that he has something worthwhile to say, and given him "keys" to unlock the mysteries of the processes and structures of college writing.
There are some metalinguistic issues that get little or no mention in Brad's journals. He makes no mention of the heuristic nature of Nancy's writing instruction. On the contrary, he tends to reify her rules-of-thumb. He also has little to say in the journals about transitions, conclusions, punctuation, and word choice. These categories are concerns of Brad, and are mentioned in his interviews and protocol.

**Conclusion.** Brad demonstrated an amazing growth in metalinguistic awareness over the course of one eleven-week academic quarter. He entered the course with few strategies for composing, almost no practice in college-type composing, and little overt knowledge of the structures and processes involved in college writing. He completed the course with exceptional metalinguistic awareness, addressing virtually all of the categories I have chosen to look at with the exception of awareness of the heuristic nature of Nancy's instruction. This particular lack may be related to the somewhat rigid and mechanical nature of his written texts, and perhaps to the possibility that reification of rules is a common intermediate stage in the learning-to-compose process.

Brad's written texts showed progress and development. He put to use his metalinguistic awareness about process and structure. This does not mean that Brad
finished the course writing excellent college essays. There are many things he still needs to work on: his written language is still too much like his oral language; he has not yet mastered expository writing; he is still confused about some elements of punctuation; he proofreads but still has trouble with revision. Another lesson that I have drawn from my study of Brad is this: it takes a long time and a lot of hard work to develop from a "Basic Writer" to a "good" college writer. Under normal conditions, the process cannot be accomplished in a single academic quarter. Brad did make progress, and did make good use of Nancy Mack's instruction. In his case, increased metalinguistic awareness improved the quality of his written texts.

Case Study of Marie

Introduction. Marie is an eighteen or nineteen year old Freshman from Columbus, Ohio. She is Caucasian, middle class, and speaks the urban Midlands dialect of Columbus, Ohio. She is a graduate of Columbus-Brookhaven High School. Marie was placed in the Basic Writing program on the basis of her ACT score (13), and on the basis of a poorly written placement essay (which will be briefly discussed later). Marie did fairly well in high school, earning A's and B's in four years of high school English, and taking one year of Latin
and three years of French. In spite of four years of English, Marie said that she did very little writing in high school. She mentioned spending English class time on reading and certain grammar exercises.

Marie was chosen as a principal participant in my study because she seemed like such a typical OSU Freshman. Her intelligence, high school background, and metalinguistic awareness seemed to be very much average, and her sociolinguistic characteristics were such that they wouldn't overly complicate the data.

**Placement Essay.** Marie wrote her English placement essay on November 11, 1981. She chose to respond to a question calling for an expository essay on the role of a grading system in education. Marie's placement essay can only be described as a disaster. Perhaps the value of this disaster is that it serves as a benchmark for her progress during the Winter Quarter. Marie's essay has problems both on the basis of process and structures. The essay shows no evidence of preplanning or structuring and no evidence of proofreading or revision. The logical structuring is a disaster. There are no clear subtopic divisions. The ordering of ideas reminds one of the associative-complexive thinking noticed by Vygotsky (1962). There is a sentence that could pass as a conclusion and Marie does seem to have an angle on her topic. But her lack of success in this essay shows that
Marie's Placement Essay—November 11, 1981

I feel that grades do not interfere with a student's learning. I feel grades keep a student motivated to work for better grades. If a student has a grading system they will set goals for themselves and try to achieve those goals, and get a sense of satisfaction. Where as if you have a pass/fail system that person doesn't see the progress he or she is making, because a passing grade ranges from an a to b. So two people my be passing the same class, but if that class was based on grades an person may get an a where as the other my be getting a c and both getting the same satisfaction.

I feel each student should be put into different categories of academics so a teacher and parents know what his or her student or child can achieve, and the kind of help that student needs. A grading system puts students into different academic categories and would be so much more useful for records; then a pass/fail system. It would be so much harder for a counselor or college to look on a student record and see how well that student really was in school, where the grading system shows specifically how well the student did do in school. So I think a grading system should be kept in the school systems for all practical purposes.

Marie's First Exam--January 27, 1982

When I tried out for the drill team for the first year I was surprised by the results. I was a ninth grade and trying out for the drill team at the school I would be attending the following fall. For two week we learned the drill and practiced the marching we had to know for tryout. Finally, the day came for tryout as a result I was a nervous wreck the whole day. Tryouts were scheduled to start at 4:00. We tried out in groups of six. Each group of six girls executed the drill and performed the marching minevors before six judges with previous drill team experience. After all the groups had performed we had a choice whether to stay there in the gymnasium or go home at that time and wait to be called while the judges compiled the scores. Of course everyone voted to stay in the gymnasium. The waiting was the most difficult part of the entire tryouts, which seemed like hours was actually only about 45 minutes.

Finally, Mr. Kloughenstein, the tryout director walked into the gymnasium with a long white piece of paper in his hand. At that moment my heart started beating wildly. The tryout director explained the girls selected would be announced in order from the lowest score to the highest and 26 girls would be chosen. Mr. Kloughenstein began calling off the names of the girls on the list. The girls that were called started screaming and crying tear of happiness. I started getting alittle worried because my name had not been called. After most of my friend had been choosen I began getting petrified. The drill director reached the 25 name on the list, but still I had not been picked. At this time I was crying because I was so upset thinking for sure I didn't receive the honor of making the drill team. There was one more name yet to go, this had to be mine if I were going to be on the drill team. I clenched my hands together, closed my eyes and prayed it was my name on that list. Everyone became extremely quite then, Mr. Kloughenstein said that the final girl and also the captain, whereupon he paused. I wanted to run down and rip the paper out of his hand in order to ease my tension. He continued by saying "The girl with the highest score and your captain is Marie." When I heard my name announced I was so surprised I began screaming and jumping up and down. I thought I was going to fall down I was so excited. At that time everyone ran and hugged me. I will always remember that moment as being one of the happiest moments of my life.
an angle without an argument (or other kinds of support and development) is worthless. Besides lack of structure, this essay has severe mechanics problems—clumsy phrasing and sentences, spelling problems, and improper punctuation. This essay makes one wonder about Marie's high school English classes where she received A's and B's.

First Interview. My first interview with Marie took place on February 4, 1982—the fourth week of the eleven week quarter. This interview proceeded along the same lines described in Brad's first interview.

The interview began with Marie reading orally her first exam—a narrative on her election as captain of Brookhaven High School's drill team. For the most part, Marie's reading was fluent and expressive. There were some discrepancies (miscues) between her oral reading and her written text—mostly in the direction of corrections to her written text. Marie was aware of these miscues and mentioned that she hadn't had time during the exam to proofread and correct her paper.

Marie's essay was a narrative and she identified it as such: "It's a narrative...just a story." Like Brad's essay and like the narratives of most of the other students, Marie's essay was based on a true personal experience. Marie showed an awareness of how narratives are structured, mentioning issues like topic sentence,
narrative climax, and conclusion. Marie felt pretty good about the way she built suspense and led the reader up to the narrative climax. But she ran out of time, and didn't feel she had dealt adequately with the conclusion. On the whole, Marie seemed to have a fairly good metalinguistic awareness of the structure of narratives.

Many of Marie's remarks in the interview revealed an awareness of the processes involved in composing. She did not mention brainstorming, but she did mention free-writing as a useful process: "It gets the ideas down on paper"—without the interference of worrying about correct form. For this particular exam, Marie actually pre-wrote the topic sentence and the entire essay! She wasn't able to totally memorize her essay, so what she wrote in class differed from her prewritten essay. Under the pressure of time, Marie took longer writing the narrative climax than she had expected, and was forced to cut short her conclusion and her proofreading and editing processes. Marie is aware of the need to proofread and edit her writing, and often asks her mother to help her in that regard. As for her writing problems—Marie mentioned having problems with "too many 'ands' and with commas."

Marie did not have too much to say about audience awareness in this interview. She thought of Nancy Mack
and her mother as the readers of her writing. Marie did show some awareness about the need for unambiguous reference.

In the interview, Marie revealed that she does some writing outside of school—she writes personal letters and keeps her own journal (besides the semi-public journal Nancy Mack had her keep). Still she finds writing, especially college writing, quite hard work. Marie did very little writing in high school (Columbus Brookhaven). She remembered writing one paper—during her senior year, and she did not remember having essay exams. Her memories of high school English focus primarily on grammar instruction (she mentioned working with verbs and comma splices).

When I asked Marie what she thought her major problems with writing were, she mentioned that her writing lacked descriptive detail. She mentioned this lack about four times in the interview.

Areas where no metalinguistic awareness was evident, or where it was underdeveloped, include an awareness of angle or point of view and an awareness of the heuristic nature of Nancy Mack's instructional hints. Her sense of audience was not fully developed, nor was her understanding of how ideas are generated and developed. She also didn't mention any distinction between surface-level proofreading and more profound revision.
Compared with Brad, Marie showed a more developed metalinguistic awareness at the time of the first interview. Her awareness follows a somewhat different path than Brad's or the other students'. This points out a theme running through this research: each student had a different pattern of metalinguistic awareness and each student has his or her own personal agenda or curriculum. As I mentioned before, Marie's agenda includes concerns about the use of descriptive details in her narratives.

**First Exam.** Marie's First Exam, which was discussed in her First Interview, was written January 27, 1982. This essay is a narrative based on a true-life experience. The essay shows evidence of preplanning and some proofreading and editing. However, the editing process was not all that effective--Marie failed to correct numerous errors in punctuation, spelling, and sentence structure. Marie's essay has a clear and interesting angle, and fairly good narrative structure (contrast with the disastrous structure of her expository placement essay). She made use of a topic sentence, though it was somewhat inadequate for communicating the drama that was to follow. Marie skillfully built up to a dramatic climax, and followed this with an adequate conclusion. She made use of transitions, but they were fairly clumsy and were usually signalled by
the word "finally." As I mentioned before, her essay has some rather serious errors in sentence structure, as well as errors in spelling and punctuation. Marie's adequate success writing her First Exam narrative stands in stark contrast to the failure of her expository Placement Essay. This pattern appears in the writings of many of Nancy Mack's students. They write narratives, especially when they represent true-life personal experience, quite easily and fluently. But they really struggle with the structure and logic of expository assignments. Marie's First Exam does seem to demonstrate progress, and she does seem to be applying Nancy Mack's instruction and putting to use her own metalinguistic awareness.

Oral Composing Protocol. Marie's composing protocol stands in marked contrast to the protocol of Brad. Unlike Brad, her monologue contains few metastatements about her composing processes and composing decisions. Her monologue consists mostly of alternative ways of phrasing ideas. Not only did Marie's protocol contain few process statements, but it also seemed to lack any statements about or indications of global goals or intentions. My initial feeling was that Marie planned only locally, and I thought that perhaps the protocol had yielded some important diagnostic information that might help Marie improve her writing. There was an indication
later in the protocol that I was wrong about this. I interrupted Marie part-way through her composing to check on the tape recorder and she told me: "I'm more or less just reading [what she was writing] ...I know what I want to write." Perhaps this explains her protocol's lack of global planning, brainstorming and idea generation--unlike Brad, she apparently came into the task with a pretty clear sense of topic and subtopics. Marie did make a few metacomments about topic choice. She said: "This paper's easy...I like writing about something that's happened instead of given topics."

This is a theme echoed by Brad and many of the students--they enjoy basing their writing on personal experience; topic choice and mode affect the quality of their writing.

There are a few comments in the protocol about rhetorical structure. Marie doesn't explicitly mention the mode she's working in (expository), but she does mention briefly certain structural elements of expository writing--topic sentence, subtopics, conclusion, and transitions. Her comments on and struggle with a topic sentence echoes the difficulties that Brad faced. At one point she stated: "Topic sentence...this is usually the worst part of the paper...I hate these topic sentences." Marie also struggled some with her subtopic sentences. She was aware that subtopic sentences often form ties or transitions between topics, and it was fascinating to hear
her work to establish these ties. She was quite good at this, but couldn't quite remember the word "transition"--she called them "transactions." Marie was aware of the need for a conclusion, but held off writing it until she had composed and proofread the body of her paper.

Marie proofread and edited after each sentence was composed. But she didn't let herself get tangled up too long if she couldn't think of how a word was spelled. This was quite a good strategy because it promoted fluency in her composing. After her initial composing was completed, she again read and proofread the text, inserting words or phrases into the blank spaces left the first time she went through it. Marie's proofreading and editing were fairly similar to Brad's in that they focused more on the surface aspects of text--she didn't do any profound revision. A fascinating aspect of her proofreading involved her problems with spelling and word choice. Marie has genuine spelling problems--she often cannot even find a word in a dictionary or thesaurus (she made use of the thesaurus to help her find alternate ways to express the same concept).

Marie's protocol showed evidence of some sense of the needs of her readers. This evidence consisted mostly of attempts to clarify reference. There were no metastatements on angle or point of view, but her topic sentence word choice (aggravating, irritating)
gave some evidence that she had an angle on her topic (this shows the synergy of topic, angle, lexical choice, and topic sentence). Marie wasn't overly rigid or mechanical in her composing, but made no metastatements about Nancy Mack's heuristic instructions or her warnings about false awareness. Surprisingly, Marie made no statements about punctuation, even though her protocol text has numerous punctuation errors.

To conclude, Marie made fewer metastatements about the processes and structures of composition than Brad. Some metalinguistic awareness could be inferred from the composing decisions she made on her protocol, but there was nothing as explicit as Brad's use of Nancy Mack's instruction. There are several possible explanations for this: Marie didn't make as much use of Nancy Mack's instruction as Brad; Marie was beyond the point where composing decisions were explicit (and into what Scardamalia and Bereiter termed the 'automaticity' state); or Marie didn't fully cooperate with the research task. It is quite possible that the difference between Brad and Marie's composing processes are typical—people may take very different approaches to composing.

**Protocol Text.** The text produced with Marie's oral protocol shows how far she has progressed since writing her placement essay. Marie's essay demonstrates both pre-planning and in-process planning. She has strategies
Although there are many nice women who shop at the clothes store where I work there are also some rather aggravating women that stick like a sore thumb.

One group of women that can become aggravating are the women that take an overabundant amount of clothes into the dressing room then after trying them on proceed to scatter them on the floor of the dressing room. This can become rather aggravating because after awhile the clothes start to get wrinkles and soiled whereupon these clothes do not attract the attention of other shoppers. Another reason is the fact we the employees have to pick up after these messy women. If we were there mothers and this can become rather irritating after hours of putting up with this.

Women who throw the store's clothes on the floor aren't the only type of women that are aggravating, so are the women who stay or come in the store when we are ready to close. These women are irritating because they want to try on everything in the store and expect you to wait to close the store as if they were the queen of England and needed something desperately at that moment to wear. This is aggravating because usually they end up not even purchasing anything at all.

Aside from the women who stay or come in when we are ready to close the store being aggravating. The most aggravating are the women who complain about return policy. These women purchase clothes without even reading our return policy then expect after a month or two to get a cash refund. If these women were even the least bit nice when they came in to return the merchandise they had purchased we might consider it, but when they barge in and demand to have their money back we feel like telling them to go jump into an oil spill. This is the most aggravating type of woman because you have to be nice and considerate at all times to the customer whereas they can act as if they were animals and treat you like dirt.

These type of women act as if they were the only ones that shop at our store you would think just once they would try looking at things from our point of view.
for when she gets stuck (leaving blanks which she will fill in later), and she proofreads and edits her work. Her essay shows much improvement in expository structure. The essay begins with a topic sentence (which is perhaps improperly set off as an entire paragraph) which establishes her theme and her angle. Then she develops three subtopics, each subtopic taking up one paragraph. Her subtopics are logically and cleverly tied together by subtopic sentences. Her essay ends with a conclusion. Marie's protocol text shows tremendous improvement, but some of her old problems are still with her. She still has some sentence structure and phrasing problems, and still makes numerous spelling errors.

Second Interview. Marie's second interview took place on March 11, 1982, near the end of the academic quarter. The interview began with Marie talking about her writing problems before entering this course. She said that she was aware that she had problems. The basic problems, in her mind, were: comma placement, comma splices, and no sense of how essays were structured. She felt that she still needed work in these areas. The areas of most progress this quarter were: the use of description in her writing, and her ability to structure a paper. Marie had some difficulty explaining to me what she meant by "description." She said that it was "...explaining exactly what happened...how
you felt...what it was like..." I didn't discover precisely where Marie picked up on the importance of description, but this is definitely a major theme of both her first and second interviews and apparently part of her personal agenda and curriculum. She even mentioned it as a characteristic of writing that she likes to read. Marie seemed very interested in the accidents or surface features of text, though she admitted that Mrs. Mack didn't share those concerns. Marie stated that Mrs. Mack was mostly concerned with the *ideas*--"she doesn't care too much about the punctuation."

Marie discussed structure in this interview, mentioning issues like topic sentences, subtopics, conclusions. She talked quite intelligently about the use of transitions and how she used a subtopic sentence to tie paragraphs together. Her discussion of structure revealed a rigidity seen in many of the other students. She mentioned that an essay must have three subtopics, or "two really good subtopics." Like Brad and several other students, Marie reified Nancy Mack's heuristic instructional hints. Marie recognized the differences between narrative and expository writing, but like many students, her explanations of the differences were not very sophisticated: narrative is "telling a story;" expository is "telling something from your point of
view...giving examples."

Marie had little or nothing to say in this interview about issues like audience awareness, angle, false awareness, or word choice. She also had little to say about idea generation and development--major themes of Nancy Mack's instruction.

Marie did have a feel for whether her writing was good or bad. Surprisingly, she said that she knew before she begins to write if it's going to be good or bad. The quality of the writing is a function of her feelings towards the topic. If she is assigned a topic she doesn't like, the essay will turn out poorly. This same kind of thing came up in my work with several students. Many of them have great difficulty writing on topics they don't like or don't care about. On the other hand, they do quite well when they can base their writings on personal interests and experience. It is easy to see a problem they run into--so much of school writing is unrelated to personal interest and experience.

A final question I asked Marie concerned my presence in the classroom. She said that my presence didn't bother her or, as far as she knew, didn't bother anyone. Marie said that before Nancy Mack and I addressed the class about our research project, she assumed I was just a diligent student who tape-recorded the teacher's lectures.
Marie's interview was, on the whole, rather disappointing. The answers to my questions were often superficial. She had command of the Language Instruction Register, but she had a hard time explaining these terms. And she showed little growth in metalinguistic awareness since her first interview. Her sense of the important issues in composing and her sense of the processes of composing didn't seem to have developed very much. In this regard, Marie stands in contrast to Brad, who showed considerable growth in awareness between his first and second interview.

Third Exam. Marie's Third Exam was written on March 3, 1982--between the dates of her composing protocol and her final interview. Marie chose to write her Third Exam on the topic she first worked with in the Protocol of February 25 (the topic concerned her frustrations working as a clerk in a clothing store). Surprisingly, her protocol text seems to be better written than this exam. Like the protocol text, this exam has pretty good expository structure--a topic sentence, three subtopics, subtopic transitions, and a conclusion. The paper is flawed by clumsy phrasing, sentence structure problems, punctuation, and spelling problems. Also, her "angle" is not communicated as effectively or strongly as in the protocol text. I think this is due in part to the fact that her word choice was not quite so effective
While working at the clothes store one may encounter some rather annoying woman and as an employee one must learn to be patient with these types of women. One reason you must be patient is because as an employee one encounters the types of woman that decided to sort through the racks of clothes and after trying them on return them to the wrong rack. After hours of putting up with this sort of thing an employee can become rather annoyed, but she must be patient and act as if this is not as annoying to her, because if you are not patient with the customer the store may lose the business of that person.

Although as an employee of the clothes store one must be patient with the women who throw their clothes on the floor of the dressing room one must also be patient with the people who stay when we are ready to clothes the store. The woman who decide they aren't ready to leave when we are ready to close can become very annoying because the only thing we (the employees) can think about is closing and going home. We have worked all day, and we are worn out. Patience is needed with these types of people because they are the types of woman who like to take their time and if they are rushed in anyway become angry and storm out of the store in an outrage whereupon now decided never to return.

Besides the woman who stay when we are ready to close the store being handled with patience so should the woman who complain about store policies. These woman complain about everything. These woman are so picky they would complain if we gave them their clothes free of cost. One must be patient with these woman because if you argue back with these woman they run right to the Better Business and this can lead to all sort of problems as it's better to be patient and avoid any problems with these woman. Even though it may be hard to be patient with these woman, as an employee one must, because if the customer is happy it makes for a better business.

Figure 4

Marie's Third Exam
in the exam essay. There is evidence that Marie planned this essay and proofread it. But her proofreading was rather sloppy and left some untypical errors. For example, her very first sentence has a reference error involving the inappropriate use of the definite article: "While working at the clothes store..."

Perhaps Marie's problems with the Third Exam are in part a function of the context of writing--exam situations may lead students to change their normal composing practices. With all her writing problems on this exam, she shows that she has made significant progress this quarter.

**Classroom Interaction and Journals.** There are several fascinating references to Marie in the classroom interaction notes. The first reference concerns her response to an in-class freewriting exercise. Marie echoed my own personal feelings by complaining that freewriting, as described by Nancy Mack, seemed to inhibit thinking and planning. Marie said she needed to think before setting pen to paper. Throughout the quarter there were several references by Nancy Mack to Marie's writing. As I look at these comments now, they seem rather harsh. But in their natural context, they were innocuous and sometimes even funny. Once Nancy Mack cited Marie (and others) for working on their subtopics before they even had a topic. Later in the quarter (February 25), Nancy Mack made the following reference concerning Marie: "I've made some of
you into little machines. I've made you subtopic addicts. This hurts your writing because you just try to satisfy the teacher." There are a couple more praiseworthy references to Marie in the interaction notes. Once Nancy praised Marie's clever approach to the making of transitional devices. Marie's lexical choice and use of repetition unified her paper and allowed for smooth and effective transitions. Another positive reference to Marie occurred during the peer-editing game played by the class. Marie was the class-champ at spotting proofreading errors--she amassed fifteen cards while her partner was seven in the hole. Eve Clark (1978) saw the ability to spot errors as a sign of metalinguistic awareness.

Marie's journal entries are in many ways more satisfying than the interviews and protocol as sources of her metalinguistic awareness. Unfortunately, it is very difficult to determine the sincerity of some of Marie's entries--some of them look like they were tailored to Nancy Mack's interests.

Marie's journals do consciously consider aspects of the composing process, including freewriting, planning, editing, proofreading, etc. In an entry dated January 20, Marie said: "The freewriting helped a lot, it helped me get in my head basically what I wanted to write for my final paper." Marie also mentioned that peer-editing was
helpful.

Marie also mentioned some aspects of structure in her journals. She discussed both narrative and expository mode as well as structural elements which compose these modes. She also discussed her problems in developing subtopics. She wrote that she needs to be more descriptive in her subtopics.

Marie, like Brad, also expressed in her journals an appreciation for Nancy Mack's instruction and efforts. She felt that she finally had an approach or a strategy for getting at a writing assignment. In high school, she was simply told to do the writing, with no instruction in processes or rhetorical structure. Marie also mentioned a false-awareness issue in regard to her high school English classes. One of her high school teachers apparently told her that paragraphs should be one hundred words in length.

Marie's journals were an important supplemental source of her metalinguistic awareness. Although they didn't have much to say about audience awareness issues or angle, they did demonstrate that Marie has a much better understanding of the writing process (especially idea generation and development) than was revealed in the other data sources.

Conclusion. Although Marie still has a way to go before writing mature college prose, she has made
significant progress while in Nancy Mack's course. Like Brad, she at last seems to have a strategy for composing, processes for helping her to develop good essays, and a sense of how essays can be structured. Her metalinguistic awareness grew substantially during the Winter Quarter, and her written texts showed considerable structural improvement. Neither the awareness or writing improvement was as dramatic as for Brad, but it was substantial. It seems clear that Marie needs a lot more practice in college writing. While practicing, she needs to give conscious attention to sentence structure and phrasing--important issues that received only secondary stress in Nancy Mack's instruction.

Case Study of Jake

Introduction. Jake is a nineteen year old Freshman who is different in many ways from the other student participants in this study. In my experience, he is not the average OSU Basic Writing student, though I have seen people with similar backgrounds in other college Basic Writing programs. First of all, Jake is not a high school graduate--he was admitted to Ohio State on the basis of a GED (high school equivalency) certificate. Jake is a Caucasian, born and raised on the north side of Columbus. His parents were divorced when he was a child, and Jake quit school at age fifteen. At the time
he quit, he was not doing well in school and his attendance was very poor. Jake said that in his neighborhood, it was not unusual for kids to drop out of high school. After quitting high school, Jake moved by himself to Flagstaff, Arizona where he eventually got jobs as a foreman on construction sites. Jake has even tried to establish his own small construction firm, but the venture failed. Jake demonstrated a keen intelligence throughout the Winter Quarter, but his effort was spotty. Quite often he came to class "stoned" on amphetamines and he seemed also to have problems with alcohol. During the quarter, Jake was arrested on a charge of threatening someone with a pistol. He spent a couple of days in jail. Lucky for him, the case was eventually dismissed on grounds of self-defense. Jake had many personal problems, and didn't devote himself full-time to school. He didn't plan to attend OSU next year, but talked of moving back to Arizona.

Jake was chosen as a subject not because he was so typical—in sociolinguistic terms he differed from most of the others, and in terms of life experience and educational background, he was unique in this class. But there was evidence that Jake had a keen intelligence, and raw skill. And he seemed to be able to make use of Nancy Mack's instruction. For these reasons, he was included among the principal participants of this study.
First Interview. My first interview with Jake took place on February 2, 1982—in the fourth week of the Winter Quarter. It seems a good bet to say that most of Jake's metalinguistic awareness about the processes and features of college writing were learned in Nancy Mack's class. Jake did very little writing in his formal schooling (he attended until ninth grade). Jake claimed, "This year is the first time I ever started writing." Jake also did little reading in school, and not much more on his own. He did have to do some reading as a construction foreman, and he occasionally reads Sports Illustrated. During the interview, I asked him to read his First Exam aloud. His reading was not too bad, though it was marked by a number of disfluencies and mis­cues.

The interview revealed that Jake has learned much about the processes involved in composing in Nancy Mack's class. He uses brainstorming and freewriting to generate and clarify ideas. He uses his journal entries to develop ideas and to develop fluency in his writing. Jake felt that the journal practice really helped him—he saw a great deal of improvement with the practice demanded by the journal assignment. Jake also was aware of the need for proofreading. In fact, he told me that he often elicited the help of his girl friend in the process (this kind of help was encouraged by Nancy Mack).
Jake's proofreading was, for the most part, similar to Brad's and Marie's--focusing on surface issues. The audience for Jake's writing included Nancy Mack and his girlfriend. Like most of the other students, he expressed little expectation or aspiration to be published in *Inprints*.

The interview showed that Jake had an incipient yet growing meta-knowledge of the structures of college writing. In this interview, he mentioned the topic sentence, the climax, and made use of the LIR term "narrative." Jake showed an excellent understanding of narrative climax, saying: "I figure it's something like a pyramid. It starts somewhere, hits a peak, and then goes down." Jake didn't use the term "conclusion" but spoke of his dissatisfaction with the "ending."

Jake demonstrated an awareness of lexical choice, and said how he made use of a thesaurus to find more descriptive and appropriate words. He was also interested in using "glue words," but ended up using "however" and "nevertheless" in a promiscuous and inappropriate fashion. Jake was quite good at discussing his lexical and structural choices, though he didn't often use the LIR for such discussion.

When I asked Jake what he needed to work on to improve his writing, he mentioned punctuation, spelling, and sentence form. Jake does indeed have severe problems
in these areas. Jake is untutored in the conventions of writing, and this is possibly attributable to his lack of schooling.

To conclude: Jake has genuine, but raw and unschooled, talent and intelligence. He is picking up and using Nancy Mack's meta-instruction, and is quickly developing a metalinguistic awareness. This awareness does not yet cover all the categories present in Nancy Mack's instruction (he mentioned nothing in regard to angle, heuristics, false awareness, expository mode, subtopics, or transitions).

First Exam. Jake wrote his First Exam on January 27, 1982, about one week before my first interview with him. Jake chose to write a true-life narrative based on his experiences in Arizona. The essay does indeed have narrative structure. It begins with an adequate topic sentence that shows signs of being preplanned with someone else's help. The essay leads up to an interesting narrative climax, and has a definite, though rather weak, conclusion. Numerous crossouts, insertions and corrections in the manuscript offer some evidence of choices, proofreading, and editing. Unfortunately, Jake does not have real good proofreading skills--there are numerous mechanics errors left in his text. Jake's errors betray his lack of schooling and a lack of familiarity with the conventions of print. He has
My home town is Columbus Ohio; however when I'm with a bunch of bloodthirsty Southerns, I'll never admit I'm a Yankee. While working in Arizona I noticed some changes in weather and people, I had just moved into my new apartment when a few of my nabories ask if I would like to have a drink with them, wanting to meet new friends I said yes. We went to a small bar on the outskirts of Flagstaff. We all sat down and they ask me were I was from and why I moved to Flagstaff. I answered by telling them I was from Ohio and I was working out here. This brought some color to their faces, one man got up and said "You mean your a Yankee?" By the tone of his voice I realized I was 'nt with Yankees anymore, I was in rebel territory now. I tried to make a joke saying "would it help if I told you Robert E. Lee was my great uncle?" They didn't find this amusing as they order me to buy the next round. Nevertheless my troubles weren't over yet. The first one to offer a jump was Paul. As he rose from his chair I notice how big his arms were and all his tattoo's. This was the first time I ever saw him standing up and boy did he ever stand up, he must have been 6'7" and he weighted over 250 lbs but he was all muscle. As we went outside I will admit I was scared, I mean who would 'nt be, here I was a Yankee in the South with this big brougly Southern, I felt as if the Civil War were still going on. I pointed out my car to him as he went for his truck. He pulled his truck in front of my car as I reached down to open his hood this is when I noticed he had Ohio plates. After seeing this I was shocked and didn't know what to think. I wanted to just come right out and ask him if he was from Ohio, but I couldn't he was just to big so I ask him if this was his truck, or a friends, he said that it was all his he just paid the last payment on it. I add in a soft muffled voice "You mean your from Ohio?" He said, "That's right but don't start any wise jokes about being a Yankee." After he said this I have never been so relieved in my life. It was as if all my trouble were over. Then I explain to Paul I was from Columbus and found out we only lived about 20 miles apart. Though I never meet him before in my life he seemed like an old friend.
severe spelling problems, has problems with the distinc-
tion between apostrophes and plurals, and does not know
how to punctuate sentences. In spite of all these errors,
Jake's work shows raw talent and promise. He seems to be
pretty good at choosing powerful and appropriate words;
he has a clear and interesting angle on his topic; he
makes effective use of dialogue in the narrative. Best
of all, Jake's narrative is interesting, holding the
attention of the reader. There are some signs that Jake
was trying to use Nancy Mack's instruction in doing this
essay--particularly in his word choice, description, and
sustaining and building of the narrative climax. He
also seemed to be trying to use subordinating and adver-
bial conjunctions and to compose longer, more complex
sentences. These efforts were not entirely successful,
but Nancy Mack does not punish students for this kind
of risk-taking. As a matter of fact, she expresses her
greatest displeasure with students who play it safe with
short, perfect sentences and safe, familiar words.

Oral Composing Protocol. There are a couple of
problems with Jake's protocol as a data source. First
of all, Jake appeared to be on drugs at the time the pro-
tocol was done (but he was this way much of the time and
my judgement about drug intoxication is not that of an
expert). Secondly, the tape recorder didn't function
perfectly when this protocol was made--the tape slows
down and speeds up, and some of Jake's monologue is unintelligible.

The protocol contained relatively few metastatement about composing processes and features. Jake mentioned explicitly things like topic sentence, paragraphs, conclusion, rewriting, and the need to narrow his topic. His statements implied that he is giving consideration to audience needs, idea generation and development, subtopics, and transitions. His remarks about the development of ideas are quite interesting: "I don't know if it [his topic sentence] might change when I write the paragraph out...which it does most of the time when I write...because I don't know exactly how far I'm gonna go...I might think of some different points to put in..." One of his asides seemed to indicate an awareness of audience needs. He described one aspect of his topic and then interjected, "most people know that!" Jake talked about paragraph development and discussed the need to revise his initial draft, saying that he'll need to add some detail and take out some detail. His sense of the need for revision went deeper than the concern for surface proofreading shown by Brad and Marie. He also talked a bit about the structure and content of some of his sentences.

Most of Jake's monologue, however, was not about the features and processes of composing. He spent most
of his time talking about his ideas, how he wanted to develop them and link them to each other. He didn't seem to be making explicit use of Nancy Mack's metainstruction—and in this he is a marked contrast to Brad. In some ways, Jake's protocol might be like a protocol made by an expert writer—someone who focuses almost exclusively on the meaning to be communicated, and the introduction, flow, and development of ideas. The ironic thing is that Jake does not have the kind of automaticity and control over the features of text that an expert might have. As a matter of fact, his text is strewn with what are considered by college writing instructors as very serious, and even fatal errors. I will reproduce, in the section to follow the first draft of his protocol text, to illustrate the extent of his problems.

To conclude, Jake's protocol showed little explicit metalinguistic awareness. He explicitly addressed only a few of Nancy's metalinguistic categories. Nothing was mentioned about angle, heuristics, false awareness, mode, subtopics, punctuation, or even spelling.

Protocol Text. I only have the first draft of Jake's protocol text. I know there must have been a much improved subsequent draft because Jake proofread such a draft into the tape recorder. The first draft, which I have reproduced below, is quite confused, lacking
both in structure and mechanics. The subsequent draft read into the tape recorder had a much clearer expository structure and a coherent, logical development. It is probably not fair to critique what amounts to a free-writing. I am reproducing it because it illustrates Jake's range of mechanics problems. This protocol text is not typical of Jake's work except for the range of mechanics errors. Jake usually produced interesting essays with fairly good structure and logical development.

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**Figure 6**

Jake's Protocol Text—The First Draft
Second Interview. My second interview with Jake took place March 9, 1982—near the end of the academic quarter. I asked Jake about areas of progress this quarter. He responded that he made considerable progress on spelling and his understanding of the structure of essays. He felt that he still needed to work on punctuation, and mentioned some confusion about comma placement in sentences having both independent and dependent clauses.

In this interview Jake showed a sense of the processes involved in composing. He said that he often began an assignment by freewriting on a topic. From his rough freewrite, he found things he could use and develop further in his paper. He also discussed the process of revision, without ever using the term "revision." Jake talked of making major changes, working with the text until it expressed what he wanted to say.
Unlike Brad and Marie, he seemed to have a true sense of revision— that it often involves significant changes.

Jake showed a good awareness of the structures involved in college essays. He discussed and named the modes (narrative and expository), and contrasted them for me. He even discussed his tendency to write in the narrative mode even when the assignment called for writing with expository structure. This was an excellent, and rather surprising, insight. As for structural elements, Jake discussed topic sentences, subtopics, and conclusions. He discussed very intelligently his technique for transitions. His discussion of topic sentences revealed more flexibility and perhaps more awareness of the heuristic nature of Nancy Mack's instruction than shown by either Brad or Marie. He said: "I usually put my topic sentence in the first paragraph...I try to lead into it...it's not always my first sentence...."

Jake also discussed what he looked for in "good" writing— he enjoyed sophisticated word choice and clever expressions. To do this in his own writing, he talked about using a thesaurus.

Jake, like both Brad and Marie, liked it best when he was able to write about his own true experiences. On the whole, Jake was pleased with the progress he made in writing this quarter.
I asked Jake about the effect of my presence on the class. He said that I didn't bother anyone. He also said something that might reveal a significant effect I had on some of the students—"I kind of like the interviewing...it kind of helps me remember some of these things." Apparently, my presence and my research techniques had the effect of increasing his metalinguistic awareness! This kind of information would be poison to an experimental researcher, but it was gratifying to me, an ethnographic researcher.

All in all, Jake displayed quite a range of metalinguistic awareness in this interview, touching on most of the seventeen issues I have identified. He also displayed a good command of the LIR, the technical vocabulary of composing. Many of his comments also revealed genuine insight and intelligence.

Third Exam. Jake's Third Exam was written March 3, 1982, about one week before my second interview with him. This essay was intended to be expository, and has some of the structural elements of expository essays. The essay begins with a topic sentence that doesn't seem to work--it promises very little and communicates a rather insipid angle towards his topic (the pros and cons of his personal generosity). Interestingly enough, the planning sheet Jake worked on before writing this essay contains
Jake's Third Exam--March 3, 1982

Being generous can sometimes get out of hand. It is very hard for me to say no to someone if they ask a favor of me. However I find myself lending out my car to friends for days at a time and large amounts of money to people I know who will never repay back. I know a good way to prevent this would be to just say no although, if I say no then I would feel people would think I was selfish.

When I first started loaning my possessions out it was only to my friends which I knew I could trust. But it started getting out of hand when one friend saw another friend with my car and naturally expected me to loan it to him. I tried saying no at times but to only find out this would make them plead and beg until finally I would give in and lend it to them. I don't know why I don't get upset when I lend something out and never receive it back at the time they promised to have it returned however, a little bit of appreciation would be nice.

When I lend something to someone I don't expect them to thank me for the rest of their lives or bend over backwards to repay me the favor. I feel that a simple thank you or "I'm sorry I didn't have your money when I promised it to you" I have found out that my friends are starting to take my generosity for granted and really didn't realize what I have done for them. I don't know if what I am doing for my friend is a good thing or bad but sometimes I wonder if I ever find myself in a spot where I need some support from them must who would be the first one to help.

Figure 7

Jake's Third Exam
a much more interesting topic sentence. His planning sheet also outlines clearer and more logical subtopics than are present in the final draft. Jake's essay, like some of his previous writings, has problems with the use of "glue words." He doesn't seem to always have precise control over the meanings of words like "however," "nevertheless," etc. The effect of this is to confuse the logic of his essay, and thus confuse the reader. Jake makes fewer mechanics errors in this essay than in most of his earlier writings. The errors he does make are similar to ones that have plagued him all quarter--spelling, sentence structure, punctuation. The worst aspect of this essay, and what makes it differ from many of his other writings, is that it lacks coherent logical structure and development, and that it is ultimately boring. This kind of inconsistent performance seems rather typical for Basic Writers--even for those who are making generally good progress.

Classroom Interaction and Journals. The classroom interaction notes show that Jake made a number of good metalinguistic comments, especially towards the end of the quarter. The first good comment by Jake occurred on February 10 when the class was critiquing an essay in Inprints. Jake discussed the structure of the first paragraph, explaining that the sentences before the topic sentence were giving background, setting the
reader up. Later in the month of February, he made comments that show explicit awareness of rhetorical mode. In one extraordinary comment, Jake criticized some of Nancy's potential exam questions, saying: "These questions seem to be better for narrative than expository writing." I also have recorded comments Jake made about transitions. Towards the end of the quarter (March 8), there are two excellent comments about the composing process. In one of these, Jake commented on the amount of time one must spend writing good papers compared to bad papers. In another remarkable comment, he compared composing to cleaning out an old desk drawer--organizing one's ideas in composing is like organizing the various bills, receipts, and papers in an old desk drawer. Jake's in-class comments weren't always so successful--occasionally he got nervous and tongue-tied while talking, cutting off his explanations with "Goddammit!"

Jake's journal entries show both a developing awareness about the features and processes involved in composing and a developing facility at producing good text. I would like to quote from some of his early journal entries. These show both his unsophistication in writing and an incipient intelligence and awareness about the purpose of writing:

a. "When I wrote my first graded paper I felt a little leary about it for I have never writied
a paper in my life."
b. "I don't really like to write because after I read what I wrote it doesn't sound the way I want it to."
c. "When I write a paper, I try to print as neatly as clearly as I can and use proper as possible all the time using proper punctuation which would be important for communication. Always trying to keep the reader's interest"

Jake's journals also discuss the importance of planning, the difference between freewrites and edited papers, proofreading, and some elements of structure. His journals clearly show that he brings a sharp intelligence and a good insight into the communicative function of writing to this class. As the quarter progressed, Jake's metalinguistic awareness developed and his texts generally improved.

**Conclusion.** Jake entered Nancy Mack's course with essentially a blank slate when it came to an explicit awareness of the processes and features of college writing. He also brought with him to the course his street-wisdom and a sharp raw intelligence. Over the course of the quarter, Jake struggled with the new job of going to school full-time and his personal and legal problems. In the face of these problems, it is amazing how much he progressed during this one academic quarter. During that
quarter, Jake developed quite an excellent metalinguistic awareness of the processes and features involved in college writing. He also made considerable progress in putting this awareness to work to develop good texts. As I said before, the development and quality of his texts were inconsistent. Generally speaking, his texts developed better structure and remained quite interesting (with the exception of his Third Exam). There was also a trend towards improved mechanics skills although Jake has a long way to go here. Jake's problems with mechanics are not all that mysterious. Mechanics are for the most part print conventions learned in school through reading and practice in writing. Jake quit school at age fifteen, and until this year, had virtually no practice in reading and writing. All in all, I would guess that Jake's progress must have pleased himself and proved gratifying to Nancy Mack.

Case Study of Barry

Introduction. Barry is an eighteen or nineteen year old Freshman from Lorain, Ohio. He is Caucasian, middle class, and speaks the urban Northern dialect common in the Cleveland area (this is most like my own dialect, and contrasts somewhat with the North and South Midlands dialects spoken by most of the other students). Barry attended Lorain High School, and took
four years of English. In those courses he earned "B's," a "C," and a "D." He said that he wrote a fair number of themes, book reports, and essay exams while in high school (which contrasts with the experiences of most of the other Basic Writing students). He also took two years of French.

Barry entered Nancy Mack's class somewhat late in the quarter, and I did not do the "First Interview" with him. He was selected as a principal subject in part because of his class participation. Barry was one of the most frequent participants and initiators of classroom discussion. He was one of the most important members of this class in terms of classroom dynamics--his comments, questions, and problems tended to generate interaction and vigorous discussion (this will be taken up again later in this case study).

**Placement Essay.** Barry wrote his English placement essay on November 11, 1981. The question he chose called for an expository essay addressing the pros and cons of a pass/fail system of grading. The copy of Barry's placement essay that I have shows no evidence of pre-planning. There is also little evidence of editing or proofreading changes--only three words were crossed out in the 330 word essay. Barry's essay is indeed expository, and has some elements of expository structure--a topic sentence, conclusion, and subtopics. The
The present system of grading should not be changed from the letter grades to a pass/fail system. With the pass/fail system a student lets us say that is studying medicine might not have the incentive to study his or her material to the fullest extent. The student may study just enough to get that passing grade on his grade sheet. This could lead to numerous problems. This person that has been studying medicine may become a doctor and will really not know what procedures to follow in treatment of a patient. With the grade system the medical student will study and learn the material to the best of his ability and will have a much better understanding of all of the countless measures that are used in patient care.

Students try to attain a grade and should not worry so much about what the grade will be as opposed to doing the best work they can on the test. If a person studies the right material and learns it will he shouldn't have to worry what grade he will receive.

The evaluation on a pass/fail system is nowhere near as good as evaluation of the student on a grade system. With the grade system there is a possibility of 5 different evaluation levels, pass/fail only has 2 levels. The grading system lets you know where amongst these 5 levels you stand and if you received a C or D you can strive to receive a better grade on the next report. Pass/fail is not a measure of where you stand; you could receive the level of C or D work but still get the passing mark whereas a person that is doing A work receives the same passing mark you did. So there really is no difference between a D or an A on a pass/fail system, but the difference on a grading system is a large one.

The grading scale system should be kept to better measure ones abilities because there really is no measure on a pass/fail system.

Barry's First Exam—27 January, 1982

Since cleaning off Mr. Winters back porch with the snow blower I realized that one should always dress warmly enough to protect themselves from the elements of winter. It was early Saturday morning when the phone rang and I did not want to get out of bed to answer it. The piercing ringing finally stopped and I heard a loud shout from beyond the walls of my bedroom. My mother was trying to get me out of bed. I forced myself to get up and go downstairs to hear the news. The phone call had been from Mr. Winter and he had asked my mother if there was a snow expert that wanted to make some money by clearing off his driveway, walkway and, two back porches.

Although I was not eager to take this task upon myself I decided that the money was the biggest reason for proceeding to the sub zero temperatures that lurked outside. I was dressed with long underwear, a pair of jeans and a pair of sweat pants over all of that. On my feet were two pairs of wool sox with a pair of thermal lined boots. I also had two sweatshirts and a down jacket along with a full faced hat.

Clearing the drive way and sidewalks was the easiest part of the job because I was shielded from the wind by the house. As I completed the front of the house I grudgingly made my way to the back of the house where the wind was gusting at near gale forces. The temperature was around 20 below zero and with the wind chill it was a very uncomfortable -60. The back porch is surround by windows on all sides but one and I was forced to compete with the wind. I had no choice but to blow the snow directly into the wind and as I did that most of the snow was being blown back and was hitting me in my already numb face. It seemed as if this portion of the tedious job of snow removal would never end. As it turned out I was out in the icy, nearly frozen world for almost an hour and a half. I sustained no damage to any part of my body although both of my eyebrows and eyelashes were blanketed with ice. As you can see it is very important that you dress yourself accordingly to the weather conditions as I did because one does not want to have any harm imposed on his body.
subtopics represent his arguments, and it is hard to figure out exactly how many arguments he has. There is a serious problem in the logic of his subtopics, and no attempt was made to link subtopics by means of transitional words or phrases. This essay has examples of both clumsy and twisted sentences and twisted logic. A good example of both of these problems can be seen in the first sentence of Barry's second paragraph: "Students try to attain a grade and should not worry so much about what the grade will be as opposed to doing the best work they can on the test." Barry seems to have an angle on his topic, but like his logic, his angle is somewhat confused. Barry does not make too many surface errors in this essay besides a comma splice, a spelling error, and a few clumsily phrased sentences. Barry's essay shows some sense of expository structure and a decent mastery of the mechanics of composing. To that extent, his placement essay is far better than other placement essays I have examined.  

First Exam. Barry's First Exam was written January 29, 1982. It is a narrative essay dealing with a true personal experience Barry had while shoveling snow. This topic wouldn't normally lend itself to an interesting essay, and Barry indeed failed to make this essay interesting. This failure seems to be related to a poorly wrought topic sentence, no perceptible angle
towards the incident, and a failure to pull off the narrative climax. It is interesting to see the synergy here: failure in topic sentence, angle, and climax are related to failure to maintain the reader's interest. The climactic incident in this essay involves snow being blown into Barry's face. A clever writer might have been able to take a humorous angle on this incident, but Barry wasn't able to come up with such an angle. His essay does clearly have a conclusion, and shows evidence of thoughtful, purposeful word choice. There are also some excellent descriptive passages in this essay. There are not too many mechanics errors except for a misplaced comma and some pronoun inconsistencies. There is a rather rare and unusual (both for Barry and Nancy Mack's other students) reference error in this essay. Barry uses the definite article improperly in his very first sentence: "Since cleaning off Mr. Winter's back porch with the snow blower..." There is some evidence in this essay that Barry proofread--there are numerous crossouts and corrections in the manuscript. This essay shows that Barry has some strengths in composing--he has mastery of most surface issues. But it also shows problems--Barry couldn't develop an angle, couldn't bring his story to an interesting climax, and ultimately wrote a boring essay, the cardinal sin in Nancy Mack's scheme of things.
Oral Composing Protocol. Barry's protocol was recorded February 25, 1982, towards the end of the academic quarter. As Barry began the protocol, he could be heard to say, "Need a topic sentence." At this point he began immediately to write a topic sentence, seemingly without going through any global planning. There is evidence later in the protocol that Barry had done some brainstorming and some global planning. But the little overall sense of where he wanted to go and what he wanted to do was inadequate for guiding his subsidiary or local composing decisions. Barry's composing strategy seemed to be: write first and plan later. A good example is a comment he made while in the middle of his first paragraph: "I don't know if this is the angle I want to take." The effect of his poor planning strategies is that Barry takes numerous wrong turns--some of which are abandoned, and some of which unfortunately find their way into the final draft. The fact that this protocol shows Barry's inefficient planning strategies indicates that protocols may have some diagnostic potential for Basic Writing instructors.

Throughout Barry's protocol, there is evidence of audience awareness and the need for proofreading and revision. He often considered the effect a sentence would have on his reader, particularly how Mrs. Mack would respond. After composing one particular sentence,
Barry said: "That's kind of vague. I don't know if anyone will understand it. I doubt it. It will probably not go in my final draft." After writing another section, he mentioned that it didn't seem exactly right, but Mrs. Mack would help him proofread it and give him suggestions for revisions. This same remark was heard in the protocols of other students, and I sometimes wondered if Nancy Mack helped them too much with revision.

Barry showed a fairly good metalinguistic awareness of structure, mentioning issues like topic sentence, subtopics, transition, and conclusion. To a lesser extent, he also consciously considered his word choice, spelling, and punctuation. Barry's protocol showed clearly how such features of composing interact with idea development and the meaning structure of the essay.

An interesting aspect of Barry's protocol involved the wanderings of his mind to issues other than composing. He cursed his performance on a math test, thought about watching a basketball game on television, and laughed about an incident that happened in his writing class. Here is that comment: "Gosh, I still don't believe Mrs. Mack brought that fish into class. That's unreal! ... what an imagination!"

When Barry finished composing, he proofread his paper and made some minor editorial changes. After
finishing his work, he commented "not bad." Similar comments ("Not bad...pretty good subtopic sentence... pretty good transition sentence" or "that stinks...that doesn't sound too good") appeared throughout the protocol. Barry was constantly making critical judgments throughout the entire process.

On the whole, Barry demonstrated pretty extensive metalinguistic awareness in this protocol, though some metalinguistic categories were not addressed (heuristics, false awareness, narrative mode, or expository mode). The protocol was particularly interesting for showing how meanings and ideas interact with metalinguistic awareness and for showing what happens when global planning is neglected.

**Protocol Text.** Barry's protocol text is an expository essay, and it contains most of the structural elements usually found in such essays--topic sentence, subtopics, transitions, and a conclusion. A topic sentence is present in this essay, but it is poorly phrased and fails to communicate a clear angle. Perhaps it would be wrong to say that there is an angle in this essay. There seem to be at least two angles: one deals with fanaticism and preoccupation with the cube, and the other deals with "cube art" and geometric patterns. These themes could be combined into an interesting, unified essay by a clever writer--but Barry is unable
Since Rubik's Cube has found its way to the homes of many curious people, it has also enticed their minds with the workings of the cube. The cube seems to almost reach out and grab a hold of your subconscious mind. At the dorm room when one person is working the cube, one can hear the various noises of the cube and those noises are like a signal to your brain that says go get the cube and solve it. Even if there is no cube to be found I sometimes seem to go through the motions in my mind that are involved in solving the cube. I have awakened during the night and realized that I was picturing an unsolved cube and I was actually watching myself solve the cube.

Although the cube takes a hold of your mind, it can also be used as a form of art by my roommates and I call cube art. There are almost an endless number of patterns that one can design. I have two favorite designs they are the two easiest to make. The designs are two different colored checkered arrangements on each side of the cube. The other is what is known as the doughnut in which one square (the middle square) is surrounded by all of the same color. Designs are fun to make but the best feeling is when you have completed the cube.

Since one must solve the cube to be able to produce the designs, the faster one can solve it the better off they will be. My roommates have a nightly competition where 4 guys all start with an unsolved cube and everyone tries to get it solved first. The one with the most first places gets taken out to McDonalds for a free dinner. The competition is stiff because between 4 guys the biggest lead is 2. Six first place finishes to 4 first place finishes. Competition can be tough but some people just like to solve the cube by inventing ways of their own.

Since the cube has created at least a nationwide craze, it has also created a craze on different ways of solving it. I have seen an almost unbelievable accomplishment and I am still astonished by it. I am referring to a woman that solved the cube. The woman was blind though, and she had different braille formation for each different color. I saw another incredible cube solver. A young man solved the cube without touching it with his hands. He used nothing but his feet. These two almost exotic cases probably resulted from the subconscious mind always thinking of a new and different way of solving the cube.

The cube has many ways of being solved and once one has solved it the cube seems to take a hold of the subconscious mind and whenever one sees it they almost automatically pick it up and begin solving Rubik's Cube.

Figure 9
Barry's Protocol Text
to unify his themes. His essay simultaneously goes in different directions. Barry's subtopics are full of interesting experiences and examples, and he seems to be consciously searching for good words. Barry proofread this text and made many surface corrections. A good essay is in here somewhere, and what he needs to do is some radical revision--radical cutting, rearranging, and rewriting. This protocol text seems fairly typical of Barry's work--he has genuine skill and potential, but some serious problems too.

Exit Interview. I interviewed Barry on March 11, 1982--near the end of the Winter Quarter. The interview began with Barry talking about his experiences in high school with writing. Barry said that most of the time in high school English class was spent on the study of literature, but they were required to do a moderate amount of writing. Unfortunately, the students were just told to write, and were given no help in understanding the processes and structures involved. Barry claimed that he never had a sense that he had problems with writing. He was somewhat surprised that he was placed in English 100.01--the Basic Writing course. I asked Barry about his areas of difficulty and areas of progress in composing this quarter. He felt that unity, "keeping one idea throughout the whole paper," was his major problem. He made the most progress in organizing his writings.
Barry felt that the key to becoming a good writer was practice linked up with good instruction. He seemed to appreciate and enjoy Nancy Mack's instruction.

Barry discussed very intelligently the processes involved in composing. He said that he used the techniques of freewriting and brainstorming to generate ideas and subtopics for his papers. He admitted that his ideas change and develop as he composes. Barry also proofread his compositions, and showed that he understood the differences between superficial proofreading and more profound revision. This was an insight rare among the students in the class, although Nancy Mack discussed this quite often. Barry said that in his proofreading he normally found errors in comma placement and spelling. But he admitted that he was not very good at spotting his own errors. For this reason he would often ask his roommates to proofread and critique his compositions.

In this interview, Barry showed a pretty good awareness of the structures involved in college essays. He mentioned and distinguished between narrative and expository writing and discussed issues like topic sentence, subtopic sentence, transitions, and conclusion. He made an astute comment about how a topic sentence can help unify a composition, but added "sometimes in my case it doesn't." He also gave a good description of
transitions: "It carries one idea from the previous paragraph to the next one."

Barry also made a typical comment about my effect on the class interaction: "Doesn't bother me at all, you know. I really don't even think about the tape recorder." Barry went on to say that when he first entered Nancy Mack's class, he thought I was a student--he had missed Nancy's and my explanations about our research projects.

To conclude, Barry showed excellent metalinguistic awareness in this exit interview. Almost all of his conscious awareness of the processes and features of writing were learned in Nancy Mack's class. Like most of the other students, Barry had nothing to say about the categories of false awareness or the heuristic nature of Nancy's instruction.

Third Exam. Barry's Third Exam was written on March 3, 1982, about a week before the exit interview described above. Barry's essay is that genre familiar to Basic Writing instructors--a narrative inside the structure of an expository essay. His topic dealt with injuries he sustained while participating in sports. The essay clearly has a topic sentence, but it is weak in that it doesn't communicate any kind of interesting angle towards his topic. This same kind of problem has plagued Barry throughout the quarter. Barry's essay has
Barry's Third Exam—March 3, 1962

Although I have been injured a few times since my freshman year in high school playing sports, I never gave up and I kept playing as soon as I was able. During my freshman year, I was on the basketball team. At practice while we were scrimmaging the sophomores, a shot was taken by an opposing team member which caromed of the backboard and was bouncing toward the boundary line. As I was trying to retrieve the ball, someone from the other team dove in front of me and smacked the ball right into my outstretched middle finger. As a result, my finger had been broken. I was out of action for approximately two weeks, but while my finger was broken I did as much training as I could without redamaging my finger. Even though I was injured playing basketball, I did not give up playing the game.

During my junior year, I was injured while playing basketball at a scrimmage. The scrimmage was nearing half time and I was in the game. Our team was on defense when I tried to position myself for a charge while the man came screaming down the lane, I had both of my feet slanted firmly on the floor. When our two bodies collided, I fell to the ground and somehow, I fell face first. The man that collided with me fell on top of me and his knee struck me on the back of my calf. I got up and ran down court with a very obvious limp. The time had run out in the half. Our team gathered on the bleachers to listen to the coaches halftime comments. After the coach was done, the team stampeded on to the floor like a pack of wild horses. As I tried to get up, a sharp pain shot in all directions in my leg. I tried to take a layup and as I put my weight on the injured leg, I fell to the ground with a thud. I sat out the rest of the scrimmage with an ice pack on my leg. When I finally got home, I went straight to the hospital. As it turned out, I had a blood clot where I had been struck. I kept working on my leg to get it ready for the rest of the season by taking whirlpools everyday. Even this injury did not keep me from participating in athletic activities.

While playing baseball, I was struck in the eye with a pitched ball. I was the catcher and the pitchers were practicing pitching. I decided that because there were no batters, and also because it was hot, I wouldn't need my face mask any longer. The first pitch after my mask was off, hit me right above the eye. After being at the hospital and having my wound stitched, the doctor told me that I was very lucky that the ball did not strike me any lower because if it had I could have lost sight in that eye. Although it only took a week for my eye to heal, I was anxious to get back behind the plate. I have had quite a few injuries while playing sports, but even though, I will keep playing them as long as I am physically able. I never gave up on any of those sports because of an injury, and as a result I still love to play both of them.
three subtopics—each subtopic being a brief narration about a different sports injury. The subtopics are linked by transitions, and the essay is rounded off by a concluding paragraph. The conclusion harks back to the topic sentence, and is just as boring. There is some evidence (in the form of cross-outs and corrections) that Barry proofread and made editorial changes, but he didn't catch all his errors. There are a few unexpected mechanics errors, and a number of overly-long and clumsy sentences. Barry also seemed to be going "glue word" crazy—every other sentence is a complex sentence beginning with a conjunction from the "glue word" handout. This might be an example of a student misusing the teacher's instruction. In many ways, Barry's Third Exam is rather disappointing and rather typical of the essays produced throughout the quarter. Barry has better composing skills (particularly regarding mechanics) than most of Nancy Mack's students, but he frequently produces boring essays.

Classroom Interaction and Journals. Barry participated very much in the classroom interaction, but his participation did not reveal much in the way of metalinguistic awareness. There are only a few metalinguistic comments on issues like topic sentence, conclusions, glue words, and run-on sentences. One time, Barry responded to the question, "What turns Mrs. Mack on?"
by blurting out, "A good topic sentence!" His more normal mode of participating in the classroom interaction was by asking for help from his classmates in developing a topic sentence or an angle on his topic. So Barry played a pedagogically useful role in this class, but did not reveal much awareness via his interaction. There were two revealing comments made by Barry late in the quarter that showed his interests and his problems. One remark, made February 24, commented on Nancy's purpose in presenting the bloody carp to the class. He thought the message was: "Our essays need vivid details...don't be boring." Another comment that typifies the frustrations of Basic Writers was made March 1. He referred to one of his essays, commenting: "I didn't say it...but that's what I intended to say." Almost the exact same comment appeared in one of Jake's journal entries.

Although Barry's journal entries are valuable sources of his metalinguistic awareness, they are most remarkable for their ideas, insights, and readability. Barry displayed quite good fluency and facility in writing as he discussed his feelings and personal experiences. His journals contain several nice comments about his experiences in high school English class. In one entry, he said: "While I was in High School, I was never really taught to write with any meaning and also I was never informed that we should have an angle on the subject
matter." It seems that Barry had much more experience and practice in high school in composing than most of the other students—and this shows up in the fluency and readability of his journals.

Barry also made numerous comments about structure in his journals, mentioning topic sentence, narrative climax, word choice, conclusion, and point of view. His comments showed that he made explicit use of Nancy Mack's instruction. At one point (February 2) he said: "I gave quite a bit of attention to formulating a topic sentence because of the emphasis put toward that subject in class." He also made a fascinating comment on how he composed a conclusion to one of his papers. He said: "I immediately tried to write one [a conclusion] but was unsuccessful in the first attempt. After a bit of thought and a bit of rewording I finally got a conclusion drawn up in my mind and translated to paper."

Besides numerous comments on the structures and features involved in composing, Barry's journals commented on several aspects of the composing process, including planning, revision, freewriting, and making multiple drafts of papers.

To conclude, Barry's journals offer valuable insights into his extensive metalinguistic awareness. They also offer a view into his composing processes and show that he made use of Nancy Mack's instruction.
Conclusion. As I conclude this case study, my feelings about Barry are quite mixed. On the one hand, his protocol, interview, and especially his journals show considerable growth in metalinguistic awareness over the Winter Quarter. His journals also show sensitivity, thoughtfulness, and insight—as well as considerable mastery of the skills involved in composing. Contrasted with this is Barry's performance on his in-class essay exams. These exams do indeed show growth in the ability to structure papers. But they also show failure: Barry rarely composes an adequate topic sentence; he rarely communicates a clear and interesting angle on his topic; he often writes insipid and boring essays. I don't know exactly what his problem is. It seems that he has not been able to translate all his metalinguistic awareness into good writing. This problem seems to point out an important dimension of the relationship between metalinguistic awareness and the production of good prose—such awareness probably facilitates good prose, but it doesn't necessarily lead to good prose.

Case Study of Nate

Introduction. Nate is an eighteen or nineteen year old Freshman from Chillicothe, Ohio. He is different from the other principal participants in this
study in that he is a Black American. Nate is a graduate of Chillicothe High School, where he said he learned nothing about writing and did virtually no writing. He is a personable and diligent student, and wants to pursue a major in computers and information processing at Ohio State.

I don't have much information about Nate's social and economic background except for the obvious fact that he is Black, and comes from a small southern Ohio city. His English shows only the subtlest traces of a Black Vernacular dialect. It has occurred to me that in other social scenes, Nate may be bidialectal. But in the contexts in which I have seen him at Ohio State, his language appears to be quite similar to that of his White classmates.

First Interview. My first interview with Nate took place on February 2, 1982. The interview began with Nate reading aloud his First Exam. The oral reading was marked by numerous disfluencies and miscues. At one point in the reading, he commented, "That part didn't make sense." When he finished, he apologized for the confused text and poor oral reading, saying: "I didn't proofread this at all."

Nate explicitly discussed a few aspects of structure in this interview, including narrative climax, and topic sentence. But he had virtually nothing to say about the
categories of idea development, subtopics, transitions, or conclusion. He did briefly mention the importance of word choice, saying that to improve his writing he needed to use more descriptive words.

Nate mentioned only a few process issues in this interview. He mentioned planning and proofreading, but acknowledged that for this paper he planned poorly and failed to proofread because he ran out of time. His planning revolved around discussions about the topic with Nancy Mack and with the composition (before going into the exam) of a topic sentence. He made no mention of issues like angle, heuristics, or false awareness. The only thing he said about audience awareness was that Nancy Mack was his only reader. He emphatically said that he wouldn't allow others to read his writings.

Nate was quite disappointed and frustrated with his First Exam. He felt (perhaps unfairly) that Nancy Mack chose this particular topic for him—and in part he blamed her for his failure. He also attributed his failure to his lack of proofreading and planning. His goal for this assignment was simply "to complete the assignment and turn it in."

To conclude, Nate showed little metalinguistic awareness in this first interview, both as to the processes and structures involved in composing. Also, his responses showed me that he didn't always implement the
awareness that he did possess. Nate's level of awareness in this first interview really contrasts with his awareness in the protocol and the final interview, both of which will be discussed in the pages that follow.

First Exam. Nate's First Exam was written January 27, 1982. The essay is essentially a narrative about going to dances in Chillicothe, Ohio. But this essay differs from most narratives in that it doesn't represent a coherent story, and lacks a narrative climax. These facts, coupled with the lack of an interesting angle, make for a boring essay. I kept wondering why Nate bothered to write about this topic. The essay seems to have a topic sentence (set off in a paragraph), and a conclusion—but these structures are weak, holding no angle or promise. Besides having weak structure and no angle, this essay contains numerous mechanics errors. There are a few clumsy sentences and one senseless sentence. Nate couldn't have spent much time proofreading this work. When he orally read this essay, he had some trouble with his own text, commenting, "That part didn't make sense." There are also a few verb errors which appear to be typical of those errors caused by Black dialect interference. There are also a couple of clumsy complex sentences in this essay. One of these looks to be the result of Nate attempting to incorporate into his text a sophisticated "glue word"("furthermore").
Chillicothe is a town where everybody meets on a Saturday night because it's a great place to socialize. Chillicothe is a small and quiet town. The town does not have many recreational activities planned compared to a larger city. Usually the kids are in the park during the day watching a basketball game. Everybody always ask each other what are you doing tonight? This is like biting their nails for night time. You party. When the sun goes down people come out of their houses like bats to get on to the streets. Usually there is a basketball game that night so the majority of the kids go to. When the game lets out everybody goes to McDonalds. It seems like McDonalds has a magnetic pull on all of the adolescence kids. This is where you go to socialize; furthermore catch up on gossip like whose dating who tonight. When you are have so many people there is in the place it reminds you of a war taking place and there is only one bomb shelter. After everybody get comfortable and situated it time move on. They go jump in to their cars and hurreying to get to the dance. The dance is the main event of the night you have to go to the dance. Everybody has a good time dancing with one another. The dance could be a place to let out all that energy building up inside you. There you learn the latest dances in addition to the latest sings. Once the dance is over everyone stands outside the door to talk about things in general. Knowing that there nothing more to do they go home happy, satisfied and pleased.

The most important quality a grillman, while working at a fast food restaurant, is speed. Speed is important when the store is in high volume hours. The grillman must be fast enough so he won't slow down production. A constant rapid flow of product must be put out by the grill person. If the grillman doesn't keep up with production, the customer will have to wait for his or her order. If the customer has to wait for an order, the customer might not come back. This will lead to an decrease in business. A grillman must respond quickly to rush hours. It is like a fast break on a basketball court. He must get down and put the ball in the bucket. A grill must be able to crank out the product when he or she is on a fast break.

Eventhough speed is important during high volume hours, the grillman must be fast enough to keep things clean. Cleanliness is important. A grillman has to be quick when he cleans. He doesn't have time to look while he is cleaning because when another rush comes everything has to be clean and ready to go. During high volume hours a grillman must be fast enough to keep clean as well as putting out product. A store might get inspected during a rush hour and if everything is dirty that looks bad on the grillman. If everything is clean during rush hours, while the store is being inspected, that makes the grillman look good.

Eventhough cleanliness is another important trait the boss could be impress by your efforts. If the boss sees that the grillman is fast with production and quick at cleaning up, he or she will remember it on your next career performance review. Knowing that you /several illegible wordy/, this could lead to a promotion or a raise. I have seen grillman who are clean and fast yet promoted to manager of the store. Impress the boss he will use the grillman as a good example.

Speed is an important quality that every grillman should work on. I think that it would be beneficial to him as well as the crew.

Figure 11

Nate's First and Third Exams
Unfortunately, he was not able to control this complex sentence and didn't seem to fully understand the meaning and usage of that particular "glue word." All in all, I would call Nate's First Exam a failure in regard to structure, mechanics, and interest.

**Oral Composing Protocol.** Nate's protocol was recorded February 25, 1982, towards the end of the Winter Quarter. This protocol was at the same time one of my most frustrating and rewarding pieces of data. The frustration involved the fact that so much of his monologue was unintelligible, due to both equipment problems and Nate's low-volume mumbling. This data proved rewarding for the important insights it provided on the role of metalinguistic awareness in the composing process.

Nate's protocol was by far the longest of any of the protocols--around 140 minutes long. The composing effort represented in this protocol was incredibly stubborn and gutty--Nate goes through hell while composing. Much of the protocol demonstrates his attempts at brainstorming and shows the raw and rough processes involved in thinking. Nate quite consciously used brainstorming as a way to think and he got this procedure from Nancy Mack's instruction. Nate brainstorms at all levels of the composition--from the general topic, down to the details to be used in the subtopics. He generates more details than he can use, and when composing the actual
text, he picks and chooses from these brainstormed details.

After his brainstorming, Nate got to the point where he wanted to write his subtopic sentence and develop his subtopic. Here his struggle began all over again as he tried to appropriately phrase the subtopic sentence. Nate tried to begin his subtopic sentence with what Nancy Mack calls a "glue word." These "glue words" are conjunctions which serve as transitions, and establish logical relationships in the prose. Nate consulted Nancy Mack's "Glue Word" handout and came up with a number of possibilities including the following: in addition to; due to the fact; in spite of, and others. It was almost as if he chose the conjunction first, and let the meanings and logical relationships follow. This seemed to be a backwards manner of composing, somewhat like the "tail wagging the dog." Nate probably thought that this procedure simply followed Nancy Mack's instruction--a dangerous reification of an heuristic instruction. Perhaps Nancy may have to change her approach to the teaching of transitions and glue words--so many of her students seem to be doing this backwards.

In his monologue Nate made reference to the following aspects of structure: topic sentence, subtopic sentence, subtopic idea development, word choice, and transition. His protocol (unlike his exit interview) does show an interaction between structure and idea development.
The neglect of meaning and ideas present in his exit interview weren't so obvious in the protocol.

Nate did some proofreading in this protocol, though he neglected a final over-all proofreading. He also could be heard to make evaluative comments in the middle of his composing. One time he said, "That sounds weak... no, that's all right." Another very revealing evaluatory comment was: "That sounds nice... but that's not what I wanted."

All in all, Nate's protocol showed him using Nancy Mack's instruction. He has good metalinguistic awareness--but there are problems. First of all, Nate was damaged by some false awareness, including the reification of some of Nancy Mack's suggestions. And as John Downing has shown for the skill of reading--false awareness or "cognitive confusion" frustrates one's efforts and leads to failure. Nate was indeed trying to consciously juggle a large number of Nancy Mack's instructions. The net effect of this seemed to be the hindering of fluency! Nate's composing was terribly slow and disfluent--a real struggle. Lack of fluency and overly slow writing seem to make for poor text. I am brought to an important conclusion here. It seems that one cannot keep in mind all the issues of metalinguistic awareness at one time and still maintain fluency. Certain issues in composing must move into an automaticity stage.
if one is to be fluent, and focus on the development of meaning and logic. A good writer, it seems, must temporarily set aside aspects of his or her metalinguistic monitor while composing. Later in the process when proofreading or revising, this conscious awareness can then be reengaged.

Protocol Text. Nate turned in no coherent draft of a protocol text to me. What he turned in were primarily planning, brainstorming, and idea generation sheets. Among these are several attempts to generate topic sentences and a few attempts at developing subtopics. These planning sheets are fascinating because they reveal the sloppy and complex nature of the thinking process. Unfortunately, they don't show the process coming together to produce finished, fluent prose. Perhaps the struggle and disorganization represented in the sheets Nate turned in to me are representative of his present stage of development as a writer.

Second Interview. My second interview with Nate took place on March 9, 1982. The interview began with a discussion of his writing experiences in high school. Nate attended Chillicothe High School, and, like several other students in this Basic Writing class, did virtually no writing at all there. As for his knowledge about composing before entering this class, Nate said: "I didn't know how to structure a paper. I didn't know anything
about topic sentence, subtopic, transition, descriptive words. I just didn't know how to write at all. So now I think I can write well enough to get by." Nate felt that he had progressed in all aspects of composing but felt that he needed to improve "writing the body part of my subtopics." Like several other students in this class, Nate felt the need to produce writing that was more "descriptive." He also discussed his biggest problem: "I have a lot of trouble picking out a topic, what I want to write about. That's my main problem."

This problem was quite evident in Nate's protocol.

Nate discussed some aspects of his writing process in this interview. He discussed how he generates ideas and plans his writing. Nate said that he uses the brainstorming technique for the major points down to the small details of what he wants to write. In this interview Nate made no mention of the proofreading and revision processes, and unfortunately I forgot to bring these up.

Nate's principle focus and interest in composing seemed to revolve around the issues of structure. He talked very intelligently about narrative and expository structure, explaining their similarities and differences. He spoke of narrative climax, topic sentences, subtopics and subtopic sentences, and conclusions. His sense of structure was rather rigid--there are always three
subtopics, always a subtopic sentence and a conclusion. The topic sentence is always placed first. This is, of course, a kind of false awareness, and shows a misuse of Nancy Mack's heuristic instructions.

As I have mentioned in the other case studies, each student seems to have his or her own personal agenda or curriculum for composing. Nate's interest is clearly in structure, and more particularly in transitions. Nate is so fascinated by transitions, that he looks first at these structures when reading essays in *Inprints*. He seems to focus more on these than on ideas and meanings. Carried to an extreme, this too could be viewed as a false awareness, missing the essential communicative function of prose.

Towards the end of the interview, I asked Nate who reads his writings and he gave me an emphatic and interesting response. Nate said, "I never let anybody read my writings." This response was fairly typical, especially for the boys in this class. For them, Nancy Mack was the only reader of their writings.

I also asked him about the effect of my presence on him and the class. He responded that at first my presence bothered him--"I thought you were watching Mrs. Mack." But then he added that it didn't bother him, once he understood what I was doing. He said, "Now that everybody knows who you are...you come in, they
expect you to come in...and if you're not there, they say, 'Where's Bob?" Nate also said that he enjoyed doing the protocol and the interviews with me because he received journal credits for them.

To conclude, Nate showed excellent metalinguistic awareness in this interview, especially for the categories that deal with the structures of composing. Unfortunately, there is some evidence that his awareness is somewhat out of balance. His focus on structure is rigid, and almost obscures issues of ideas and meanings.

Third Exam. Nate's Third Exam was written on March 3, 1982, about a week before my final interview with him. This essay describes the traits of a good fast-foods restaurant worker, and is written in the expository mode. Nate's essay has all the structural parts of an expository essay--topic sentence, three subtopics, transitions, conclusion. But structure is not enough to salvage this essay--structure interacts with angle, and Nate clearly does not have an interesting angle on his topic. The failure to develop an interesting angle is obvious immediately as one reads the topic sentence of this essay. And this failure then carries through the subtopics and conclusion. There are not many mechanics errors in this essay--the writing is "safe" and boring. This is an example of
the kind of essay Nancy Mack did not want to receive. Nate's performance contrasts most vividly with Jake, who often wrote fascinating essays filled with mechanics errors. Nate's failure to take risks might be in part a function of his personality. The development of writing skill is not just a function of practice and instruction--it is also a matter of guts. It seems that in this particular essay, Nate may have decided not to take any risks.

Classroom Interaction and Journals. Nate did not turn in all his journal entries with his composing portfolio at the end of the quarter (as Nancy Mack had requested), so this data source remains unavailable to me. I am not sure why he did not turn these in, but perhaps it was for personal privacy reasons. Nate did not want anyone but Nancy Mack to read his essays, and was very private about his thinking and composing processes. Perhaps this is why the journals were never turned back in.

I only have a couple of references to Nate in the classroom interaction notes. One references (from January 22) was a response to the question, "What turns Mrs. Mack on?". Nate answered that Mrs. Mack was turned on by "neat little words and phrases." The other reference in my notes (from February 22) has Nate discussing the composing process. He spoke of the development
of one of his papers, from brainstorming through the grouping and organization of ideas.

The class notes and journals are not important data sources for Nate's metalinguistic awareness, but they do repeat a few themes familiar from his protocol and interviews.

Conclusion. Nate's protocol, interviews, and texts offer a sober warning against any glib conclusions about the relationship between metalinguistic awareness and the production of mature college prose. On the one hand, Nate demonstrates a significant growth in awareness of the structures and processes involved in composing. And one can also note improvement in the quality of his written texts as he moved through the quarter. On the other hand, the intellectual struggle Nate went through in his composing protocol indicates that one cannot maintain all metalinguistic issues in the forefront of consciousness and expect to compose fluently at the same time. There is something to be said for metalinguistic awareness, but there is also something to be said for automaticity in the composing process. Nate's protocol showed that too much self-conscious awareness can choke off fluency and speed—elements which may be critical to good writing. One other very important lesson coming out of this case study involves the role of personality in composing. At different points in this study, Nate
showed both genuine courage and a failure of nerve. Good writing often demands risk taking and guts on the part of the composer. The issue of personality in the development of writing skill is something that both teachers and psycholinguists should give some attention to.

This concludes the in-depth case studies used in this dissertation. Some of the important trends and patterns found in these case studies will be discussed in the sections of Chapter V that follow.
CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS, HUNCHES, AND NEW DIRECTIONS

I will begin this chapter with a discussion of the principle trends and patterns that I have discerned from my ethnographic case studies. Then I will discuss certain findings that seem important for the development of composition theory. At this point I will discuss the role that metalinguistic awareness plays in composing and learning to compose. Following that, I will discuss areas where additional research must be undertaken. Finally, I will conclude Chapter V with a personal reflection on the process of researching and writing a dissertation.

Principal Trends and Patterns Coming Out of this Research

In the section of Chapter V that follows, I hope to bring together some of the important trends and patterns that have come out of my ethnographic case studies. When reading the following section, it is important to keep in mind two things: the contextualization found in Chapter IV's individual case studies is crucial for understanding these patterns and conclusions; and my conclusions are known with great confidence, but may have limited generalizability.
Writing History. A theme that comes through unambiguously in this study is that these students were not prepared for the demands of college writing in their high schools or grade schools. There are a couple of different issues involved in their universal lack of preparation. First of all, these students apparently had little practice writing while in high school. Most of these students told me that they wrote virtually no essays, papers, or essay exams while in high school. The couple of exceptions to this pattern seem to prove the rule. The few students who did some writing in high school were involved primarily in journal writing and creative writing. And there doesn't appear to be a necessary or direct link between that kind of experience and the ability to deal with college narrative and expository prose. Secondly, these students were taught very little about the structures, strategies, and processes involved in composing. To sum up, these students had no awareness about composing, and no practice in composing. Under these circumstances, it would be quite a surprise if any of them had been able to write well before entering this course.

Topic and Mode Preference. An interesting pattern coming out of my research confirms a finding of many prominent researchers who have studied composing. All of my principal subjects expressed a preference for basing their writing on true personal experience. And all of
them tend to write narratives, even when the assignment calls for expository prose. When they try to write expository essays, they tend to incorporate narratives into expository form. Many students refer to their writings, no matter the mode, as "stories." It's interesting to speculate about the reasons for the above pattern. It seems that the narrative mode might well be the basic structure of prose writing—the structure upon which further refinements and developments are based. An instructor should probably not discourage a developing writer from basing his or her essays on real-life narratives. A sense of story, something that usually develops in childhood, is one of the great strengths a Basic Writer brings to his new task. This sense, along with oral language skill, should be looked upon as an essential foundation for further development. It is unfortunate that many college writing instructors disdain their students' strengths in these areas.

Reification of Instructional Heuristics. Nancy Mack often made use of instructional heuristics in her teaching about writing (e.g. in regard to the nature and placement of topic sentence, number of subtopics, etc.). This instruction was often accompanied by warnings against the reification of such rules-of-thumb. The students used this instruction to penetrate and get hold of an otherwise mysterious process. For this reason, I am convinced
that the use of heuristic devices, even when they are not 100% true, is a useful and perhaps necessary approach to the learning of a complex skill like composing. Unfortunately, many students didn't seem to attend to Nancy Mack's warnings about reification of the instruction. The result was that many of the students became "little sub-topic machines," to use Nancy's words. Many of them produced writings that had a structural rigidity--always topic sentence first; always three subtopics; always conclusion last. That kind of rigidity often leads to boring, mechanical prose.

The issue of "false awareness" certainly comes in here. "False awareness" could be caused by teacher ignorance of the composing process or by the way students misuse the teacher's instruction. Among the students I have studied, it seems that many have misused Nancy Mack's instruction. The fact that this "misuse" is so widespread leads me to believe that perhaps reification of rules and structural rigidity is a "stage" that Basic Writers must go through. It may be a necessary stage, but it should be a temporary one if the students are ever going to become good writers.

Superficial Editing Processes. Getting Basic Writers to proofread and edit their writings is something of a victory--many of them come into Basic Writing courses never having proofread. The problem is that many of them
never get beyond a superficial kind of proofreading. The students I have studied generally proofread for spelling and punctuation errors—there is seldom a major "re-vision" of the text. A few students talk about revision (in contrast to surface-level proofreading), but few of them have the skills to accomplish it.

Nancy Mack was quite aware of this problem, and spoke often about the need for revision. She often said that "good writing is not an instant thing," and showed the students that between the initial concepts and the final draft there were often major revisions. She also stressed that revision demands guts—the courage and confidence to tear down and rebuild large sections of discourse. Nancy's instruction in this area was not totally effective. Revision appeared to be a new and difficult habit for the students. Perhaps revision demands skills that these students do not yet have total control of. Like many other aspects of good writing, revision may not be learnable in one academic quarter.

Writing for the Teacher. Most of the students that I have studied began this Basic Writing course with the teacher as their only imagined reader. Nancy Mack took many steps to expand this sense of audience, and her efforts bore some fruit. Some of the efforts in this direction: including student writings in the
Writing Workshop's newspaper *Inprints* and in the Workshop's textbook *Reprints*; in-class discussion of student papers; in-class peer editing; urging students to get roommates, friends, or parents to help proofread and critique their writings. There clearly was success in expanding the readership for these Basic Writers, but I am amazed at the stubbornness of the idea that the teacher is the reader. I think this stubborn idea is related to how we structure schooling in regard to Basic Writing instruction. The "bottom line" is always that one teacher ends up the quarter by assigning a letter grade to each student. In that kind of structure, the only reader that counts will continue to be the teacher who assigns the grade. The Writing Workshop in general, and Nancy Mack in particular, have made great strides towards circumventing this tendency towards "dummy writing." But my study indicates that more needs to be done to create a real and expanded sense of audience.

**Difficulty in Expressing One's Exact Meaning.** A fascinating theme that came out of the students' protocols, interviews, and journals was that they had trouble putting into print exactly what they wanted to say. One comic remark on this came out of Nate's protocol when he said, "That sounds nice...but that's not what I wanted." Of course, even expert writers understand this problem--the incredible difficulty of putting
the complexity of thought and feeling into the linear and logical structure of print. I don't think any teacher will ever solve this problem. The best a teacher could do would be to encourage the students to discard text that belies their feelings, insights, or intentions. The teacher must represent writing as a long process and should encourage deep revisions when the text inaccurately represents the student's thinking.

**Inconsistent Development.** Even the brightest and most diligent students in my study did not show consistent improvement and did not always produce texts of the same quality. This is a difficult fact of human learning and development that teachers must face. Inconsistency often showed up when the students tackled a new modality or an unfamiliar or unliked topic. It also showed up when they were struggling to learn something new (e.g., the use of subordinating and adverbial conjunctions in transition sentences). Inconsistency sometimes can be taken as a good sign—a sign that the students are taking risks instead of sticking with "safe writing." Learning often seems to require risk-taking, and risk-taking generates errors and inconsistency.

**Students Made Use of the Instruction.** Without equivocation it can be said that Nancy Mack's students made extensive and productive use of her instruction. That is not to say that they all made the same use of
the instruction. On the contrary, an interesting theme of this study was that each student seemed to have his or her own personal agenda or curriculum. These agendas seemed to be related to a particular student's needs and interests. Most of the students made use of Nancy's suggestions about brainstorming and idea generation, and most of them made use of her instruction on structuring and proofreading their writings. As I have mentioned before, a few aspects of Nancy's instruction seemed to be misused by the students, and a few aspects were ignored. In this last category I'm thinking about things like the instruction on revision, the warnings about reification and structural rigidity, etc. Not only did the students make effective use of most of Nancy's instruction, but many of them expressed a profound gratitude for her demystification of the processes and structures of writing. Some of them felt that at last they could be successful at a task (composing) that had heretofore seemed impossible and magical.

These then are some of the major patterns and themes coming out of my study. Below is a chart that shows how my five principal subjects stand in regard to these (and other) themes.
Table 2
Trends, Patterns, and Principal Subjects.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>pattern</th>
<th>Brad</th>
<th>Marie</th>
<th>Jake</th>
<th>Barry</th>
<th>Nate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Little instruction on writing in highschool</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Little writing done in highschool</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>some</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prefers to write from personal experience</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tends to always write narratives</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Superficial editing processes</td>
<td>developing</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>developing</td>
<td>mixed</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher is only reader</td>
<td>Yes, at first</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reifies teacher's instruction</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problems using &quot;glue words&quot;</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Texts &amp; comments show rigidity</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>some</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Struggles to compose topic sentences</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>not noticed</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trouble writing what he/she intends to say</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writes interesting essays</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>mixed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Texts generally improved over quarter</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>some</td>
<td>some</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased metalinguistic awareness</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Texts inconsistent in quality</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Makes use of Nancy's instruction</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shows gratitude for Nancy's instruction</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above chart is a useful summary of how my principal subjects stood in regard to the major trends. But any such chart necessarily oversimplifies, and is not particularly useful for showing growth over the quarter.
Some Implications for Theory Development

There are at least three areas of theory development addressed by research into composing. One area focuses on the written texts and asks questions like: what constitutes good writing? how are good texts structured? what are the various subparts of these structures? Another area of research in composing inquires into how people learn to compose. A third area of inquiry looks at how people do compose. These three areas are separate and yet interactive. Although I am not attempting to construct comprehensive theoretical models for these three areas, my research findings should shed some light on issues that need to be included in comprehensive theoretical models, and should show how these three theoretical areas interact.

The Parts of a Text. My research has not really addressed what constitutes good writing. Nor has it delved deeply into the question of how good texts are structured. What I have found out is something about the nature of the "parts" of rhetorical structure. The various structures and features (i.e. the "parts") of a written discourse seem to be intensely synergistic and interactive. This is evident in almost all the texts produced by the students in this study. This synergy has two realities: it exists in the mind of the writer; and it exists within the text itself. This claim means, for
example, that one could not speak of "topic sentence" as a structure separate from issues like topic, subtopics, lexical choice, angle, etc. All "parts" of a text interact to produce an organic whole. If my claim is indeed true, then the "parts" of a text have no real existence outside the whole text. To claim otherwise is probably to be technically incorrect—though such claims may be useful fictions and heuristic devices. My claim here certainly needs much more investigation.

How People Learn to Write. How people learn to write is both a pedagogical and psycholinguistic issue. There are several important trends coming out of my research that address these issues. The first thing that I would like to mention is related to my claim that there are no discrete or independent parts of a text. In the same way, I believe that there is no necessary and real "scope and sequence" of learning skills that add up to mature skill in composing. In this regard, learning to compose is as synergistic as learning to use oral language (see Lois Bloom, 1976). A much better model of learning to compose is the spiral model discussed by Vygotsky (1978). In this model, a learner does not master a subskill and then move on up the pyramid. Instead, a learner comes back again and again over the years to a particular issue. The learner may address this issue (e.g. "angle") with an ever-more sophisticated
understanding—but such issues in writing are never "solved." Beginners and experts must grapple with angle, word choice, logical development, etc. My data show that Basic Writers, if they are going to succeed, cannot consider one "subskill" without considering its synergistic relationship with other "subskills." For example, one cannot even compose a topic sentence without considering issues like angle, point-of-view, lexical choice, etc. A lesson from the synergistic nature of composing might be: have students write complete texts from early on in their schooling (see also Witte and Faigley's (1981) remarks).

Another pattern that relates to Lois Bloom's model of oral language development and relates to the issue of scope and sequence is this: there seems to be no set pattern for the development of composing skill. In other words, learning to compose is "variable." My data clearly show that individual personality plays a role in what a student works on and pays attention to. Personality seems to affect the development of composing skill in at least two ways: first of all, each student seems to have a personal agenda or curriculum. This agenda seems to be related to the student's interests and needs. Secondly, the student's personality plays a role in his or her composing decisions. Learning to compose and learning to write good texts demand the courage to take risks. Good composing demands patience, persistence, and courage.
It is difficult for a teacher to affect some of these personality issues. For a fascinating example of the effects of courage and lack of nerve on composing, see the case study of Nate.

Finally, I would like to briefly mention the importance of teacher and peer feedback and the importance of practice in learning to compose. Most of the students coming into this study had no practice in composing and very little meta-awareness of the processes and features of composing. It seems clear that the students need practice in writing college compositions. Other seemingly related activities (like reading, journal writing, creative writing) are helpful, but they don't have a direct effect on the peculiar register of language demanded by college compositions. I am especially thinking of the demands of college expository essays. This is something of an exotic, artificial, and foreign genre--both of thinking and writing--to most beginning college-level Basic Writers. These students need both an abundant practice and a clear concept of the processes and structures involved in expository prose. The feedback provided by the teacher and other readers is also crucial in learning to compose--as it is in any cognitive-based complex skill. Nancy Mack was truly excellent on both of these counts--her students had to write quite a bit, and Nancy provided them with fast and personal feedback to
How People Compose. The last theoretical issue that I would like to take up is the role of metalinguistic awareness in the composing process. This issue addresses both the theory of how people compose and the theory of how they learn to compose. My data show clearly that the students used Nancy Mack's meta-instruction in their own composing. The data also show that the texts produced by these students generally improved over the course of the academic quarter. And the data clearly show that the students were extremely grateful for Nancy Mack's meta-instruction--at last composing was demystified; at last they had strategies and tools to help them with their written assignments. Having said all that, I still cannot unequivocally claim that metalinguistic awareness necessarily and always facilitates the production of good writing. The protocol evidence in particular shows that the relationship is much more complex than that.

Nate's and Brad's protocols seem to show that too much metalinguistic awareness can even inhibit speed and fluency in composing. And speed and fluency seem as important in composing as Frank Smith (1978) says they are in reading comprehension. It seems that one cannot expect to compose fluently and at the same time keep all metalinguistic issues in the forefront of consciousness. On the other hand, good composing demands that at certain
times one be able to monitor, plan, and reflect on one's composing decisions. In other words, successful composing demands a careful, dynamic balance between a metalinguistic monitor and automaticity in composing. Automaticity is indeed important for writing good texts, as John Ciardi and Scardamalia and Bereiter have claimed (see their remarks in Chapter II of this dissertation). But one doesn't just suddenly achieve the nirvana of automaticity. It seems probable that before achieving automaticity in composing, a writer must go through a "stage" in which metalinguistic issues are in the forefront of the writer's mind. Later, when one becomes an accomplished writer, the metalinguistic awareness is put to use more in the reviewing and revision parts of the composing process.

A final interesting issue that involves metalinguistic awareness was also discovered in the protocol data. It seems that some people do not put to use the metalinguistic awareness that they do have. A few students were quite good at talking about certain aspects of writing, but they were less successful in using that knowledge to produce good texts. This pattern is not totally unfamiliar: good critics are often not good poets. This situation seems to point out the importance of practice. To become a good writer, it seems that one has to know about writing, and one has to practice writing.
Instructional Implications Arising From This Research

Pedagogical suggestions and implications are important byproducts of this research into the relationship between metalinguistic awareness and the development of college-level writing skills. There are a couple of good reasons for this. First of all, my data sources (particularly the journals, interviews, and protocols) yielded abundant introspections and reflections on Nancy Mack's teaching and on past instruction in composing. Ethnographic methods in general are quite good for examining pedagogy and students' use of instruction. These research methods do not make the mistake of assuming that each student is making the same use of the instruction (a mistake promoted by some sloppy curriculum improvement studies). Secondly, as Bruner suggested, metalinguistics or metacognition is one of the goals of school curricula. Examining metacognitive or metalinguistic awareness should shed light both on an individual's intelligence and the schooling that individual has encountered.

I have varying levels of confidence in the pedagogical suggestions that follow. Some of these suggestions arise from experiences common to almost all the students in the class and some arise from the experiences of only a few students. I will communicate my level of confidence in the suggestions that follow.
Looking at my descriptions of Nancy Mack's instruction, I think most teachers would agree that she makes use of sound pedagogical principles. Here I am thinking of things like: her ability to motivate students, the abundant and quick feedback given to her students, the amount of individual attention she gives students, the fact that she always explains why something is being done, etc. I hope to show why such activities have more than just ordinary importance for the pedagogy of writing.

A theme that appears in my data for all but two students relates to the role of practice in the development of writing skills. It seems pretty clear that one cannot become a good college writer without practice. And with only a couple of exceptions, Nancy Mack's Basic Writing students did little (and in some cases no) writing in high school. The two students who did a lot of writing in high school seemed to concentrate on journal writing and creative narrative writing. Reflective writing and narrative writing are not to be ignored and neglected. As many scholars have noted and as I have observed in Nancy Mack's students--narrative based on personal experience seems to be the basic form of writing. Other forms of writing like exposition and argumentation must build upon this competence in narration. Unfortunately, competence in narration doesn't evolve necessarily or automatically into competence in
exposition. So practice (and instruction) in all the modes of college writing is necessary. Nancy Mack's instruction seems to facilitate practice. As I have said before, she asks for a great deal of work from her students. Students produce about 14,000 words of text for her in an eleven-week quarter--and that number doesn't even count preliminary drafts and preliminary activities in the composing process. Nancy's ability to motivate students and to build solidarity with her students helps make such a work load possible. In other words, Nancy's ability to motivate is not just a nicety or an add-on. It is a crucial element of this Basic Writing curriculum--one that could not be replaced by computers and modern "teacher-proof" learning modules.

Another pedagogical theme that runs through Nancy Mack's instruction is individualization. Her brand of individualization is unrelated to the forced isolation imposed by some modern curricula in the name of individual attention. Much of the work of individualization done by Nancy Mack is accomplished outside of class contact hours. It is done mostly during tutorial conferences. Here ideas and topics are generated, help is given with revision, areas of strength and weakness are pointed out, and grade contracts are negotiated. Most of Nancy's students love the individual attention and are amazed by it. A few students, on the other hand, seem intimidated
by it—in this course, there is little slack, and no place to hide. Related to the issue of individualization is a discovery coming out of the protocols and interviews done in this research. Each student seems to have his or her own agenda, own curriculum. These individual curricula don't always match up with the common, general goals of the teacher or the course. Some students in this class were focusing on rhetorical structure, others on angle and point of view, others on transitions, and still others on surface issues like comma and apostrophe placement. It seemed as though these individual agendas were tied to individual problems and weaknesses. Seen in this light, individualization is seen not as a luxury or an add-on, but an instructional practice necessary for developing composition skills. It begins to become clear how much administrative decisions can affect the quality and success of Basic Literacy programs. Administrative decisions about class-size can promote or inhibit the individualization and optimal feedback necessary for a successful program.

Another pedagogical issue that I would like to discuss involves metalinguistic awareness, cognitive clarity, and cognitive confusion. Not every issue of metalinguistic awareness seems necessary for the development of effective writing skills. Many metalinguistic
issues remain below the threshold of consciousness without negatively affecting the students' compositions. On the other hand, there are certain issues of metalinguistic awareness that do seem quite crucial for successful writing. Almost every student came into Nancy Mack's Basic Writing course in the state of "cognitive confusion" about the processes and basic structures involved in college writing. For the most part, students had no sense that writing involved idea generation and clarification, planning, proofreading, and revision. Most of them just began writing when faced with a writing task, with the end result of half-digested, ununified, error-filled text. Most of Nancy's students entered the course with no strategies for approaching a writing task and no sense of how writing can be structured (strategy and structure are synergistic, interrelated issues). Many students expressed amazement and gratitude towards Nancy for showing them that writing is not 100% magic. By the end of the course, these students had greatly increased self-confidence because they knew how to get into the writing task, and how to organize things once they got there. Thus, I would conclude that an important pedagogical implication of this research is this: to develop good writing skills, students need cognitive clarity and metalinguistic awareness about the processes and structures involved in writing, and they may need to
first confront their own cognitive confusion about such processes and structures.

This last point brings me to reflect upon a practical dilemma faced by writing instructors. In spite of Nancy Mack's warnings about reifying her heuristic suggestions (e.g. about topic sentence placement or number of subtopics), many of her students fell prey to such false-awareness. I think teachers must be on guard for this and must often warn students against reification of rules of thumb. The interviews and protocols do show very clearly that the students want and need such rules of thumb. Heretofore writing has appeared to them as an undifferentiated, even magical, process. Thus, they are quite happy to get heuristic suggestions. Perhaps the reification of such suggestions is a temporary stage in the process of becoming good writers.

A final pedagogical issue that I want to discuss involves the writer's sense of audience. Early in the quarter, most of the students thought only of their teacher when they thought of audience. There seemed to be some difference between the women and the men on this issue, though I must admit that the small number of people involved in this study precludes a strong generalization. However, for many of the boys, Nancy Mack was the only reader; for some of the girls, parents,
friends, and roommates were also readers. Nancy tried to broaden their sense of audience by means of peer-editing activities and by publicly reading or discussing someone's paper. In addition to this, several students had writings selected for publication in the Writing Workshop's student newspaper--Inprints. Some students even had the possibility of finding their writings in the next revision of Reprints, a Writing Workshop textbook which includes many samples of student writing. These efforts to broaden the real audience for student writing represented a sincere and genuine improvement over most curricula. But my impression was, based partly on my interviews with students, that in the end, the teacher was still regarded as the audience for their writing. In other words, there is still plenty of "dummy writing" going on, and more work needs to be done to broaden the audience for student writings.

These pedagogical suggestions are not really revolutionary. They do reaffirm many of the points made in the literature review of this dissertation. And they do establish some general patterns for successful programs and classes. Perhaps what these findings do the best is point out how important real live human teachers are for successful Basic Writing programs. These suggestions also show that a successful program in Basic Writing is the product of the interaction of administrators, teachers, and curriculum.
New Directions for Research in Composing

Research in composing seems to be in its infancy, and almost every aspect of the psycholinguistics, sociolinguistics, and pedagogy of composing is in need of further research. There are some questions in this field best addressed by normal science and quantitative research methods and many questions best addressed by qualitative and ethnographic research methods. As stated before, one must be guided by the principle of appropriateness when choosing a research methodology.

My own research has been fairly general, exploring the general shape and boundaries of certain issues in composing. I believe there is still need for such general research—we are still very much like blind men groping to get an understanding of the shape of this big, complex creature. This kind of general, less-focused research is often quite frustrating, but it is critically important in that it puts in perspective and guides the choice of more focused research projects.

Once the general shape of the composing process is better known, there will be a critical need to focus on particular aspects of this process. When these narrowed aspects are studied, they will undoubtedly reflect back on the larger, general process. This movement between the general and specific aspects of composing will undoubtedly be dialectical and interactive.
There are a number of pedagogical issues that need to be looked at more closely. One issue comes directly from my students' comments on their histories as writers. About 80% of the students I studied did virtually no essay writing in high school, not even in their English classes. Many had never written a paper, and some had never written an essay exam. A good research project would be to find out what is going on in our high schools in regard to the development of composing skills. This kind of question may be amenable to both quantitative and ethnographic methods.

Another issue in need of study has both pedagogical and psycholinguistic dimensions. We need to find out how the other language arts are being developed in the schools, and attempt to explore how one language arts skill interacts with another. I am particularly interested in the relationship between reading and writing. There are some tantalizing hints in my research about this relationship. Experience and skill in reading seems to aid composing skills—but this relationship is not inevitable. Besides wide-ranging experience in reading, students need abundant practice in composing if they are to become good writers. And the practice in composing needs to be somewhat disciplined—creative writing, journal writing, and the writing of narratives do not necessarily lead to skill in expository writing.
Another pedagogical issue that is in urgent need of study involves a critical examination of instruction in composing, particularly in regard to how students make use of instructional heuristics (e.g. regarding the number of subtopics, the nature and position of the topic sentence, the use of transitional devices, etc.). There is always the danger that young writers will reify these heuristics and write mechanical (and boring) "well-made" essays. Ethnographic methods and composing protocols offer excellent ways to get at such research questions.

Going along with the above question about student use of heuristic instructional devices would be a critical examination of these heuristics. Such investigations might make use of linguistic, rhetorical, or literary criticism techniques to explore the truthfulness of these heuristic instructions. Do good writers always make use of topic sentences? Do good writers structure their essays the way we tell students to structure their essays? How can we describe a good piece of writing?

That last question is very important if we are attempting to measure writing maturity by examining students' written texts. What factors seem most closely related to effective and mature writing? These are very difficult, and yet very important questions, and may take a researcher deep into the areas of text linguistics,
Another issue which needs further study is the very issue explored in this dissertation. We need to further explore the complex and rather mysterious relationship between metalinguistic awareness and skill in composing. We certainly need more in-depth case studies. These could be used to explore the generalizability of my own discoveries. It also might be useful to focus more intensely on certain kinds of metalinguistic issues (process awareness, for example). It would also be nice to explore metalinguistic awareness over a much longer span of time. Unfortunately, such longitudinal studies are rarely possible within the time and resource constraints of most Ph.D. programs. Studies of metalinguistic awareness contribute to at least two important areas: they contribute to psycholinguistic theory in that they explore language arts acquisition and development, and they contribute to an understanding of schooling and a theory of pedagogy in that we gain insight into how students use teachers' instructions.

Finally, I believe that much research needs to be done on the model of composing presented in this dissertation. The model has been called a cognitive process model by Flower and Hayes (1981), a synergistic-variable model by Bloom (1976) and Pappas (1981), and a dialectic model by Jim Zebroski. We need to describe
this model in greater detail so that we can test it. Does it account for what we know about the psycholinguistics, sociolinguistics, and pedagogy of composing? If not, how can we change or revise the model to jibe with our present knowledge?

Many of these suggestions for new research follow the calls of Uri Bronfenbrenner, Ray Rist, Don Sanders, and others (discussed in Chapter III) for "ecological experimentation" and "developmental research"—approaches that might begin to breach the chasm between theory and practice in education.
My fellow graduate students and I often wonder aloud about the strange and rather exotic rituals we have endured in graduate school: general exams, oral exams, committee meetings, dissertation research, writing, and defense, etc. We particularly wonder about the dissertations--like new babies, they are on our minds for a long time, morning until night, summer and winter, no vacations. We wonder if it has been worthwhile, wonder what we have learned (on both explicit and implicit levels), and we wonder about the reasons for writing a dissertation. What is a dissertation supposed to be, anyway? The "Graduate School Handbook" answers this question in the following manner: "The dissertation is a scholarly contribution to knowledge in the student's area of specialization. By researching and writing a dissertation, the student is expected to demonstrate a high level of knowledge and the capability to function as an independent scholar." That's not a bad description, but it only tells a fraction of the story. I'll continue by discussing what I think a dissertation is and is not.

To the disappointment of many young scholars and scientists, a dissertation is almost never the definitive work in a field; it is almost never a comprehensive drawing together of all the disparate strands and questions in a field of study; it almost never fully satisfies all the
goals and questions brought to the task by the novice scholar.

The reasons for the lack of definitiveness or comprehensiveness or satisfaction seem to be related to the fact that a dissertation is indeed the work of a novice, a rookie, a beginner. A dissertation is hardly ever one's life work--it is an introduction to scientific research, a demonstration and exercise of skills and knowledge, a prelude to further work. Being the work of novices, many dissertations demonstrate the enthusiasm and ambition of beginners as well as possessing flaws typically made by beginners. A common, and I dare say honorable, flaw is "biting off more than you can chew." Perhaps that is the original sin of every serious scholar.

I have learned many things from my own dissertation writing process. For one, I have learned a lesson about the power of discipline and stubbornness. I have learned that a large, comprehensive task can be mastered by organization, discipline, and constant, steady work. I have to admit that this accomplishment still surprises me. I look at this big manuscript and wonder, "How did I do that?"

Even more amazing to me than the accomplishment of generating 300 pages of text is the quality of the ideas I have synthesized and come up with. Like the Basic Writing students I've studied, I have discovered
something about the relationship between thinking and writing. Many of the new ideas and syntheses found in this dissertation were born in the writing. Sometimes I wonder if I am the father! I am as amazed about this process as any of Nancy Mack's students--"How did I think that?"

There are other analogies between my dissertation work and the composing processes of Basic Writers--and many of these points of similarity embarrass me. An example: my struggle to come up with a research proposal is very similar to Brad's struggle to come up with a topic sentence and an angle in the text accompanying his oral composing protocol. Like many Basic Writers, I struggled with the unity of my writing. If I were to rewrite this dissertation, I would make a greater effort to unify and coordinate the various pieces of this work. Another most embarrassing point of analogy to the processes of Basic Writers involves the changing and development of ideas. I learned something in the writing up of this ethnographic research, and that learning put a strain on the unity, goals, and consistency of the chapters written earlier.

If I were to write this dissertation over (and believe me, I will not do such a thing), I would probably not write Chapters I, II, and III until IV and V were finished. And I would lay greater stress on the
ethnographic nature of the study--make it more and more a genuine ethnography, leaving the "normal" science questions for other researchers. Along these lines, I would try to develop to a finer degree the narrative educational criticism approach recommended and practiced by McCutcheon, Eisner, Edelsberg, and Nancy Mack, the aesthetic uses of language urged by Dell Hymes, and the use of personal experience recommended by Ross Mooney. In my examination of student texts, I would make more use of the insights and methods of hermeneutics and literary criticism. I think that I would shift my emphasis somewhat away from psycholinguistics towards issues of sociolinguistics and towards theoretical and practical issues of language arts pedagogy. These seem to be the areas where ethnographic methods offer the best insights.

Finally, I would like to make a few comments about the length of this study. As long as it is--"I know lots more than I'm telling." The case studies presented here were very compressed--there was always a good deal more that could have been said. In other words, the "thick description" could have been a lot thicker. In a dissertation, as in any other creative work, you run into limitations and barriers. Ethnographic data is so rich and interesting that many other dissertations could be written from the very same data. My ethnographic data are
being preserved, and any scholar interested in examining, challenging, or triangulating my interpretations is welcome to borrow them. As I have said before, Nancy Mack's dissertation, which should appear in 1983, will make use of much of the same data base.

I am glad I took an ethnographic approach to my research questions, and glad that my dissertation committee didn't rein in my thinking and discoveries. My findings might lack broad generalizability—but that is not the principal concern or task of ethnographic research. My discoveries at least are not trivial, and they are known and communicated with great confidence, and possess what Don Sanders terms "internal validity." I hope some of my findings will prove useful to teachers, administrators, and scholars trying to grapple with the theory and practice of teaching and learning to compose.
CHAPTER VI
SAMPLES OF THE ETHNOGRAPHIC DATA

This chapter functions something like an appendix, providing more contextualization for my data analyses and interpretations. The chapter begins with a collection of texts, journal selections, protocol, and interviews of one student--Brad (see his case study in Chapter IV).

Towards the end of Chapter VI, there will be some examples of Nancy Mack's visuals and handouts, and a few examples of some of the ethnographic data--classroom interaction notes and research journal entries. The classroom notes and research journal entries should shed some light on my personal research methodology and the research process in general.

Brad's Texts, Protocol, and Interviews

What follows are some of the raw data from which I constructed my portrait and case study of Brad. To better understand my text critiques and data analyses, it would be useful for a serious reader of this dissertation to shuttle back and forth between the raw data presented here and the analyses and critiques presented in the case study of Brad in Chapter IV.
First Exam. The following essay was written by Brad as his first exam. The exam was held January 27—the fourth week of the Winter Quarter. Nancy Mack had asked the students to write in the narrative mode for this exam. I have reproduced Brad's errors.

After a few years of trapping, I succeeded in catching an animal which eludes most trappers for many years. Last year I decided I was going to make a larger profit by trapping than I had in the year's past. So I went out and bought just about everything I could on trapping to try and improve my knowledge of the sport. I knew basically how to trap muskrat and coon but they weren't really the big money makers.

I decided I would put an effort into trying for fox and mink while running my regular trapline. I waded more swamps and pond's in my off time than I spent on sleeping. This one particular swamp was an ideal place to trap so I set in a couple dozen traps that were real choice sets. I awoke the next day, way before sunrise and headed for the swamp.

After breaking my way through the ice on the swamp and retrieving my catch of muskrat from the icy water, I was nearly froze to death but I persisted on. Then I noticed something had been gnawing on one of my muskrats and I figured it had to be a mink. So I made some sets and baited them with my brand new, never been used mink lure. Thoughts were running through my head about returning the following day and finding an over abundance of mink caught in my traps. Needless to say, this idea ran through my head all day and I even had a dream about it that night. When the 5:30 alarm went off I was off and running full of anxiety for the catch I hoped I would make. Once at the swamp, I checked all of the other trap's first since they were alot more accesible than the other part of the line. I then headed toward were my mink sets were located.

I checked the first 5 sets and to my disappointment hadn't succeeded in catching one yeat. Then on my next to last set, as I put my arm down in the icy water, to my astonishmet was held a big male mink. It was the first one I had ever caught, so I patted myself on the back and gave a few Indian war hoops.

Then my mind started racing again as I relized I had yet, another trap to check.
Third Exam. The following essay was Brad's third exam of the quarter, written March 3, 1982, near the end of the term. The students were told to write an essay on a topic of their choosing, and they were told to write in the expository mode. Brad's errors are reproduced in the text below.

I learned a valuable lesson in working at a gas station, which will help me to get along with irrational people in later life. While recently employed at a gas station I had numerous opportunities to view different stereotypes of people. The type I remember the best is the kind of people who want to make a fuss because of the slightest human error on my behalf. Once on a real busy day, as I was working alone I somehow forgot to put a gasoline cap back on a man's car. So about an hour later he returned to the station with hatred in his eyes demanding his gas cap back and my job. I tried to explain my situation and how I was sorry for the mishap but he wasn't so easily convinced. He had to take the issue to my boss, which my boss in turn chewed me out to the satisfaction of this guy. I got to thinking, what did it benefit this guy by getting me in hot water with my boss when I simply made a mistake. He seemed like the type of guy who would steal a dying man's last cigarette. Oh well I put this guy's actions in the back of my head and went on about my business.

After the incident with the guy and the gas cap was over I knew it was going to be one of those days. Another scroungey looking guy pulls in with an old klunker and order's me to put in four quarts of oil. So I prepare myself to check his oil and he tells me not to bother but just to throw in four quarts of oil. Since I had had trouble earlier in the day with my boss I didn't need any more complaints about my services. So I complied to the mans wishes and sure enough the oil came rolling out and caught fire from the hot engine. Then this guy starts to rant and rave about the circumstances, and I just realized how self centered and how moody people can be. So after I agreed to redeem him for anything that was ruined, of course to my boss'es rules, he went about his merry way leaving me in a state of confusion. I tried to think it was a bad day but really I hadn't been doing very unusual actions that were in the wrong.
Since my day was marred by these two guys who had never made a mistake before in their entire life, I was anticipating the end of my day. And since my boss was watching every action I made I was on my best behavior from then on out. But then misfortune struck again with an elderly lady who wanted to know the price of every item the station had in stock. I told her basically the prices for about everything I could think of but she still wanted to make small talk about prices. So I excused myself from her because I had other customer's who also wanted my services. Sure enough, she made a straight line for my boss and proceeded on telling him I didn't care to make a sell on a few small items. This really brought the boss down on me and he in turn sent me home for the remainder of the day. On my way home I was feeling pretty low about myself when it struck me that I was only doing my job to the best of my abilities. I convinced myself I wasn't the only individual who was in the wrong and that's when I first realized how to get along with different types of irrational people.

Text Produced With Protocol. Reproduced below is the written text produced with Brad's oral composing protocol. The protocol procedure, an attempt to exteriorize the composing process, and the text produced with it were done on February 25th, 1982, near the end of the academic quarter. Brad was instructed to write on a topic of his choosing in the expository mode. As with the other texts reproduced in this chapter, Brad's writing errors have been preserved.

Even though I enjoy the companionship of my roommates, sometimes I can't get along with their different lifestyles. Dana my good friend from back home just happened to turn out to be, my most frustrating of the three roomies. I always thought coming to school and rooming with your best friend would be a lot of fun. But since we have been living together the fun has run out and some of the friendship. It's not that I dislike him anymore than I used to its just that we end up taking our anxieties
out on each other. Plus he has a negative attitude toward school which might affect my schooling in the long run. He'd rather watch T.V. or play pinball than study for a test. And to me your not at school for that reason. If he keeps up his present attitude I doubt if I'll have to worry about us rooming next quarter because he will be on his way home.

Almost as bad as Dana is my other roommate Dave. He's the type of guy that's never wrong and never has been wrong. Anytime I contradict something that he favors, he wants an argument to prove himself. He's tries to be so perfect that he ruins him image. I can see somebody that tries to be wise all the time, but he says its been like that all his life. I've never really gotten to see the humorous side of him, and sometimes his strive for so much perfection is really unbearable.

But not quite as bad as Dana or Dave is Bob. He's the kind of guy you can get along with in any given situation. He's the human model of the American buzzard. During his first week of school he found 2 tail lights and a wax apple. Putting it bluntly he a junk collector. He ends up cluttering the room with more unnecessary items than one could image. And he always has to be different than anybody else when it comes to music I think he'd rather spend an evening with Lawrence Welk than listening to America's top 40. Even though my roomates are all, of a different type, I keep telling myself maybe to them I'm the different type.

It should be noted that the text produced above was not considered by Brad to be anything more than a rough first draft. Brad did reread his writing, and did some minor proofreading and editing. He contemplated making significant revisions in subsequent drafts. Thus, this text should not be judged with the same standards one might apply to texts that have been through all the editing and revision processes.

It should also be noted that many of the errors appearing in the above text did not show up in Brad's
oral reading of the text. This is the well-known phenomenon of miscues (to use Kenneth Goodman's term), and says something about Brad's potential composing skills. A good example of such a miscue involves a sentence in paragraph two of Brad's text. He wrote: "He's tries to be so perfect that he ruins him image." But he read that sentence in standard, acceptable English. Another example occurs in paragraph three where Brad wrote: "Putting it bluntly he a junk collector." This was read by Brad as "...he is a junk collector." This miscue is unrelated to Brad's oral dialect, and seems to be caused by carelessness. Portions of Brad's oral protocol appear in the next three pages of this chapter.

Partial Transcription of Protocol

What follows is a partial, edited transcription of Brad's oral composing protocol. The purpose of this partial transcript is to give the reader of this dissertation a sense of the richness and complexity of the protocol data.

Okay...this has to be an expository...I don't have an idea yet...let's see...brainstorming...I wish she had picked a topic to write about...brainstorming...I don't know what to write about...hunting? ...nah, that's what all my papers have been about...talk about...hunting, trapping....so I'll write about school...no, everybody writes about school...my paper's got to be different from everybody else's...let's see, what am I always doing? I know, I'm always watching
what I eat...talk about foods, diets...there we go...diets...diets...let's see...brainstorm a while...let's talk about ability to eat...how much to eat...what to eat...what not to eat...talk about different foods and how they attract you...the external cues like the real greasy pizza and the shiny nuts you see in all those stores, and the fresh donuts...I'm gonna have to leave and go eat! ...OK...dieting...there we go...I'm always on a diet so this should be easy...peer-pressure, that's the biggest problem...all my roommates gotta get on me cause I'm on a diet...they're a bunch of skinny people anyhow...so...roommates! I could write about roommates...all three of my roommates....I wonder if its alright to write a paragraph on each one...[he continues to brainstorm on the topic of roommates, searching for a theme and an angle].

OK, I got my three subtopics...I'm gonna need a topic sentence...and a conclusion...and I need three subtopic sentences to tie into the subtopic...and I need to keep a strong point-of-view...I wonder if I should put their names or not...[he begins his long struggle to compose a topic sentence]...And as bad as Dana is my other roommate Bob...nah...just as bad as my other roommate...I can't put "other roommate" again--I have to put the name in there somewhere, or "him"...get out the "Glue Word" sheet...[this is a list of useful subordinating and adverbial conjunctions provided by Nancy Mack]...I do think the "Glue Word" sheet's OK...good idea...there we go...I just found something to help us...anyhow...let me see...[he seems to be reading from his notes]...topic sentence, three ideas...get a strong point of view...keep referring back to the topic sentence...tie in subtopics...and a conclusion...and this is all expository...I wonder what that means besides "examples" and "explanations"...[he continues to struggle for many more minutes with a topic sentence]...

[He finally begins to write the first sentence of the composition, but is unable to come up with something totally acceptable to him]...even though...even though...even though I really enjoy my roommates...let's see...even though I enjoy...companionship with my roommates...the companionship of my roommates...I don't know why I'm writing this...Mrs. Mack will just
help me change it tomorrow...I shouldn't say that... the last one she hardly changed...even though I enjoy the companionship of my roommates, sometimes they can be the cause...of a nervous disorder...nah...sometimes my roommates...that's referring back to them...sometimes...that's not a glue word...is that a dependent?... let me think...[he continues to struggle for many more minutes with the second half of his topic sentence]...

[Almost 30 minutes into the composing process, Brad finally settles on the following topic sentence and begins to write very fluently and quickly]...man, I need a topic sentence...even though I enjoy the companionship of my roommates...let's see...they can be hazardous to your health...OK, I'll just put my basic lines...[he begins to write]...even though I enjoy the companionship...OK...companion-yun...i-o-n-s-h-i-p...companionship of my roommates...sometimes I can't handle...their lifestyles...sometimes I can't handle their actions...nah...sometimes I can't handle...relate...nah...sometimes...I'm stuck on that word...I can't get along with their actions...Now comes the second hardest sentence in the whole paper...I've just done the first hardest...now who do I want to talk about first...

[he writes the rest of the essay quite fluently in about twenty minutes]...[writing]...all in all, the...let's see...even though my roommates are all different types...[scratches out something]...even though my roommates are all of...are all...comma...of a different type...I keep telling myself maybe to them I'm the different type...that'd be a good idea for my topic sentence...my different type roommates......[he tries to re-compose his topic sentence in light of his concluding sentence]...even though I enjoy the companionship of my roommates, sometimes...sometimes...I can't get along with their different types...mark out actions...nah...actions is alright...different lifestyles...there we go...types isn't a good word...I wonder if I should reread this...I'll try it real quick...[Brad rereads the text he has just produced. His reading reveals numerous miscues--discrepancies between his intended writing and what he actually wrote. During his rereading, he does some relatively minor editing]...I'll change that later...even though my roommates are all...comma...of a different type...comma...I keep telling myself maybe to them I'm the different type...
I like my ideas so far, but...maybe I should go through and be serious through the whole thing...or maybe I should be humorous...I like writing humorous stuff...but, since this is just a first draft, I'll work on it later...[end].

**First Interview.** Below is an edited, partial transcript of an interview conducted with Brad early in the academic quarter (February 2, 1982).  

R = R. Coughlin, Researcher  
B = Brad  

R : Could you read what you wrote?  

B : He proceeds to read his text as I observe his reading and make note of his oral reading miscues; the text he read is his First Exam, reproduced in this chapter.:/  

R : What did you see as your job in writing this? What was your goal?  

B : Just to tell about how I felt the day I finally did catch my first mink.  

R : Where did you get this goal...this idea?  

B : I've been trapping now for a few years...catching a mink's a pretty rare thing, so...it's just like a goal you set for yourself.  

R : What do you call this kind of writing? Do you have a name for it?  

B : Expressing one of my goals that I've reached.  

R : Does Mrs. Mack use a name for this kind of writing?  

B : /doesn't answer/  

R : Before you started writing this, what did you do? Did you fill Mrs. Mack's plan sheet out?  

B : Yea.  

R : Had you thought about this before?
B: Yea, I wrote a topic sentence for three possible exam topics. I did the whole outline for three different ones.

R: Why did you pick this topic?

B: This is my favorite one to write about.

R: You were more interested in this one than the other ones?

B: Yea.

R: So, when you got into class, you'd been thinking about this. You had practiced the topic sentence. You got into class, did you immediately start on the plan sheet Mrs. Mack provided?

B: Yea.

R: How long did you spend on planning, any idea?

B: Four or five minutes.

R: You weren't psyched out by the task because you'd been thinking about it?

B: No.

R: So you didn't spend too much time on planning.

B: No.

R: Is this idea of planning things as Mrs. Mack has taught you...is this something new? Did you write this way...?

B: No, I haven't wrote for a couple years.

R: When did you get out of high school?

B: Last year.

R: Did you write much in high school?

B: No. I haven't wrote a paper since probably tenth grade.

R: So this way of approaching planning a paper is something new?

B: Yea. It's helpful too.

R: Did the teachers in high school have a way to help you write?
B: I can't remember. All's we did was read books.

R: Did the idea change at all as you wrote this?

B: I knew pretty much where it was going to go. And I couldn't wait to tell you what it was about.

R: So it really didn't change that much?

B: No.

R: Who do you see as reading this? Who reads the stuff you write here?


R: Do you see her as your only reader? Or, do your roommates read some of the stuff you wrote? your friends.read it?

B: No. Just Mrs. Mack.

R: If Mrs. Mack is your reader, are there things that she doesn't know about that you do know about?

B: Yea, sure. She's cautioned me on that before...about how I shouldn't use my everyday slang...

R: Because why?

B: Because other people don't know what they mean...

R: This is the kind of topic you would discuss with your friends?

B: Yea.

R: So this is something... Would it be any different discussing it with your friends or not? Can you think of ways that it would be different than actually sitting down and writing it?

B: It wouldn't be so formal. I'd just tell them what happened, and how I went about it.

R: A few questions about the text. I noticed that you put an "sp" above a word here. When did you do that...as you wrote it?

B: Yea.
R: So right away you weren't sure about the spelling.
B: Yea.
R: Is that an apostrophe on the word "years?"
B: Yea.
R: So you were thinking...
B: I don't know why I wrote it with an apostrophe. I must have been going too fast.
R: Down here. What does that mean?
B: Paragraph.
R: What made you decide to put a new paragraph there? Is there anything specifically that...?
B: I don't know...I was talking about trapping muskrat up here and I changed. I went off the subject...
R: OK, you changed subjects so you changed paragraphs. Do you have a topic sentence. If you do, what is it?
B: Yea. "After a few years of trapping I succeeded in catching an animal which eludes most trappers for many years."
R: OK. Here's a term that I'd like you to explain. What does the word "sets" mean here?
B: Sets—that's a trap location. I probably should have been more specific.
R: Do you think Mrs. Mack understood that?
B: I doubt it now. Now that you bring it to my attention.
R: But anybody that's a trapper knows what you're talking about.
B: Oh yea.
R: So there's one example...if your reader's not a trapper they may not....
R: You erased something here. Do you remember when you erased that?
B: While I was reading. I reread it all.
R: Did you reread it all after....?
B: Yea. I reread it a couple times. Changed stuff around.
R: So, what do you call that?
B: Proofreading.
R: So you did proofread. Is it the same way with this thing? Do you remember when you crossed that out? Was that as you were writing?
B: Yea...that's when I proofread. I had another sentence in here that didn't come in...
R: Look at the last paragraph. Was there a reason you put that last sentence in?
B: It's just what my mind was thinking about.
R: Mrs. Mack uses the term "narrative climax"....does this paper have one?
B: Yea. I'm checking my next to last trap...and I finally caught my first mink.
R: Does it have a conclusion?
B: Conclusion... not really...I wouldn't think.
R: Where did you learn the process of proofreading? Is that something you were taught in high school or...?
B: No. That's something new this year.
R: Are you happy with how it came out?
B: I thought I did a good job considering I haven't wrote for such a long time.
R: What do you think Mrs. Mack's goal was in giving you this assignment, this test here?
B: I don't know.
R: What is she looking for in writing, as far as you know?
B: Creative, tell what's on your mind... get everything the right order... have a topic sentence, climax, conclusion. Proper English.

R: Do you think any of the freewriting and journal stuff have helped you?

B: It's helped... expressing what I... from what I think to what I want to write on paper.

R: What's the difference between freewriting and formal writing?

B: Freewriting... I don't use past tense all the time. I make silly mistakes.

R: What in your mind do you need to do to become a better writer?

B: Learn my spelling. Probably draw out the climax. [end]

Second Interview. Below is an edited, partial transcript of an interview conducted with Brad near the end of the academic quarter (March 12, 1982). R=R. Coughlin, Researcher

B=Brad

R: This is not a test... what I want to do is ask some fairly general questions about writing and certain opinions you have... first of all, before you came into the course this quarter, did you think of yourself as having certain writing problems?

B: Yea, a lot... I didn't know how to write at all, really. In high school we didn't write... we stressed literature.

R: Which was your high school?

B: Zanesville.

R: So you didn't do much writing in high school?

B: Hardly any. I can't remember the last time I wrote a paper.
R : So you felt weak in many areas? Was there any particular that you didn't have much confidence in?

B : I could write, but I didn't know you needed a topic sentence or anything like that...paragraphs...

R : This quarter, I'm sure you'd say you made progress. Is there any areas where you really feel strong, that you really improved in?

B : Expressing my point of view towards the subject....

R : Is there any areas that you still feel you have to work on?

B : Um...I get to be too general throughout the subtopics and stuff. I gotta be more specific.

R : In general, what do people need to do to become good writers?

B : You gotta start out, you gotta have good topic sentence, you gotta have strong point of view, you got to express your point of view throughout the paper.....you got to keep the reader of your paper interested in your paper...good examples....

R : How do people learn how to do these things? You apparently didn't in high school, right? Why?

B : Because I never wrote a lot...

R : What about the instruction? Can an instructor do much to help you become a good writer?

B : Yea...like I didn't know about commas or none of the comma rules or anything...and I got a lot of help there.

R : Is there anything about Mrs. Mack's teaching that has been useful for you, that's helped you?

B : She kept my attention all quarter! I can say that much. She's the only teacher I've had since I've been here can relate to your level...she can talk to you like in everyday situation. You go to another class and get a professor who probably sits in the dark and reads these books, you know...then they'll say something you don't understand...she can express her point of view...she acts like she's interested in the students' lives....her examples that she gives, the little pictures and all that...and some of the craziness she does keeps you interested.
R: I think that she probably asks more of her students than any teacher that I've ever seen. Why do you think she's able to get that much from the students?

B: I didn't think it was too bad probably because...she makes you want to do good...she motivates you all the time...the first paper I wrote about, I didn't really want to do it, and she just told me write about something I really want to write about...then she give me a few ideas and I hit on my idea, and she helped me bring it along a lot.

R: When you write a paper, what kind of preparation do you personally do? how do ideas develop? where do you get your subtopics?

B: I sit down with a piece of scrap paper and just...first I find out what I have to write about...then I brainstorm...

R: Do you do any freewriting kinds of things?

B: Sometimes...it all depends...If I brainstorm and know exactly what I want to get across I do...but sometimes I freewrite...but I always brainstorm.

R: Do the ideas get fully developed before you write, or do they change as you're writing?

B: They're fully developed before I write.

R: So they're fully developed...and you just...its just a matter of executing them?

B: Well, I wouldn't say that...I change a lot of stuff. On this last paper, I had four or five rough drafts. Every time I'd go back and read through...thinking I could be more specific.

R: This quarter you've done different kinds of writing. Do you know what the different kinds are?

B: Narrative and expository.

R: What are the differences between those two?

B: Narratives...personal experience you related...expository is personal experience with examples throughout it.

R: Are they structured any differently?
B: Oh yea. Expository is paragraphs...subtopic that relates to the subject, and get another paragraph, and you always get a transition sentence that relates to the first paragraph.

R: Do you have a way to...are there any other parts to an expository paper?

B: A conclusion....subtopics...topic sentence...

R: Where do you usually put the topic sentence?

B: I usually put it the first two sentences.

R: Is there anything about the structure of a narrative that she stressed?

B: Keep your same point of view throughout the paper.

R: Let me ask you one question about the transitions that you mentioned. You connect your subtopics with them. Do you have a technique for doing that?

B: I just...I put my strongest point of view first, and then my second point of view, and if its on a bad subject

B: I'll put, in my first transition sentence or my second paragraph, I'll put "almost as bad as" relating back to the first one.

R: Did you know about these transition devices before you came into this course?

B: No. She told me about them in a personal meeting.

R: I think that's another one of her strengths. The amount of time done in those personal meetings. She seems to be available quite a bit. What's your procedure when you finish a piece of writing?

B: Proofread for sure....usually when I finish a paper, I get up and walk away from it for a little while to get it out of my mind. Then I come back maybe an hour or so later and read it like she says--be a totally different person. Sometimes I even let other people read it, proofread it after I get done...a roommate or somebody else.

R: Do you find errors?
B: Oh yea...spelling mostly... commas... when to put an apostrophe after an s... I still have trouble with that... and just run on sentences, or something like that.

R: When you're finished writing, do you have a sense whether its good or bad?

B: Yea... I always have a pretty good sense... I always try to write interesting and humorous-type...

R: To you, what makes a piece of writing good or bad?

B: Interesting and humorous. I like to exaggerate something... that way you keep your readers interested.

R: So when you read "Inprints" are those the kinds of things you look for? Things that are funny or interesting?

B: Yea... and something that keeps you suspended throughout.

R: What kinds of things you don't like?

B: Something dry that just states this... and how they walked across the street and 'dadidadida...'

R: When you find errors in other people's writing... are there certain kinds of errors that bother you? and certain kind that don't bother you at all?

B: Usually I don't read somebody else's work and criticize it... cause I'm sure I have my problems... I usually don't mess with other people's...

R: What do you think's the effect of my having the tape recorder running in the classroom? Does it effect the class much?

B: Oh no. It doesn't bother nobody.

R: How about at the beginning of the quarter? Did you know what I was doing?

B: Well, you guys explained what you were doing. It was clear.
Selected Journal Entries. Brad wrote 40-50 journal entries in this class, and some of these reflected on Nancy Mack's teaching or on the composing process. Many of Brad's journal entries allow for inferences about his meta-linguistic awareness.

1. How can freewrites help you write a paper? In my personal experience freewriting has helped me considerably. Before I started this class I virtually knew nothing but now in my opinion I have progressed greatly. And I will note that freewriting has helped me a lot with my final papers. On the first freewrite I just write about a particular incident and whatever pops into my mind about the particular subject. When you freewrite you write what you would be saying as if you were just talking to someone. That way you come up with catchy little phrases and at the same time you state your true opinion of whatever your writing about. If you notice a freewrite is a heck of a lot different than your final copy. You take certain phrases and quotes or idea's and transfer them onto your rough draft and final copy. Freewrites help me express the way I feel and if I were to express my feelings and hand them in for a grade, I would be thinking how to word it and make sure that its right and in the process I might lose some of the feelings I really wanted to express.

* * *

2. Well Teach Mack you asked me to write a journal on how I prepare for one of your exams so here goes. First of all I get the three topics that I like best and more or less get the story stored in my head. Then I play around with topic sentences until I find one that fits each. After I write down the topic sentence I use one of your tricks that I copied off of you which I think helps a great deal. I use squiggly lines like this just to fill up space until the next change over in subjects comes about. At first when I prepared I used to write the whole paper and try and memorise every detail but then I would forget the main points of the paper So now I write the topic sentence and fill in squiggly lines for the sub topics or the major mass of the paragraph. Then I come to another point and I write a sentence relating to the idea of the paper followed by the squiggly lines. I figure by the
lines throughout the paper I can save a lot of time and remember the main points. Cause when it comes time to write the final I should remember my basic ideas of the subtopics.

* * *

3. When I started school this I hardly knew a thing about. But since I've been writing for Teach Mack class I have learned a heck of a lot. Back in Zanesville (that's where I am from) in my English classes we read books instead of writing so when I got in college and on my placement test you had to write I knew immediately I was in trouble. But since Teach Mack shows her classes what writing's all about I have benefited from it. Now that she has us writing stories all the time I think I have progressed. I may not act like it, but I really enjoy writing and I do take a lot of pride in my work. I'm glad Teach Mack started my class from the very beginning about writing instead of just jumping right in. If you would of started off the quarter by saying write an expository with a topic sentence followed by 3 subtopics and independent clauses following dependent clauses I would of been a lost sole. What I'm really trying to say is thanks Teach Mack for all you've done.

* * *

4. I am going to write this particular journal concerning the yellow handout sheet Teach Mack gave us on Wednesday. The one that catches my eye the most has got to be number three. Here's the question in case you don't have the yellow sheet handy. "What do you feel you did the best job on in your paper?" Well, I was totally pleased by my performance on completing the paper in the first place. Come to think of it, it was the first paper I had wrote since eleventh grade and I didn't remember very much about writing. I will say you helped me get my mind back on the right track. Maybe you can tell by my grade that I haven't wrote very much lately mostly letters to girls that write me. But I did enjoy writing this paper just so as I could prove to myself that I could do. When I write, I like to write the way my mind flows in other words I usually write facts but I always add or try to add humor to everything I write. In my paper (rough draft) I wrote about my teacher John Bell and how everything about him was green. Which by the way was true, I think he even had green eyes. If someone else was reading my paper I put or try to put in words that will set the reader and myself in a certain mood. It's usually a humorous
or a mood like you don't know what's going to happen next but you can't wait for it to happen. I think that's why I wrote my paper that way. I try and write a paper like the way I like to read a good book. What I mean is you the reader has to be interested in what you're reading or you will lose interest. I try and write interesting details to give my paper the whole picture of how it was. As far as I'm concerned there's no one who wants to read a paper or book that's just blah.

In my paper I tried to carry the story of breaking a window (which was the climax of the story) throughout the whole story without giving it away. I had a hard time for the title; it was going to be something like the broken window on Football Friday but then I got to thinking if I wrote that the reader would know just exactly what the story was about and when it came for the time of the climax they wouldn't be excited or surprised at what consequences happened. I did settle on the title of Football Fri that way I sort of mislead the reader thinking about a football game on a Friday night. I loved my climax and the details I put in cause on my rough draft I just wrote what happened step by step, then I went back to my freewrite and saw the emotion I had put in it and I thought that was my real point I was trying to get across.

* * *

5. This is a journal entry but it will probably sound more like a letter to you Mrs. Mack. When I started your class I knew virtually nothing about writing and didn't really care to write. Now I'm going to THANK YOU FOR EVERYTHING you have taught me during this winter quarter. It seems like your class and private meetings have really motivated me to do more of what I want to. I get the impression about you of how you express your feelings openly and I really like that in an individual. You see Mrs. Mack, I know you are there to teach English (which you do real well and with a great deal of pride) but you also showed me how to be myself and to express myself through either my actions or in writing a paper. I'm normally a shy type but your class has caused me to open up somewhat and that makes a lot of things a heck of a lot easier in the long run. I hope I can still come to you for advice next quarter even though I won't be one of your students I hope I can make you proud of my later accomplishments in other English classes. I don't think I need this for my 40 journal credits I just wanted to really say thanks a lot for all you've done.

Thank you again
Brad
Samples of Ethnographic Classroom Interaction Notes

Ethnographic classroom interaction notes were taken during each class meeting. Below and on the following page are typical examples of such notes. The in-class notes were taken on the right-hand side of the paper.

Figure 12

Classroom Interaction Notes (a)
Here I recorded important actions, teacher and student comments, assignments, the nature of handouts and visuals, etc. The writing in the left-hand margin usually took place after class. Principal activities and categories of interaction were written there. For a typical fifty-minute class, I might take six pages of notes.

Figure 13

Classroom Interaction Notes (b)
Both Nancy Mack and I kept research journals during this project. Oftentimes Nancy and I would go our separate ways after a class session to meditate on what happened in the class and to write in our personal journals.

---

**Final Interviews:**

- Interview with Jay: Nancy says good MLA, but cannot always explain what he means. He seems to have learned a lot this quarter. Made an interesting comment about my role—"You're just like one of the students."

- Brian: Another good interview. Mentioned effect of his high school creative writing course. Journaling opens doors, not sure he wrote. Don't seem to help much, "It's more of just thinking about writing of my own." He seems to be fascinated by structural elements. He said when he reads other people's writings, he enjoys looking for the "transitions." He makes extensive use of transforming.

- Melinda: Very interesting comment on how she can only work on 1 aspect at a time. (Important for composing, theory & pedagogy)

- Jake: ok vision. Good MLA. Like about anything.

- Shirley: Interesting thing—she doesn't like to see misspellings in writing (e.g. in "Imprints"), though punctuation problems plague her. Like many students, she does much better on topics she's interested in and has experienced. She knew before she began writing whether her essay will be good or bad.

---

Figure 14

Research Journal Notes (a)
research journals. After about a half hour of private meditation and journal writing, we would meet and discuss that particular class session as well as our upcoming research needs and goals. The journals were

Figure 15
Research Journal Notes (b)
not intended to be public writings. They were places
to consolidate and connect ideas and plan the research.
Often I would use the journal to incorporate my observa-
tions into a model of how people learn to compose. Two of
these pages contain some of my attempts at model building.

Research Journal

11 March 82

Some aspects of writing:
- cognitive development (world knowledge; ability to judge truth & values; ability to consider other people's interest knowledge, etc., etc.)
- oral language competence. Most (but not all) writers develop their writing skills on the basis of fairly sophisticated skills in oral language and interaction + basic communicative competence.
- spelling --- like other elements of language, considered mechanical coding
- punctuation --- some aspects of punctuation are rather arbitrary, but others relate to very sophisticated issues that relate to point-of-view, new-given, audience awareness = need, etc.

Figure 16
Research Journal Notes (c)
Samples of Nancy Mack's Visuals and Handouts

On the next four pages are samples of handouts and visual cartoons used by Nancy Mack in her Basic Writing instruction. Nancy uses the term "visual" very broadly. It usually refers to non-print cartoons, either reproduced on paper or projected on the overhead. Nancy also uses the term "visual" to refer to certain dramatic actions

THE MAGICAL MACK LIST

(This list will cure fragments, run-ons and comma errors. And best of all, it will help you write complex sentences and even read faster. Regretfully, it does nothing for dandruff.)

CLUE WORDS

when / who
after / whom
before / who ever
until / whoever
since
while
as
so that
as provided
as if
as provided that
as soon as
unless
once
though
by the
even though
time
because
whenever
in case
how
than
where
although
whatever
in order that
whenever
whether
whereas
to which
what
whichever

GLUE WORDS or subordinate conjunctions are the tip off to DEPENDENT CLAUSES.
When a dependent clause is alone, it is a FRAGMENT.
When a dependent clause is attached to a sentence, the sentence becomes a COMPLEX sentence.

PUNCTUATION

IC DC (normal sentence pattern—no comma needed)
DC, IC (interrupted order—comma needed)

word and word (joining words—no comma needed)

IC, and IC (joining sentences—comma needed)

IC, IC and = but/nor/so/yet/or/for
(a semicolon is used when the conjunction is dropped)

Figure 17
"Glue Word" Handout (a)
done in class. These are among the most exciting and memorable of the visuals, but unfortunately they could only be reproduced by film or videotape.

The first two handouts seen are the front and back sides of Nancy's "Glue Word" handout. "Glue Words" are useful adverbial or subordinating conjunctions that set up relationships and tie subtopics together (thus the word "glue"). The students quickly adopt the term "glue word" as part of the Language Instruction Register of this course and this teacher.

**PHRASES THAT CAN ACT LIKE DEPENDENT CLAUSES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phrase Type</th>
<th>Example 1</th>
<th>Example 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>to phrases</td>
<td>to your very best</td>
<td>to do your very best</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ing phrases</td>
<td>wearing a smile</td>
<td>wearing a smile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ed phrases</td>
<td>covered with mud</td>
<td>covered with mud</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These phrases act like dependent clauses and are extra information to the basic sentence. Therefore, they can be dropped off with no problem. (These structures are very similar to sentence parts, so you have to be sure that they are actually extra information.) Since they are such oddities, they get a comma no matter where they occur.

**WORDS THAT ACT LIKE INDEPENDENT CLAUSE CONJUNCTIONS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Example 1</th>
<th>Example 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>however</td>
<td>consequently</td>
<td>in addition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>moreover</td>
<td>for this reason</td>
<td>as a result</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>besides</td>
<td>indeed</td>
<td>also</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nevertheless</td>
<td>still</td>
<td>thus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nonetheless</td>
<td>therefore</td>
<td>hence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>otherwise</td>
<td></td>
<td>accordingly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>similarly</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These words are not coordinate conjunctions, so they must be punctuated as if they didn’t exist with a semicolon. Since they also interrupt regular order, they also need a comma.

**EXAMPLE:**

He was my friend; consequently, he came to my aid.

I, therefore C.

**THE NONRESTRICTIVE CLAUSE**

These clauses get commas when the information is not critical to the meaning.

I bought her a present, which cost me plenty.

I bought her a present which was an early birthday present.

The comma placement is determined by whether the information is primary or secondary. Cases of this question usually occur with WHO and WHICH dependent clauses.

**Figure 18**

"Glue Word" Handout (b)
The handout reproduced below deals with journal writing. The principal point of this visual is to compare journal writing to the drawings in an artist's sketchpad. The journal is a private place to try out ideas and to practice writing. This handout attempts to develop cognitive clarity about journal writing.

---

**Writing is an art.**

**THEREFORE, A JOURNAL IS LIKE AN ARTIST'S PORTFOLIO**

- Words can capture bits of life.
- You can preserve a moment in writing.
- Memories forget.
- Like an artist's sketchpad it is practice.
- Spelling and grammar aren't important.
- Neatness doesn't count.
- Writing is just thinking on paper.
- It is reflecting on paper about an idea, feeling or an opinion.
- It is writing to yourself.
- It is getting in touch with what is happening in your life.
- It is understanding yourself.
- You have to develop a romance with life.
- The best writing is often not about earth-shaking events.
- A day when "nothing happens" has lots of things in it to write about.
- Writing about something that has happened to everybody is a good idea. It is easy to identify with.
- To really do a good job you must more than mention a common fact; you must search for details that will ring true and play with words until the right phrase pops out to represent your idea.

---

Figure 19

Journal Writing Handout
The visual illustrated below deals with the preliminary processes involved in composing—finding a workable topic and angle. What I like about this visual is that it connects with the students' own bewilderment.

Figure 20
Idea Generation Handout


Garnes, S. Director of The Section of Basic English, The Ohio State University. Personal communication, April, 1982.


Ong, W. The writer's audience is always a fiction. PMLA, 1975, 90 (1), 9-21.


