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THE ENTRY SKILLS, METHODS AND ATTITUDES OF THE INTERMEDIATE
COMPOSITION STUDENT IN A POST-SECONDARY COMPOSITION PROGRAM

The Ohio State University   PH.D.   1979

THE ENTRY SKILLS, METHODS AND ATTITUDES OF THE INTERMEDIATE

COMPOSITION STUDENT IN A POST-SECONDARY

COMPOSITION PROGRAM

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for

the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate

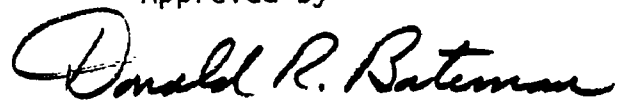School of The Ohio State University

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* * * * *

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

All across the United States, scholars are questioning the read-
ing and writing skills of entering freshmen into post-secondary
instructional programs. Newsweek's cover story "Why Johnny Can't
Write" in December, 1975, has spurred articles and books describing the
crisis in communication. Articles such as "The Condition of Student
Writing" (American Education, March 1976); "Writing Crisis Spurs Big
Corrective Effort" (The Chronicle of Higher Education. XV, 7,
10/18/76); "Employers' Complaints Fuel Literacy Debate" (Christian
Science Monitor, April 5, 1976); and more investigate the condition of
student writing and how it can be helped.

Universities across the nation have initiated remedial reading
and writing programs to stem what is perceived to be the problem: the
marked ungrammatical and incoherent writings of incoming freshmen into
universities. The Ohio State University has founded a remedial writing
workshop for incoming freshmen whose ACT scores and placement scores
determine that they should be there (supported by research conducted by
Andrea Lunsford). The University of Southern California, Yale
University, Old Dominion University, and The University of California
at Los Angeles have all fostered such remedial programs designed to
meet the problem.

The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) started the controversy with its 1974 research survey analyzing the current state of national writing skills. The NAEP reported that there was an "overall decline in the quality of essays written by a total of 2,500 pupils, ages nine, 13 and 17."[1] The essays written by both the 13 and 17 year olds were particularly error ridden and were "marked by more awkwardness and run-on sentences, the students displaying a tendency to write in the same manner as they spoke."[2] The NAEP found that the writing abilities of the 13 and 17 year old groups declined measurably, perhaps dovetailing with the Office of Education's statistic that one fifth of American adults are functioning with difficulty, partly because of their unskilled and inadequate preparation in communication skills such as reading and writing.[3]

In the 17-year-old group, particularly, the decline in written expression alarmed educators to the point of constructing the basic English programs in the universities. The high school senior decline was mainly one of "quality; the mean holistic score of their essays dropped from 5.12 to 4.85 (on a scale of 1-8) and the number of students writing better papers (4 or higher) dropped from 85 percent to 78 percent."[4] The higher ranked papers contrasted with the poorer ones with differences in average word length (longer); a richer vocabulary; more punctuation; more complex sentences and sentences with imbedding; and less than half of the awkwardness as the poor papers. At the same time, the higher ranked papers also contained one-fifth as many run-on sentences and misspellings.[5] The NAEP also concluded that the average paper was shorter and more awkwardly

written than the average paper written during the NAEP's comparable survey conducted in 1969. Moreover, clarity of ideas emerged as a clear distinction to the less garbled writings of the 1969 group. Although the general level of coherence remained relatively unchanged (though markedly more differentiated in the 1974 group), writings of both the poor and average students in the 1974 study were not as straight-forward or as clear as those of the 1969 group. All in all, NAEP Director Forbes commented that:

> We must all realize that the writing skills of
> teenagers have decreased. Even though our language
> is constantly changing, it would appear that the
> written word is in trouble and deserves immediate
> attention.[6]

In general, the National Assessment of Educational Progress concluded that the downward trend of the 17-year-old group was characterized by two factors: first, by the drastic decrease in performance (as measured by the holistic scores) and by "the wider range separating the more prepared, literate students from the poorer, less articulate ones."[7] Responding to this trend, many schools have constructed remedial reading and writing programs.

The average student with mid-range writing scores (though in greater numbers and with more problems in communication) has been ignored or even unattended. Ron Smith discovered in the fall of 1973 that more universities have less courses, hours of instruction, and programs for the incoming average student than ever before. In his survey of composition courses conducted throughout the nation, Smith found that in 1967 freshmen at 93.2% of schools had to take one quarter of writing and 77.8% were required to take two terms of

freshmen English. In 1973, however, only 76% of incoming freshmen were required to take one course of freshmen English and 45% were required to take two.[8] These findings seem to indicate that the nature and severity of the perceived writing crisis is relegated to the basic or remedial student, (for whom more courses have been designed see Andrea Lunsford's research study, "Remedial English: A Descriptive and Evaluative Report").[9] Although, the NAEP found that the average student's scores declined markedly, the instruction of such students has decreased, at least quantitatively. Apparently, most universities perceive the crisis in writing as mainly affecting those in the remedial writing range and have created programs for this group.

The Intermediate Student's Crisis:

Nonetheless, the average student in composition has problems and needs in written communication. In an unpublished survey in 1976, Garnes found that 58.1% of the students in the introductory composition were "poorly prepared for college writing." Nearly half (48.6%) had 6 or fewer t-units per essay (T-units are a measure of writing complexity). When asked what difficulties in composition most worried them, 60% of the students replied that they had problems with revising and topic selection; 68% with organizing and thesis formulation; and 70% had difficulty with transitions and unity.[10] In general, the students perceived the greatest difficulty with composition skills such as unity and coherence and relatively less with mechanics.[11]

This student opinion varies considerably with the Ohio State English Department's stated description of the average incoming student as documented in their English 100 proposal of 1971. Before reducing their freshmen English requirement from 9 hours to 5, the Freshman English Policy Committee described the incoming freshman thus:

> Our proposal rests upon the assumption that freshmen today are considerably more adept at using their language than were those of ten or fifteen years ago. Both the exposure to the mass media and the efforts of the high schools have improved our students greatly of the last decade, at least in vocabulary and sentence construction.[12]

Admittedly, confusion reigns over what students can or cannot do and to what degree a writing crisis even exists. As Richard Ohmann points out, the writing crisis may be "a fiction--if not a hoax."[13] What is striking, however, is the amount of mythology and ignorance which undergirds most writing programs, making these programs ineffectual to students. In particular, the knowledge and understanding of the average composition student is unclear or misperceived at best. Is the writing crisis just a problem with learning the basics or should the instruction into written communication go much deeper and into more areas?

Research probing the skills, needs, abilities, attitudes and even numbers of average, incoming, intermediate students is lacking. Although the demand and need for more mid-level writing courses and skills have significantly increased, most educators have focused on the remedial student whose problems are usually more acute and more easily recognized. As Shaughnessy notes, for basic writers "errors

create real barriers to readers because they demand energy without giving any return in meaning; they shift the reader's attention from where he is going (meaning) to how he is getting there (code)."[14] Even so, the problems in coherence, in meaning, in clarity, in flexibility and expression are real problems in writing simply because effective communication rests on these skills.

Furthermore, one of the most critical discoveries of the National Assessment of Educational Progress has been overlooked--that the writing skills of the 17-year-old students were more primer-like and more incoherent than were their counterparts in 1969. A large part of the literacy problem lies in the incomprehensible writing now being produced by many middle-range students in academia.

Part of the task of aiding the middle-range student lies in the problem of definition for this student and his/her performance. At The Ohio State University, incoming freshmen are placed in writing courses based upon a combination of their ACT scores and a writing sample. At Columbus Technical Institute, students are placed based upon a placement essay written when they apply for admission to the school. Essay evaluation is made by veteran English instructors who have both graded placement essays before and taught the courses into which the students are placed.

The Definitions of Remedial, Advanced, and Intermediate Writers:

Most universities base their placement upon ACT scores. At The Ohio State University, the students are placed according to three categories: ACT scores of 0-10 are in the basic composition course (100.01); ACT scores of 11-15 are in the basic-intermediate group (100.02); and ACT scores of 16-24 are in the intermediate writing section (110). These ACT scored categories are approximations as are the analyses of both the placement essays of both Ohio State University and Columbus Technical Institute. That these approximations do not identify these students in any clear way for teachers to help or instruct was demonstrated by Silva in her dissertation, "A Comparative Study Of The Needs And Concepts Of Individual Students In A Post-Secondary Remedial Writing Program." As one instructor remarked, "students on the borderline in these categories are placed in the lower section because more experience with writing will only be beneficial to them." Acute sensitivity to errors rather than to understanding seems to dominate placement of students.

The Remedial Writer:

Because of the attention the remedial student has drawn by academics, the definition of this student is more available and more definite. Shaughnessy described the basic student thus:

> Those who have been left so far behind the others in
> their formal education that they appeared to have
> little chance of catching up, students whose difficulties
> with the written language seemed of a different order
> from those of other groups . . . (for whom) even very
> modest standards of high school literacy had not been
> met.[15]

Silva analyzed the basic student in this way:

> Students who are required to take remedial writing
> courses are found to be lacking in basic writing
> skills, i.e., sentence structures, spelling,
> punctuation, conventional performance with regard
> to the grammar of EAE, and choice of words or
> phrases for expression of thought in compliance
> with conventional word or idiom usage.[16]

Further, Lunsford described the remedial writer as having "slightly over two grammatical errors in barely five sentences."[17] It is obvious that the concern for good writing mostly focuses upon correct or conventional use of the language and if the failings in student's writing are not immediately discernible, little attention is given to them. At Columbus Technical Institute, placement is made mostly on the grounds of error and conventional usage of the language. For basic writers, the level of remediation is determined by subject/verb disagreement, shifts in verb tense, omission of words, spelling errors, pronoun antecedent agreement and fragmented sentences. Although these definitions of the basic/remedial writer seem expansive, at the center is the element of pronounced and repeated grammatical error. Two essays below illustrate the error-type pattern of the basic writer (taken from the placement tests at CTI):

Essay 1:

> I decide to come to colleage because after 9 1/2
> yrs. out of school I'am finialy realizing just
> now important continuing education is in life.
>
> After Realizing This and seeing only how far I
> can get with just a high school education. I
> see that to reach my goal a dental lab Tech.
>
> I must further my Education to achieve this goal
> so that I may better myself and the bettermen of
> my community and people of this word.

Essay 2:

> I decided to come to college in high school. I
> was going to go in the navy their I was going to
> a school in Indiana, it is a autonative school.
> Then my friend dad brought us down here and we
> like it.
>
> We are going to take the automotive cose. It
> looks like its a pretty good corse it all new,
> it close to home, its only two years and you can
> make some good money when you get out. And the
> biggest reason for coming is my dads paying for
> it.

The Advanced Writer:

The advanced writer also has been studied extensively. Beginning with an analysis of professional writers to probing the skills and traits of high scoring high school students in SAT and ACT tests, composition researchers have sought out this writer. Hooks, 1972, investigated the writing skills of professional writers to identify and record the main elements of successful writing. In her seminal study, The Composing Processes of Twelfth Graders, Emig also analyzes the methods of literate writers as an indicator of productive methods for writing. Emig draws from another well-known source of professional writers and their behaviors: Writers At Work: The Paris Review Interviews I and II.[18] Advanced composition students too have had in-depth analyses of their work and performances. Broderick, 1975, probed two groups of college freshmen: one with high SAT scores and one with low SAT scores in order to study usage and writing competence. No measure or attention was paid to the "intermediate" student. R. R. Adler, 1972, investigated the factors which affect the quality of

essays by advanced placement students. In 1974, Ferrante questioned
the generation and acceptance of educational objectives for advanced
placement in English for college freshmen. The composing habits, too,
of good student writers were noted, particularly in Charles Stallard's
dissertation: <u>An Analysis of the Writing Behaviors of Good Student
Writers</u> (1972).

In summary, the advanced composition student is attractive to
many academic investigators because he/she is readily identified and
most particularly fits the pattern of the "good" college student. As
Shaughnessy points out:

> The advanced writer has a fluency, a readiness with
> words and is able to juggle contradictions, exceptions
> and multiple levels of meaning. He has met the
> traditional requirements for college work, and appeared
> from their tests and school performance to be competent
> readers and writers.[19]

At Columbus Technical Institute, the advanced composition student is
defined as "needing to improve communication skills with an emphasis
on the whole composition process--pre-writing, writing and revising."
This student has few problems with grammar, punctuation, mechanics and
spelling but concentrates on sharpening the unity, development and
coherence of his/her writing. The two essays reproduced below indicate
the pattern of the advanced composition student (taken from CTI place-
ment examinations):

Essay 1:

> Many things that are considered to be marks of
> success are material in nature, while others may
> be ideals or concepts. I hope someday I will be
> able to bring these extremes to a middle ground.

Graduation from high school meant a feeling of
freedom to do as I pleased. I exercised that
freedom by purchasing cars, stereo's, cameras,
and other segments of my "image". This process
continued for a year until I pinched the freedom
in my wallet. I came to see that when my billfold
was empty, I was empty. I didn't like what I
saw and decided to do something about it.

Here I am. Education is the key to where I am and
what I will do. Hopefully, I will be able to provide
for myself and my family in a comfortable manner.
In order to do that, I must learn.

This is my first step.

Essay 2:

One of the main reasons I have choosen to attend
college is to learn a skill for a good paying job.
Another is the unavailability of jobs for unskilled
people. Most of all I would like to learn more
about the field that is of interest to me.

In college I can learn a skill of my choice and
look forward to the day I can go out and find a good
job. It may not be the highest paying job but it
would be more than working in a supermarket. Also
it would be more enjoyable to have a job I liked
rather than working in a menial job.

The unavailability of jobs for unskilled people is a
good reason for attending college also. Instead of
wasting months looking for a job, you can be learning
a skill in college. All the wasted time is put to
good use.

The best reason of all is the fact I can learn about
something I am interested in and can enjoy. Even if
I don't make it a lifetime career, I will always have
the satisfaction of knowing I improved my knowledge
by going to college. I will be learning something
because I am interested, not because I was told to
learn it by someone else.

The Intermediate Writer:

The mid-level composition student or intermediate writer then seems somewhere in the vast area between basic and advanced writers. As such, this student lacks both the research interest and solid information about his/her needs, attitudes, methods and skills. Even the ACT score divisions are not very helpful, especially in the transitional period between the basic students and the basic-intermediate and intermediate ranking. Ironically, this student makes up the bulk of the composition program, yet he/she has received little attention from researchers and scholars. Two research studies glide over the topic of the intermediate writer. H. H. Schmeling (1970) concluded that "headed nominal clauses" most clearly differentiated poor papers from average and good essays written by students. Schmeling's main concern was for the "poor writer" although he at least mentions a middle group. Likewise, Bamberg also noted a distinctive group for the intermediate writer in her dissertation, Relationships Among Attitudes Toward Language Activities, Composition Achievement (1976). Bamberg's purpose, too, was to investigate the high school activities of the poor writer but, coincidentally, discovered a wide attitude difference between basic and intermediate writers, though she neglects to follow up this attitude difference.

As a consequence of the dearth of information about the intermediate writer, what is known about the mid-level student is gleaned from other studies. Britton, 1975, documents a sort of lackluster writing style in his research study: The Development of Writing Abilities (11-18). Britton describes a student whose combination of

adequate skills plus a boredom or alienation from the task of writing develops an uninvolved and unfocused writing style. As Britton notes, "The fact that the pupil is subject to frequent demands for writing, some of which he finds distasteful or merely dull, may lead to his sense of audience taking on a particular complexion. His writing may be dominated by the sole consideration of meeting minimum requirements.[20] This student sounds suspiciously like the intermediate writer profiled in Errors and Expectations by Shaughnessy. Shaughnessy writes, intermediate writers are "those who have survived secondary schooling but not thrived on it, whose writing has a flat competence, by no means error-free but limited more seriously by its utter predictability--its bare vocabulary, safe syntax, and platitudinous tone."[21] These students have learned to get by but have not thrived on schooling (as the advanced students) or were awed by it (as are the basic writers). The intermediate's lack of involvement contrasts vividly with the sense of optimism projected by the basic writer as observed by Lunsford in her study. Lunsford noted that remedial writers showed hope about the task of writing, did not see themselves as inadequate but "poorly prepared."[22]

Previously, Macrorie also described the passive style of the uninvolved intermediate writer, a style which contrasts strongly with the error-ridden but dynamic quality of basic writers. Macrorie notes:

> Most English teachers have been trained to correct
> students' writing, not to read it; so they put
> down those bloody correction marks in the margins.
> When the students see them, they think they mean
> the teacher doesn't care what students write, only
> how they punctuate and spell . . . The students know

> theme writers seldom put down anything that counts
> for them . . . Apparently they are teacher's
> exercises, not really a kind of communication.[23]

"Playing the game" can encourage many intermediate writers to the flat,

cliche ridden style previously outlined by Shaughnessy. Moffett

documents that this canny protective coloration by mid-level writers

starts early in the student's educational experience. Moffett de-

scribes a phase in a primary school child's development in which

graphic representation is foremost but not dominated by conventional

grammatical correctness. Moffett then goes on to outline a further

development of this writer when he says:

> This stage not only combines the good car of the
> small child with the motor skill and phonic under-
> standing of the older one, but it is the period
> of strong competence motivation, when children
> are still willing to master an ability somewhat
> for its own sake. By contrast, junior and senior
> high school students insist on much more . . . . on
> meaning and content, and resent what they feel
> to be the nit-picking of fuddy-duddy clerics who
> are interested only in a hollow formalism, not
> in what you have to say . . . (teachers should
> avoid) alienating older students from writing as
> composition.[24]

Finally, Elbow, too, focuses in on the intermediate writer whose

flat competence of communication extends into his further dealings

with a hostile or uncaring society. Elbow presents this person as

one who is constantly trying to evade any confrontation and thus

tries to blend into the background. He goes on to say:

> But the speech community is constantly curbing
> this looseness. When an individual speaker means
> things by a set of words which the community of
> listeners does not 'hear', he tends to give in to
> the community and stop meaning those things by those
> words: that is, when they don't build in at their

end what he builds in at his, he either stops
building it in or else remains unconscious of
building it in. In either case, he no longer
treats these as real meanings of the words.[25]

At Columbus Technical Insitute, the intermediate writer is

defined as one who needs to develop confidence with writing, with

emphasis on sentences and paragraphs. Primarily, students in the

intermediate range have problems with run-ons, fragments, comma

splices--and less with mechanical errors such as spelling and verb

endings. Classically, this definition hinges on identification of

grammatical errors for its classification, but the noting of a need

to build the writer's confidence is a refreshing change and a critical

priority. It is also a priority not shared by the ACT evaluations or

the error fixation of the NAEP's findings. The two essays reproduced

on the following pages were evaluated in the mid-range (intermediate)

writing course--based on the previously established criteria at

Columbus Technical Institute.

Essay 1:

> I choose the Dental Tech. field because it is
> interesting.
>
> This field can make you feel good because you
> help people's appearance and health better. Even
> though you don't see many of the patients I still
> think you get to meet plenty of people.
>
> My brother is a Dental Tech. and I go and watch
> him work because its fun to learn about stuff like
> this. This is a good career to get into because
> there are alot of jobs and the pay is pretty good.
> This is also more fun and more interesting than
> working for more money in a factory or something.

Essay 2:

> I decided to come to college because it is time.
> The right time for me, to help me become more
> whole.
>
> I wasn't ready after graduating from high school,
> So I decided to go to Cosmetology school.
>
> In 1966 I received a Cosmetology license and
> worked as a beautician for eight years.
>
> I have been married for four years and I feel
> that something is missing in my life.
>
> The social and group preasures are very strong.
> I need the feeling of satisfaction, fulfillment
> and most important independence.
>
> I believe going to college will help me achieve
> these goals.

The Need To Research The Intermediate Writer:

The intermediate writer has real needs, qualities, and identities, but he/she has almost been totally ignored by research and by academic faculties. My study is an attempt to bridge some of the gap of information separating the teacher of composition from communicating with his/her audience, a majority of whom are intermediate writers. As such, my study focuses on the intermediate student as defined by placement at Columbus Technical Institute and in comparison with both advanced and basic students in the same program. In doing so, I analyzed both questionnaires and placement writings of 268 students (97 basic writers, 89 intermediate writers, and 82 advanced writers). Using Janet Emig's procedure of investigating the writing habits of the various groups, I researched the pre-writing activities of these students, their global attitudes about written communication, and the

level of apprehension[26] each student brought to the task of written composition. In general, this student's lack of confidence and level of timidity toward writing is so great that it is not surprising that he/she is nearly unresponsive, that is able to communicate only in a limited and cursory way.

Following this, I then analyzed the written placement essays of the three groups, especially of the intermediate writer. In doing so, I eschewed the traditional approach of looking mainly for errors and tried to perceive patterns in the types of written communication that these students exhibited in their writings. I based my work on Shaughnessy's procedure of correlating writing patterns with particular attitudes toward the written work.[27] In particular, I devised a coding system based on stylistic considerations: vocabulary, sentence structure, voice, punctuation, and the use of cliches; (see Chapter III for further explanation). Shaughnessy's Errors and Expectations was "based on an analysis of four thousand freshmen essays . . . and offers many examples of students' writing difficulties; explores the causes of these difficulties; and suggests possible lines of approach for the teacher." Like Shaughnessy, I analyzed freshman essays (210) and in particular the 72 intermediate students in this study to explore the logic behind their syntactic and rhetorical patterns of writing. I also investigated particular intermediate "errors": run-on sentences, fragments, incorrect use of prepositions, change in person and common splices. My system was validated by three English teachers (Mary McGann, Ph.D. in Education-Humanities; Bill Ellis, Ph.D. in English; and Marcia Holbrook, M.A. in English) who picked out 89% of

randomly gathered student papers as "intermediate"--based on the above system. My attempt at trying to perceive these students as something other than a faceless mass of persons with relatively the same needs and abilities has been very fruitful.

In particular, my research has led to a type of intermediate style and voice. As Shaughnessy eloquently described them, these students do exhibit a flat, bare and safe syntactical approach which seems definitely correlated with their view of the reader/grader as hostile and judgmental. Specifically, those students with the most intermediate-type "problems" brought the highest level of apprehension to the task of writing.

The research reported in this study was conducted to implement a more beneficial writing program for the intermediate student in written composition. Both the questionnaire and the analysis have resulted in more in-depth personal knowledge of the intermediate writer in my classroom. Importantly, this student, though individual as all students are, can be described with sufficient weight and accuracy to help other composition teachers and curriculum planners to be sensitive to their needs. Already I have been able to perceive these patterns in my current students' papers and have tried to guide them toward a stronger and more confident writing style and voice.

Chapter II looks at studies that relate to the state of composition research and theory as it applies to the intermediate students and their writing programs. Specifically, the self-image of these writers will be probed as well as their level of apprehension in

approaching the task of writing. In Chapter III the procedures I followed in conducting this study will be presented as are the methods for analyzing the findings. Chapter IV reviews the findings of my study. In Chapter V, I summarize the findings, draw conclusions and recommend areas for future research and instruction of intermediate students.

NOTES FOR CHAPTER I

[1]NAEP, <u>Writing Mechanics</u> (U.S. Government Printing Office, 1975), p. 1.

[2]Ibid.

[3]Ibid., p. 133.

[4]Ibid., p. 1.

[5]Ibid., p. 14.

[6]Barron Beshoar, "The Condition of Student Writing," <u>American Education</u> (March 1976), p. 22.

[7]NAEP, p. 14.

[8]Ron Smith, "The Composition Requirement Today: A Report on a Nationwide Survey of Four Year Colleges and Universities," <u>College Composition and Communication</u>, 25 (May 1974), pp. 138-148.

[9]Andrea Lunsford, "Remedial English: A Descriptive and Evaluative Report," (typewritten). Department of English, The Ohio State University, 1976, p. 9.

[10]Sara Garnes, "Freshman English Questionnaire," unpublished paper, (Autumn 1976), p. 22.

[11]Garnes, p. 22.

[12]Freshman English Policy Committee, "A Proposal For a Five-Hour Composition Course," unpublished paper, (Fall 1971), p. 1.

[13]Richard Ohmann, "The Decline in Literacy Is a Fiction, If Not a Hoax," <u>The Chronicle of Higher Education</u> (October 25, 1976), pp. 1-3.

[14]Mina Shaughnessy, <u>Errors and Expectations</u> (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), p. 12.

[15]Shaughnessy, p. 2.

[16]Clare Silva, "A Comparative Study of The Needs and Concepts of Individual Students in a Post-Secondary Remedial Writing Program," Diss., The Ohio State University, 1977, p. 7.

[17]Lunsford, p. 9.

[18]Janet Emig, The Composing Processes of Twelfth Graders, (Urbana: NCTE, Research Report, no. 13, 1971).

[19]Shaughnessy, p. 2.

[20]James Britton, The Development of Writing Abilities (11-18), (MacMillan and NCTE, 1975), p. 64).

[21]Shaughnessy, p. 2.

[22]Andrea Lunsford, "The Historical, Descriptive and Evaluative Study of Remedial English in American Colleges and Universities," Diss., The Ohio State University, 1977, p. 64.

[23]Ken Macrorie, Telling Writing (New Jersey: Hayden Book Company, 1970), p. 4.

[24]James Moffett, A Student Centered Language Arts Curriculum Grades K-13: A Handbook for Teachers. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1973).

[25]Peter Elbow, Writing Without Teachers (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973), p. 154.

[26]John A. Daly and Michael D. Miller, "The Empirical Development of an Instrument to Measure Writing Apprehension," Research in the Teaching of English, vol. 9, no. 3, Winter 1975. (Bulletin of the NCTE) Urbana, Illinois, pp. 247-255.

[27]Shaughnessy as described by Ronald Clyne in book jacket to Errors and Expectations. Professor Shaughnessy's careful and compassionate analysis of the basic writer's performance, style and attitude has truly been an inspiration to me. Her eloquence and caring for the students is beyond comparison. I was very awed and determined to attempt such an analysis of the intermediate student's style since, I felt, the traditional sentence level methods of analysis were inadequate and unrevealing for my purposes.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE ON WRITING AND THE

INTERMEDIATE STUDENT

Researchers in written composition have traditionally investigated
the phenomenon of writing from three scholarly perspectives:
rhetorical, linguistic, and instructional. The rhetorical stance
involves the investigation of the art or science of using words effec-
tively within a piece of writing, either by analyzing the writing's
style, voice, imagery, form, design, audience, invention, or a com-
bination of these. Lauer's Invention in Contemporary Rhetoric:
Heuristic Procedures (unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of
Michigan, 1967) is an example of a rhetorical investigation. Linguistic
analysis involves the study of the development and structure of a
particular language by analyzing its phonology, morphology, syntax or
semantics. Researchers with a linguistic perspective usually examine
the grammar of a particular piece of writing. Mellon's Transformational
Sentence-Combining: A Method For Development of Syntactic Fluency
in English Composition (Research Report No. 10 NCTE, 1969) employs a
linguistic perspective in its study. Instructional researchers examine
the problem of writing competency by analyzing what types of instruc-
tional methods will produce better writing by the students. The
Smith Study, Class Size in High School English: Methods and Results
investigates the usefulness of using two different lecture methods for

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teaching students how to write (based on class size) and exemplifies a study conducted to determine the strength or failure of a particular method of instruction.

These research perspectives have generally developed an awesome body of information about writing but have focused on its products (the writings) rather than the producers themselves (the students). As such, the research has become limited and rarefied for the average composition teacher who is often baffled by the literature's esoterica. As Silva points out in her dissertation, A Comparative Study of the Needs and Concepts of Individual Students In A Post-Secondary Remedial Writing Program, "Scholars tend to be concerned with the abstract student, one who reflects most of the qualities or capabilities possessed by most of the real students."[4]

In response to the need for more holistic research, a "student-centered" perspective upon writing has become a viable alternative to the traditional research in written composition. In essence, student-centered research tries to identify the real student's attitudes, methods and self-concepts when he/she composes. As Guth states in English For A New Generation, "A whole generation of educational re-formers is rebelling against a too exclusive preoccupation with the intellectual, the cognitive, the conceptual. With John Holt, they object to education that is merely 'trying to plant strings of words in childrens' heads.'"[5]

Braddock, Lloyd-Jones, and Schoer's Research In Written Composition (1965) declares that to carry the problem of writing research further, "one might well ask what kinds of writing following

what kinds of instruction of what kinds of students."[6] They further detail several areas of unexplored territory for research, though only three areas include investigations into the real dimensions of student writers as individual people. These questions are 3) What are the sources of fear and resentment of writing? 22) How does a person go about starting a paper? and 23) How does a writer generate sentences?[7]

Although Braddock, et al., determine that such an approach is recommended, only two of the 504 bibliographic entries actually incorporate a student-centered approach to research: Written Composition and Characteristics of Personality (Allport, Walker, Lathers Archives of Psychology, No. 173)[8] and Barton's The Relation of Personality to Composition Writing and To Style of Writing[9] (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Syracuse, 1946). Both of these investigations are outdated, though the Allport, et al. study uses the case study approach for their research--a technique more qualitative than quantitative in obtaining data and thus more individualized.

The research involved in my study, The Entry Skills, Methods and Attitudes of the Intermediate Writer, has attempted to investigate the intermediate student as a real student with particular characteristics, problems and needs. To that end, questionnaires, placement essays, and case studies were evaluated to characterize these students. This chapter will look at examples of research regarding the importance of student-centered studies; the definition of the intermediate student within these studies; and the specific information available in regarding the intermediate's composing writing competence, processes

and social attitudes. Finally, the chapter will close with an analysis of what distinguishes this study from other research.

1. <u>Student-Centered Research</u>

Although Braddock, et al. propose that there is value in studying the psychological and personal dimensions of student writing, the five studies included as research examples all deal with the effectiveness of using different instructional approaches.

Allport, Walker, and Lathers' Study, <u>Written Composition</u> and <u>Characteristics of Personality</u> (Achives of Psychology, No. 173) appears to be the only entry in the 504 bibliographic titles to deal with students as individuals rather than as an undifferentiated mass. This study tried to identify the characteristics of an individual with his/her writing style (1946). The researchers posited that "individuality in writing is that aspect or quality of writing which is the most reliable means of recognizing a given individual's work and of distinguishing it, in the absence of other identifying features from the work of another."[10] Allport, Walker, and Lathers evaluated 630 themes from 70 unidentified students in order to match the themes to the respective writers. Their results showed that the themes could be matched to the students two and one half times above chance.[11] A unique feature of this study was the additional inclusion of twenty prototypical case studies, several of whom (9, 18, 11, 15, 7, 8) bear a striking resemblance to the findings of this research study. Although Allport, Walker, and Lathers used a novel research technique in this study, their main purpose was to test the instructional gains

from working with students as individuals. Their research has been ignored within the ranks of composition inquiry.

Emig's study, The Composing Processes of Twelfth Graders (NCTE, 1971) is the most prominent research study within the last few years designed to document the actual processes individual students follow when composing papers. Her case studies are important to research in written composition in that they reflect an ongoing and real process taking place through the aid of tape recordings by the actual students in the study. The study attempts to transcend the limited and dehumanizing elements of many empirically based composition studies.

Emig's work has been criticized in that it looks at a small sampling of twelfth graders (eight students) and directs much of the study toward one subject, a white middle-class female as she composes an essay. As such, its design rather than its findings holds more value for research in the composition field. Emig points out in her "Implications For Research" that more research is needed in what students do and who these students are. She states, "More important, it would make better known the developmental dimensions of the writing process, both for the individual and for members of the various chronological and ability age groups."[12]

Moffett's Teaching the Universe of Discourse (1968) and A Student-Centered Language Arts Curriculum Grades K-13: A Handbook For Teachers (1973) present both a theoretical and practical method for building a program in writing that is designed for the student rather than the teacher. Although neither work is a research study

per se, Moffett cogently argues that present day composition teaching is both irrelevant and destructive to students because the teaching builds upon linguistic, literary or rhetorical analysis, none of which are vital to the student's everyday experience or needs. Moffett states, "What the student needs most of all is to perceive how he is using language and how he might use it. What this requires is awareness, not information."[13] Moffett's work dovetails with other composition theorists such as Macrorie and Elbow in rebelling against the "tidying up and transcribing of thought, not thinking"[14] which has permeated the theory and practice of the written composition field.

Individual education and thinking for oneself has divided the ranks of the composition field into a kind of objective and subjective about what's really important in teaching students how to write. As Kinneavy writes in "Freshman English: An American Rite of Passage," "Two movements which I saw in some Freshman English Programs-- on the one hand an emphasis on the 'professionalization of freshman English,' and on the other hand an emphasis on the individuality of the student typified by such approaches as those of Ken Macrorie, Peter Elbow or Lou Kelly."[15]

2. Research Related to the Intermediate Student

As stated in Chapter 1, there is little information defining who the intermediate students are, what makes up their needs or how to go about instructing them. They appear to be almost a "given" for composition reseachers and instructors alike. Kitzhaber (1963) observed that the "standard freshman English Program may enroll anywhere from

55 to 97 percent of the freshman class. For the ninety-five schools studied, the mean is about 75 percent."[19] Although Kitzhaber devotes several pages to the remedial student and the "superior student," there is no description or definition of the intermediate student.

Studies generally have directed themselves to comparing "good" versus "poor" writers. Research in Composition (1963) lists Baker's "An Investigation of the Characteristics of Poor Writers" (College Composition and Communication, V February 1954) and Barch and Wright's "The Background and Self-Picture of Good and Poor Writers," (Journal of Communication, VII Winter 1957). Stallard[20] (1974) investigated the writing behavior of good student writers in his dissertation. Remedial English has been researched several times during the last few years, notably Lunsford's report "Remedial English: A Description and Evaluative Report."

Much of the intermediate's identity is a by-product of studies which are researching other areas. Holbrook's English for the Rejected (1964), a humane and student-centered analysis of the "backward" child in secondary schools, also discusses the average child in the system. He notes:

> The inadequacy lies in the reality that the children,
> having been separated because they are not "brainy',
> are being given an education largely derived from that
> given to the brainy ones. Their education is to be
> examined. . . . Yet the secondary modern child cannot
> benefit from this kind of training because it is too
> abstract, formal and too much based on memorising in-
> formation. . . . The motives behind these developments
> are pathetically not such as would seek to give the
> average child the best possible, liberal, rounded whole
> education.[21]

Labov has done important research analyzing the speech of Negro children in urban ghettos. Labov shows dramatically that stereotypes of Negro children as verbally and culturally deprived (as well as non-logical) are false and destructive. In doing so, he describes some aspects of the "middle-class." He writes:

> The speech of many middle-class people departs max-imally from this target (of explicitness and preci-sion). All too often, 'Standard English' is rep-resented by a style that is simultaneously over-particular and vague. It is this verbosity which is most easily taught and most easily learned, so that words take the place of thought and nothing can be found behind them.[22]

Shaull notes, in his introduction to Freire's Pedagogy of the Oppressed, that oppression of the school system affects not only the minority but also the majority of its captive pupils (the middle class). The school's domination results in a silencing of these students, an alienation from their culture and themselves. Schaull theorizes that "Our advanced technological society is rapidly making objects of most of us and subtly programming us into conformity to the logic of its system. To the degree that this happens, we are also becoming submerged in a new 'culture of silence.'"[23]

Freire terms the emphasis on students as objects not subjects as the "banking" concept of education. In this theory, the student is passive, lectured to and led along a pathway to some ideal of thinking and writing by the teacher. Freire's description of this process sounds remarkably like the traditional classroom: "A careful analysis of the teacher-student relationship at any level, inside or outside the school, reveals its fundamentally narrative character.

This relationship involves a narrating Subject (the teacher) and patient, listening objects, (the students). The contents, whether values or empirical dimensions of reality, tend in the process of being narrated, to become lifeless and petrified."[16] Bellock (1963) found that teachers talk approximately three times more than students. The inbalance of teacher-talk to student-talk remains a stable characteristic of almost any given classroom. This study was a follow-up of a similar study done in 1912 in which researchers found that teachers talked 64% of the time during classroom discussions.[17] Both research and theory in composition argue for a more enlightened, humane approach to discovering how to help students write more clearly, competently and powerfully. Even so, present research in composition deals little with the actual student. Only Walter Petty's "The Writing of Young Children," in Research on Composing: Points of Departure (Cooper, O'Dell 1978),[18] analyzes individual children's writings in order to discover how children go about transforming their oral language to their written essays.

The research done in composition on the intermediate student (or average student) is thin and not very thorough. Fenner's "Can 'Average' Students Be Taught To Write?" (Teaching High School English, 1970) poses a relevant question for this study and for most English teachers. Fenner never really addresses this question, however; the article is written for high school instructors as a guide to preparing students for the Regents' examinations. Fenner describes an important feature of the students' work, its "empty improvisation, substanceless and disorganized,"[24] writing but goes on to attribute these features to the students' lack of pre-writing activities.

In _Profile of the Poor Writer: Relationships of Selected_

Characteristics to Poor Writing In College, (doctoral disseration,

Miami University, 1965), Woodward discovered that average writers "did

not enjoy writing" and "did not perceive it as an important skill" when

compared to good and poor writers.[25] Because Woodward is interested

in poor writers' attitudes, he does not follow up on this finding.

Likewise Bamberg's Research for _Relationships Among Attitudes Toward_

Language Activities, Composition Instruction, Student Attitudes And

Composition Achievement (doctoral dissertation, University of California

at Los Angeles, 1970) discovered a wide negative attitude difference

separating intermediate writers from remedial.[26] Her study, too, is

directed toward researching basic writing and so does not pursue this

discovery to any conclusion.

Shaughnessy's _Errors and Expectations_ (1977) is the most com-

prehensive study of the basic writer to date. Her definition of

intermediate students as:

> those who had survived secondary schooling but not
> thrived on it, whose reading was seldom voluntary
> and whose writing reflected a flat competence, by
> no means error-free but limited more seriously by
> its utter predictability--its bare vocabulary, safe
> syntax, and platitudinous tone.[27]

makes up the focal point and design of my study. Although Shaughnessy

is also concerned with the problems and abilities of the basic writer,

she devotes several pages to describing the intermediate's vocabulary

and style. She notes that the intermediate writer "strikes the

academic reader as being beyond basic" but still may retain some

traces of the basic style. Shaughnessy does categorize some of the

intermediate's problems such as a bare vocabulary and a lack of sophis-tication with the language (for example rarely using adverbs) but does not investigate the intermediate writer in-depth as she does the basic.[28] As a consequence, much of the intermediate's identity is based on intuitive and tangential information. This study, The Entry Skills, Methods and Attitudes of the Intermediate Writer in a Post-Secondary Composition Program is an attempt to discover particular information and insights about these particular students.

3.   Research Regarding the Intermediate's Writing Competency

Research regarding the intermediate's writing competency tends to be undeveloped, or contradictory. A number of nationwide writing tests have been administered by the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) during recent years under the direction of the Education Commission of the United States. Their findings tend to support a trend in incoherent writing, especially in the 13, 17 and adult cat-egories. The NAEP also noted a tendency to write with more awkwardness and run-on sentences. Barron Beshoar states:

> The nationwide survey of writing skills showed
> that in 1974 students aged 13 and 17 used simpler
> vocabulary, had a shorter, primerlike style, and
> wrote more incoherent paragraphs than their
> counterparts in 1969. . . In general, the 1974
> essays by the 13- and 17-year-olds were marked
> by more awkwardness and run-on sentences.[29]

Stewart researched the length of t-units written by senior high school students when they were confronted with an essay composed of several extremely short sentences. In "Syntactic Maturity From High School to University: A First Look," Stewart measured these sentences

compared to writings of younger students and those in college. He found that seniors rewrote these sentences with significantly longer clauses as well as longer t-units.[30] Although Stewart's findings are solid, he admits that their general application to most students is inappropriate. He notes, "Certainly, the results obtained here relate only to the students studied and are subject to varying interpretations."[30]

Slotnick and Rogers (1973) investigated 2,079 papers written by the 17-year-olds in the 1969-70 NAEP study. They attempted to find out if there was any consistent error pattern present in the essays written by this group. They noted that punctuation errors appeared more frequently than others, though the majority of errors was irregular and infrequent. Particular essays written by poorly motivated students were usually very brief and general; specific details were absent from them.[31] Although the authors of this study argued that the study was representative of the 17-year-old subjects' performance in the NAEP study, they did not apply these findings as related to the writers themselves or to the writing process.

Hackman and Johnson (1977) conducted a study to determine how well freshmen write at Yale College in 1976. Although Yale students are probably not representative of the typical group of beginning writers, the researchers did find that the prose was dull, ambiguous, unskeptical and filled with colorless latinate diction. Few students (20%) scored 4 or less on subsentence and sentence level skills. No attempt was made to develop these findings into a theory regarding intermediate skills.[32]

Several researchers in composition hold that the average students, or intermediate writers, are more competent than even before in the handling of mechanical skills while writing. These researchers note that the average student needs work on development of ideas and clarity of thought, rather than grammar and mechanics. Richard Ohmann is probably the most renowned dissenter against the "writing crisis" school of thought. Ohmann's "The Decline in Literacy Is a Fiction, If Not a Hoax" (Chronicle of Education, Oct. 25, 1976) provides several counter-arguments to the notion that "Johnny can't write correctly." Ohmann states that the functional literacy level for 17-year-olds increased from 88 percent to 90 percent between 1971 and 1974.[33] He also states that the percentage of good writers among 17-year-olds has gone up, according to the N.A.E.P. study.

Earlier researchers have also claimed that the intermediate student knows more but says less than ever before. The problem is not one of back-to-basics but forward to thinking. In "Freshman Composition: The Circle of Unbelief" (College English 1969), Coles, Jr. declares that "there is not the degree of snoutish illiteracy to contend with in the writing of freshmen that there once was. The writing of most students entering most colleges now is more antiseptic, more brutally correct than it used to be."[34] The 1971 Freshman English Policy Committee of Ohio State University decided to compress three quarters of freshman writing into one claiming that:

> Our proposal rests upon the assumption that freshmen today are considerably more adept at using their language than were those of ten or fifteen years ago. Both the exposure to the mass media and the efforts of the high schools have improved our students greatly

of the last decade, at least in vocabulary and
sentence construction.[35]

The intermediate's writing competency is a mystery with various
individuals holding inconclusive or contradictory positions. Shaugh-
nessy suggests the clearest definition of the intermediate's skill
levels: she states "Ready with sentences, he is still not ready to
spin webs of academic discourse."[36] Given that three-fourths of an
entering class is composed of mid-range, "intermediate" writers as
Kitzhaber noted, more information is needed about what most of them
do or do not know.

4. Studies Related to the Intermediate's Composing Processes

"Process" has become a key word for composition researchers. As
editors Cooper and O'Dell state in Research On Composing: Points of
Department, (NCTE, 1978) "What we have needed for decades and what we
must have soon is a period of vigorous research on written discourse
and the composing process."[37] Without having some idea of the approach
the student is taking, the composition teacher can only attend to the
written work's exterior rather than to the writer personally. Helping
the student develop constructive writing habits is a major part of the
teacher's job. Composition research regarding the intermediate's com-
posing methods is minimal and exists only as part of instruction in
textbooks for freshman composition.

Emig's The Composing Processes of Twelfth Graders (NCTE, No. 13,
1971) is the seminal research study on composing processes. Emig's
findings of both the reflexive and extensive modes of composing provide
an understanding of process not delineated before. She also notes the

strictures placed upon student writers by teachers of composition.

The teacher's criticism of the student's work leads a student who is

afraid to risk and to show his/her real feelings and who produces prose

with a frozen quality. The intermediates' platitudinous, antiseptic,

ambiguous, and colorless writing sounds remarkably like Emig's

school-sponsored writing. She writes, "The first teachers of

composition--by giving certain descriptions of the composing process

and by evaluating the products of student writing by highly selective

criteria--set rigid parameters to students' writing behaviors in

school--sponsored writing that the students find difficult to make

more supple." Because the rigid practices prescribed differ so greatly

with the student's own experiences with writing, the intermediate

student develops certain behaviors and attitudes: "outward conformity

but inward cynicism and hostility."[38]

Understanding the process by which a student starts to write is

also a major consideration for the research of Britton's The Development

of Writing Abilities (11-18) (MacMillan, 1975). This study investigated

the ability to write according to distinct and comprehensive categories

of task. Although Britton et al., were not specifically investigating

the processive methods of the intermediate writer, they did investigate

the general matter of how and why students write. Britton also calls

attention to the alienation created by the artificial and prescribed

writing assignments exacted by students. He notes, "In school, however,

it is almost always the teacher who initiates the writing and who does

so by defining a writing task with more or less explicitness. Not

only does he define the task but also nominates himself as

audience. . . [The student's writing] may be thus dominated by the sole consideration of meeting minimal requirements."[39]

Process then becomes a central concern for teachers of composition who need to develop some sort of organic method and purpose for students to write; otherwise, the entire business often leads to cynicism and shoddiness for both groups. Emig makes the same point: that the school system encourages a divided student attitude and performance. In "Hand, Eye, Brain," she analyzes the various physiological processes a person follows when composing and writing. She notes how difficulties in any one or more of these activities can interfere with the writer's ability to perform. Not only do the physiological processes interfere with and impede written progress, but blocks such as heavy-handed teachers or irrelevant learning can stop the writer altogether. Emig calls for a more organic process, quoting Nelson Goodman, who said 'the American educational system is half-brained.' She states that the only base for a writing curriculum which would be what reseach suggests is "literally organic."[40]

"Process" in composing is also part of some freshman textbooks. These books mainly cater to the average student and are thus more relevant to the intermediate writer. Macrorie's Telling Writing (1970) was a trail blazer in setting up a workable process by which students start to write: "the freewriting approach" whereby the student starts to write without the paraphenalia of outlines and other formal devices. By freely associating on paper, the student becomes more relaxed, more able to discover his/her "true" subject.[41]

Elbow's <u>Writing Without Teachers</u> (1973) extends Macrorie's technique so that the person may be his/her own teacher and critic. Here the process becomes more self-motivated and independent, mainly relying on pre-writing exercises and reader feedback. Elbow wants to help writers "generate words better—more freely, lucidly and powerfully."[42]

Miller's Writing: <u>Process And Product</u> (1976) instructs its readers about the process of writing through task-oriented activities in a cookbook-type manner. Miller's style in this text is to try and help the student experiment; though her attitudes about how a student should write are much more definite and formal than either Macrorie or Elbow (see "Why Some Writing Is Better Than Others").[43]

In all three of these texts, the reader/student is encouraged to become actively engaged in the process of writing. As such, these books, for all their failings (Miller's book especially can become grating in tone), stand out from the traditional texts for composition writing which prescribe and dictate the proper manners for writing. As Ohmann states, the books lead to a "relatively sterile conception of rhetoric, one that can only encourage in freshman courses the same barrenness that blights" the traditional classroom.[44] The process of learning to write well should not be dissociated from the product of writing well. Research in the processes of students shows the signif- icance of such an organic and holistic connection. The intermediate writer, especially, needs to feel that the process of writing is meaningful; otherwise, this student is often alienated from the act of written communication.

5. <u>Research on Student Attitudes About Writing</u>

The way one feels and/or thinks about something will often profoundly affect his/her performance of that task. One's attitude is defined as the "manner of thinking and feeling that shows one's disposition, opinion, mental set, etc." (Webster's New World Dictionary, second edition). The individual's attitude toward writing plays a vital part in his/her level of involvement with the task.

Research in composition has adequately demonstrated the importance of a positive attitude toward writing in order to compose clearly and competently. Most researchers of student attitudes toward writing, specifically the level of fear involved with it, have focused on the general student audience. These researchers have discovered a strong link between the fear of writing and a particular stylistic pattern (a passive tone and structure to these writings). My research has uncovered similar findings and indicates that the intermediate writer has the most tendency to write in this tenuous style and a tendency to be the most fearful of the task as well.

Steidle's <u>An Investigation of Writing Ability As a Function of Student Attitude: General And Specific</u> states that "a direct linear interdependence between student attitude and composition exists. This suggests that encouraging healthier self-esteem would improve writing ability."[45] Although Steidle's investigation involved some empirical work, he did not use any particular instrument to tap student attitude and thus his research tends to be interpretive rather than statistically based.

Likewise Lederman's "A Comparison of Student Projections; Magic and the Teaching of Writing" (College English, Vol. 34, no. 5) deals with self-concept and the ability to write with confidence. Lederman analyzed 452 papers from three groups of students and based her analysis of the student persona on the writer's theme: what would they choose to be if reincarnated? Lederman discovered a marked trend toward lower, more vulnerable animal choices for the students in the lowest (remedial) group. The advanced group picked the most prestigious and powerful choices (presidents, philosopher, billionaire), and the intermediate picked choices in-between (teacher, explorer, bird). Lederman interpreted this data to show the lack of self-esteem for the students in the lowest group; although she read twice as many papers from this group as from the other two. Although Lederman's research is somewhat haphazard, her comments agree with Steidle's research in that she states "There seems to be a connection between writing and feelings about the self."[46]

Other researchers in composition have become interested in the student and his/her problems with the affective domain of writing. Rose's "Rigid Rules, Inflexible Plans, and the Stifling of Language: A Cognitivist Analysis of Writer's Block" investigates the phenomenon of writer's block as connected to rigidly learned ways of composing and writing. Rose's thesis in this article is that writer's block can be set-up as a side effect of rigidly learned patterns; "my blockers were stymied by rules or plans that were inordinately rigid, inflexible and inappropriate."[47]   Rose agrees that a student's emotional difficulty

with writing, anxiety, fear of evaluation or whatever, can effectively inhibit the student from performing at all. Although Rose has an elegant and thought-provoking thesis, his reliance upon interviewing his students for supportive information tends to jeopardize his findings. His suggestions for curbing the student's writing dysfunction are more pointed and helpful, however. His study, nevertheless, supports the notion that student attitude is an important function of his/her performance.

Daly and Miller's work with writing and apprehension is by far the most thorough and sound in the field of composition. The attitudinal questions appearing on the questionnaire I administered to the intermediate writers were taken from their "Empirical Instrument To Measure Writing Apprehension." This twenty-six item instrument uses a Likert scale to identify the respondent's level of anxiety about writing in general, teacher evaluation and professional evaluation of his/her work.

Daly and Miller constructed and validated this instrument in 1975. In general, they followed up research on apprehension and speech communication and discovered that apprehension of writing paralleled behaviors associated with fear of communicating verbally. For example, both fear of speech and fear of writing resulted in less small group interaction and tended to be associated with individuals with lower self-concepts.[48]

Furthermore, Daly and Miller have conducted several investigations of apprehension and writing: the comparison of high apprehensives with low apprehensives and the effects of high apprehension

upon the individual's behavior in writing courses. "Further Studies on writing Apprehension: SAT scores, Success Expectations, Willingness to Take Advanced Courses and Sex Differences" (Research in the Teaching of English, 1975, Vol. 9) follows up on their development of the empirical instrument to measure writing apprehension. In this study, the researchers discovered several results from their investigation of the differences between high and low apprehensives. High apprehensives, according to this study, tend to enroll in fewer advanced writing courses, had less success in earlier writing classes, were male, and expected to do poorly in any future writing classes. Daly and Miller conclude that "Predispositions are extremely important. No matter how skilled or capable the individual is in writing, if he believes he will do poorly or if he doesn't want to take courses that stress writing then those skills or capabilities matter little."[49]

A further study of the effect of apprehension upon individuals was conducted to determine its bearing upon the message encoded. Daly and Millers' "Apprehension of Writing as a Predictor of Message Encoding" reports the effect of fear or stress upon the resulting message. Working from a study done by Osgood and Walker in which the researchers compared suicide notes to personal letters, Daly and Miller also discovered that individuals with high apprehension of writing encoded significantly less intense messages than did those with low apprehension.

In Daly and Millers' study, 98 undergraduate students were given the Writing Apprehension Measure and then asked to complete a

formulaic message with 10 blank spaces. The subjects then chose from a list of words which had been previously assigned scale values for their intensity. Individuals with high apprehension chose significantly less intense words to complete the given message.[50] Daly and Millers' research of writing apprehension and its effects on the writers and the message has important applications to the research of this study. Specifically, the intermediate style and the intermediate attitudes gleaned from both the questionnaire and the placement essays parallel much of Daly and Millers' findings.

Book's investigation "Some Effects of Apprehension on Writing Performance" also has important bearing on the research in this dissertation study of the intermediate writer. Book analyzed the writing of 180 sophomores, who previously had been identified as either low or high apprehensives. The students were not differentiated in terms of skill levels (as in my study). Book discovered that "written messages produced by high and low apprehensives differ significantly in structure, language and the amount of information conveyed. . . High apprehensives wrote three times fewer words and conveyed 4 1/2 times less information . . . have less confidence in their opinions and judgments and are likely to reduce exposure by revealing less about their views."[51]

Book's description of these high apprehensives sounds very similar to the writing style of the intermediate writer whose writing, as Shaughnessy notes, reflects a flat competence, an utter predictability and a platitudinous tone."[52] Book's study also compares strongly to Hiatt's study of The Way Women Write. In Hiatt's work,

she empirically compared the word choices and writing styles of 100 writers (fifty women and fifty men). Hiatt discovers several notable findings: that women are neither more "hysterical" nor "long-winded" than men, and that women tend to be more conservative and more "balanced" than men in their views of the world.

Hiatt makes the point that women, because of their training and social conditioning, tend to be less assertive and aggressive in communicating their ideas. As Hiatt notes, "It is, in general, a middle-of-the-road style, not given to extremes of length or brevity, not given to extremes of emotion or action, not given to extremes of 'feminine' concerns to the exclusion of 'masculine' concerns."[53]

A woman's fear of being different, of being rejected and ostracized from an already alien "man's world" discourages her from daring or standing out. In this, she fears the consequences of her actions and tries to stay as non-descript as possible. Although Daly and Miller cite that men test more apprehensive than women of writing, they may be analyzing data that would not reveal a woman's true feelings. My data tend to support the notion that women are generally more apprehensive of the communication experience than men. As Hiatt writes, "Why is the way women write more moderate, more consistent and even-handed than the way men write? The chief reason is doubtless that women are a minority group, more likely to conform than to dare . . . they have been told that they should be passive and keep their opinions to themselves."[54]

Ironically, English teachers are both supporters and victims of this language insecurity. Richard Ohmann argues this profound irony

in <u>English in America</u>. Ohmann states that the traditional English
teachers' rigid fixation with rules and correctness made both the
students and the teacher himself/herself afraid to make mistakes in
speech or writing. As a consequence, both avoid communication situa-
tions at all costs. English teachers themselves are often the worst
offenders of the very rules they preach. Ohmann writes:

> English teachers, like their books, do teach
> students that a speaker or writer runs a constant
> risk of betraying through his language some shame-
> ful inferiority . . . These insecurities are
> greatest among the middle and lower middle class
> and among women . . . so the anxiety and the sense
> of linguistic hierarchy they teach to students are
> deeply involved with class and status and are felt
> by English teachers themselves.[55]

This system becomes counterproductive for both teacher and student.
The teacher claims to want individual writing but gets innocuous writing
instead and not because the student is unskilled or openly rebellious.
The student understands the system: English teachers are generally
supporters of the status quo and grammatical correctness at all costs.
Honest writing could get the student into trouble (fail) and thus is a
risk that neither the student nor the teacher intends to take or
foster.

Several articles in composition journals have noted this
phenomenon. Hill's "The Dead Letter Office: Composition Teaching
and The Writing Crisis" (<u>College English</u>, Vol. 39, no. 8) describes
"the higher illiteracy"—language that is empty, impersonal and un-
communicative; it hides more than it says. Bureaucratic memoes are
an example of this inflated language use. Hill argues that our society
encourages impenetrable language as a way to escape/avoid criticism

or attacks by others. Students play this game in order to survive in an academic setting that they perceive as threatening. Hill states:

> A student who had mastered dead-letter writng told
> Degnan that he wouldn't improve his style because
> society really wanted dead letters and so the student
> couldn't afford to stop writing them. This cultural
> tendency . . . can produce over-cautious, stilted,
> awkward and impenetrable language in adults whose
> experiences have led them to think of themselves only
> as examiners or examinees.[56]

Linn's "Psychological Variants of Success: Four In-depth Case Studies of Freshmen in a Composition Course" (College English, Vol. 39, no. 8) describes several college freshmen and the ways they adapt to the freshman composition class. Linn's research technique resembles both Allport's study of Written Composition and Characteristics of Personality and Rose's analysis of writer's block. Linn describes a student whose writing style resembles several case studies in the Allport et al. report. Linn's student, M-- O'Brien, is technically a passing writer but her sentence structure, word choice, and ideas are pedestrian and repetitious. She fits Shaughnessy's description of the intermediate writer, and her inability to risk is a function of her fear of the consequences. In this, she fits with many students whose "anxiety about communication outweighs his projection of gain from the situation."[57] (Daly and Millers' definition of communication apprehension).

Stoen's "Stuttering Pencils" (English Journal, Vol. 65, no. 8) questions the negetavistic approach to teaching writing as being a self-fulfilling prophecy: students are poor writers because teachers expect them to be. The English teacher's constant scrutiny of the every error creates stress that finally produces writer's block.

Stoen states, "if a young child's every utterance were subject to an English teacher's scrutiny before being allowed, would he ever learn to speak? I doubt it!"[58] Stoen compares the Indians' method of dealing with speech problems (they have no word for stuttering) in which they simply recognize all speakers as being competent. Stoen believes that seeing students' halting efforts to compose as being part of a "normal non-fluency" could ease the pressure and bring a genuine delight to the process of learning. Stoen sees the lack of hope as the main problem in the English teaching profession today.

Another study which supports the counter effect of high pressure writing in Bergen's The Causes of Writing Problems in the Army. Bergen discovered a highly muddled, "officialese" language pattern which choked rather than expedited communication between sender and receiver. In questioning the army secretaries responsible for language communications, he noted a trend similar to Ohmann's thesis about English teachers: army managers were the source of most writing pressures. The managers were vague about what they wanted but punitive about what they received. The army writers felt insecure about how and what they should say so they said nothing. Bergen writes, "Army writers feel that managers do not adequately define writing objectives for their subordinates, thus causing a doubt and confusion which results in vague and verbose writing."[59]

"An Interactionist Approach to Advancing Literacy" (Harvard Educational Review, Vol. 47, no. 3) argues that poor writing could be a type of passive resistance to teachers'/managers' inflexible and repressive domination. As Freire noted, poor people respond to

powerlessness through silence and non-participation. Likewise, dis-
enfranchised writers know that silence is safest so they volunteer
nothing (the army experience is the ultimate in losing one's identity
and control). As Greenberg states, "the teacher is the state and tell
them only what they want to hear."[60]

Braddock, Lloyd-Jones and Schoer's <u>Research In Written Composition</u>
propose that one investigate "the sources of fear and resentment of
writing."[61] Several studies have established a definite trend toward
writing apprehension (especially Daly and Miller), though only the
bolder researchers have asked why. Deductive research seems to in-
dicate that English teachers could be a big part of the problem: they
induce fear which stymies writing and communication. Soon a writing
block develops. Ironically, teachers seem to perpetuate the kind of
garbled, unclear writing that they so much want to remedy. The inter-
mediate writer, especially, seems caught up in this absurd game:
avoiding failing and failing to learn at the same time.

6. How This Study Differs From the Foregoing

The research conducted for this study differs from the foregoing
in that it attempts to define the intermediate composition student both
generally and individually. Research in composition has traditionally
analyzed the products of writing rather than its producers or pro-
cesses. This study attempts to note distinctive characteristics of
the intermediate writer who produces the work and how he/she produces
it.

Another feature which distinguishes this study is the analysis of the intermediate's writing style. This study attempts to pinpoint what syntactic features dintinguish the intermediate student from the advanced or basic composition student. A particular stylistic pattern has been previously described by composition researchers but not documented by empirical evidence.

A further distinction of this research is the investigation of the psychological problems hampering the intermediate writer. To this end, the Daly and Miller Writing Apprehension Instrument to Measure was administered to 72 intermediate writers and their responses interpreted on a collective and item-by-item basis. This study looks at any possible relationship between writing anxiety and the student's subsequent style and errors.

Finally, this study differs in that it investigates the intermediate writer both quantitatively and qualitatively. Questionnaires and placement essays were analyzed empirically to establish a general view of this student audience. Three in-depth case studies were also completed to individualize the study's collective findings.

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CHAPTER III

PROCEDURES AND CRITERIA

In analyzing the intermediate students and their needs and performance, this study holistically evaluated the group and the individuals within it. Researchers in composition have formulated some ideas of both basic and advanced students, but the intermediate student is generally seen as lacking in identity. Thus, the criteria for judging this group must both seek out a pattern within the group and a specific profile of some individual group members.

Following the lead of researchers such as Emig and Shaughnessy, the research conducted in this study was based upon an attempt to define the whole intermediate student, both in attitude and in performance. To this end, a questionnaire was distributed which probed the pre-writing behaviors, the global attitudes towards writing in general, and the level of apprehension brought to the task of writing by basic, advanced, and intermediate students. The results were tabulated and analyzed to the level of significance of the findings. The entry placement tests of the intermediate students were then read and analyzed. An initial reading of all the students in the survey was performed, followed by an in-depth probe of the intermediate students specifically. A tentative stylistic analysis was delineated and later validated by a juried evaluation of the papers.

The findings of the questionnaire and the analysis of the place-
ment essays were correlated to the extent that the two were compared
in order to discover any consistent patterns which described the inter-
mediate writer and his/her subsequent style. Specific case studies of
three intermediate students with comparable attitudes and skills but
with differing results in the same course were conducted to fully
understand and define the group and individuals in question. It is
important that this group be as fully analyzed as possible--if only
to shed more light upon the needs of the intermediate student.

Procedures

I.   The Questionnaire

Before the research was conducted at Columbus Technical Institute,
the questionnaire was piloted and tested at Ohio State University during
the Fall Quarter of 1977. Thirty 110 students (advanced), twenty
100.02 students (intermediate), and twenty 100.01 students (basic) were
given the questionnaire, and the results were computer analyzed for
results. During the pilot study, the twenty 100.02 students (inter-
mediates) tested as more apprehensive than the advanced 110 or the
more basic 100.01 Ohio State composition students.

After the findings of the pilot study were studied, the quesion-
naire was distributed at Columbus Technical Institute during the first
week of Autumn Quarter of 1977 to 269 students: 82 advanced, 89
intermediate, and 98 basic composition students. It was important to
probe the students during the first week so as to avoid contamination
of attitudes by later experience within the course given. The

questionnaire sought to discover several facets of the intermediate student. First, pre-writing (Area A) was investigated so as to define as concretely as possible what these students do before writing and the effect of these behaviors upon their finished work. Moreover, this information could be very revealing in that the different patterns expressed when compared to the advanced and basic students could provide information about the intermediate's success or failure in writing clear communication. This section of the questionnaire, Pre-writing activities, focused on two major aspects of the student's performance: lifelong behaviors which affect individual writing performance, and specific activities and attitudes performed before and during the act of composing and writing. Lifelong behaviors investigates familiarity, comfort, and interest in verbal skills, The questions listed below seek to determine verbal patterns performed longitudinally by the intermediate student:

3. I write letters often.

4. I have kept or am keeping a diary.

5. I like to get an idea and just start writing.

6. I avoided writing in high school as much as possible.

10. I always use big words because teachers like them.

12. Grammar problems are usually what hampers my writing.

13. I have written creative writings (poems, stories, etc.).

17. I usually talk over my ideas with someone else before I write them.

20. In general, I dislike writing anything.

21. I usually read only the books that are assigned in school.

23. In general, I have trouble with writing.

Particular pre-writing activities performed before the act of writing were studied--particularly with the idea in mind that the success or failure of resulting work could be connected to the methods the student used before writing. As an example, most composition instructors teach "making outlines" before writing as a means of making the work clearer and more controlled. Do students make outlines and does this activity facilitate their learning to write clearly? As Emig classically demonstrated, information about pre-writing activities by most students and/or writers is limited. The questions listed below seek to determine the amount and the effect of pre-writing activities upon the intermediate writer's subsequent work:

2. I make outlines before I write a paper.

7. I can only write about an assignment if I'm interested in it.

8. I usually try to write the teacher's ideas, even if they're not my own.

9. I think about who will read my papers as I write them.

11. I like to plan my papers as I write them.

14. I usually re-read what I write and correct it as I go along.

15. I usually try to have a main idea in my writing.

16. I usually wait until just before the assignment is due to write my paper.

18. After I've written an assignment the first time, I don't usually make changes in it.

19. I use specific examples when I write.

22. I usually re-write a paper after I've written it once.

The responses to this section of the questionnaire are based on a Likert scale of response but are geared to time and amount as well as degree. It was important to try and determine what patterns existed and could emerge--if only to expand the quality and quantity of information known. The responses were "Never," "Rarely," "Sometimes," "Most of Time," and "Always." As can be seen, these responses are drawn over time so as to gauge the student's specific and global experiences with writing. Although this section of the questionnaire cannot be seen as an instrument, the individualized items are instructive as to individual and group performance.

The second section of the questionnaire seeks to determine the student's generalized notion of the importance of writing to his/her life and its importance to his/her culture as well. The students' global attitudes could have a bearing upon their openness to learning composition and become part of a vested interest the students bring to the task of writing. With these ideas in mind, this section of the questionnaire probes information concerning these philosophical stances (or the lack thereof) toward the importance of writing to communication in the contemporary world. This section of the questionnaire was modeled upon a questionnaire established by Silva who summarized the thrust, import, and content of these questions in this way:

The recognition test included a further set of variables as well:

1. The student's attitude regarding the value of writing generally.

2. The student's evaluation of his own writing.

3. The student's evaluation of his own ideas.

4. The student's interpretation of the process of writing.

5. The student's interpretation of his own specific needs in a writing class.[1]

Further, three attitudes toward writing are evaluated in this section of the questionnaire: (a) a social sense of writing and its importance to culture; (b) a pragmatic use of writing as important to a job or a profession; and (c) a specific application of writing to the student's classroom experience with it. The questions listed below investigate the student's cultural evaluation of writing as an important function of his/her society:

24. Writing is important in learning how to communicate.

27. Language is often used to confuse, baffle, or deceive people.

29. A good writer can think clearly.

30. It doesn't matter how one says it; the message conveyed is most important.

32. A person who can't write clearly doesn't know very much.

Furthermore, a critical aspect of effectively teaching writing to students is the notion that strong writing matters in a job or professional situation. Without a practical application of writing skills, some students do not adequately benefit from writing classes simply because they view writing as obsolete and/or irrelevant to them in their daily lives and futures. Questions seek to answer how much the particular groups of students value writing as an important part of their careers:

25. Writing papers, letters, memos, and other writings
    will be obsolete or unnecessary someday.

26. One needs to know how to write well in order to succeed
    in a career.

31. I don't usually notice how one expresses himself in writing.

33. Most of the concern about good writing is in the schools
    and doesn't affect me very much.

This section of the questionnaire again focuses on the personal views of the students about writing, especially their classroom experiences with it. Although classroom experiences with writing (i.e., apprehension) are measured in the questionnaire's following section, these questions specifically ask the students how they view writing in the class for which they are currently enrolled. The questions listed below seek to determine the approach the student is using for this particular composition class:

28. In general, most people my age have trouble with writing.

34. I know my writing needs improvement, but I don't know
    what it needs specifically.

35. One reason that I have difficulty with writing is that I
    don't have much to say.

36. I think I will.be a much better writer after I finish
    this class.

Thus, the answers could be very telling, both individually and collectively for this study. The responses are set up on a Likert scale--to analyze degree of attitude response.

The third section of the questionnaire are questions used as
an instrument to measure writing apprehension--or the fear of writing.
The section of the questionnaire was constructed and tested by Daly
and Miller for the National Council of Teachers of English in 1975.[2]
As such, the responses are collectively evaluated as a measure of
writing apprehension, as compared to the single item analysis of the
questionnaire's previous two sections. The legitimacy of the total
responses to this part of the questionnaire was further demonstrated
by item analysis which judged its totality of responses. These
questions do, in fact, measure writing apprehension.

Writing apprehension generally describes the fear of the writing
act and its consequences. The infamous "writer's block" which affects
professional writers is related to this phenomenon: the anxious
feeling or dread of writing which can, in fact, "paralyze" the writer
from performing adequately, or from performing at all.

The questions listed on the questionnaire between 37-62 are
measures of the fear of writing and the fear of the consequences of
writing. Twelve of the questions are positively phrased and measure
the writer's sense of involvement and ego identification with the act
of writing successfully. Questions such as "I enjoy writing";
"Handing in a composition makes me feel good"; and "I have no fear of
my writing being evaluated" are geared to testing the person's con-
fidence about writing and his/her sense of accomplishment. Thirteen
of the questions were negatively phrased and measure the degree and
amount of fear connected to the act of writing and composing.
Questions such as "I'm nervous about writing"; "Taking a composition

course is a very frightening experience"; "I avoid writing"; and "I'm
no good at writing" all measure the writer's sense of apprehension
and lack of confidence about writing. These questionnaire items
correlate with the questions from Section B of the questionnaire but
measure the degree of the writer's emotional block against writing
in a clearer and more thorough way. The results of this section also
are extremely vital to the findings of this study. Lunsford[3] pointed
out in her Report on Basic English to the Ohio State English Department,
the grammatical skills of the basic writers were poor, but their
attitudes about learning to write well were positive and optimistic.

Most researchers in composition have formulated some ideas about
students' attitudes toward learning to write, but no solid findings
were set-up to validate these views. Lunsford hypothesized that basic
writers had positive views toward learning to write well, but this
finding was not central to her study nor followed up within it. As
a consequence, most researchers have had impressionistic views about
how students feel about writing but no empirical data to document
these ideas. It is important to document these feelings in an
empirical way.

Intermediate writers seemed to have no acute feelings about nor
difficulties with writing, though their writing was substandard in
expression and content. My pilot study first discovered the trend
among intermediates toward writing apprehension. The subsequent study
at Columbus Technical Institute later validated this finding to a
.07 level of significance. Although all three levels (basic, inter-
mediate, and advanced) tested as apprehensive of writing, the

intermediate had a qualitatively higher level of anxiety about his/ her writing. This discovery makes sense, given the writing and composition course process. Many intermediates fear writing because they have had negative experiences with writing in courses where poor or average grades indicated to them a lack of talent and skill for writing clearly. They also generally face several courses which can further engender negative attitudes. The advanced writer feels more confident, perhaps because of positive feedback or reinforcing courses. He or she has also succeeded in writing, i.e., placed into an advanced class. The basic writer has had little experience with writing and thus has not formulated blocks to learning to write well. Ironically then, they have a greater chance to learn than do the intimidated intermediate students.

The remaining questions on the questionnaire ascertain factual matters concerning the student's experience with writing courses. Three questions are listed which investigate the number of English courses taken in high school; the number of composition courses taken; and the grade received in the last English class. These questions were set-up from the study conducted by Miller of English 110 students during the fall of 1976.

Miller found that while more students had had more courses in English (though not in composition), their writings had not obviously benefited from these courses. Miller interpreted this finding to indicate that these English classes focused on material other than composition skills (such as literature or mass media). Generally,

too, these students received high grades (average of B); their compositions, however, were substandard in grammatical correctness and clarity of thought.

These questions in my study did not glean the same feelings, although the advanced group had had some training and success in composition during high school. The CTI students in my study generally were students who had had little academic preparation and success but were willing to try and develop in spite of these circumstances. It is, therefore, more compelling that the intermediate student tested as significantly apprehensive of writing. For, although most of these students have a willing attitude to learn, they still fear the act and consequences of writing.

The fear of writing for the developing student writer can circumvent even those who have come to school with the most willingness and determination to learn. The final statements on the questionnaire "Any remarks that you would like to make, feel free to write them below" elicited a type of response which reinforces the conclusion that students want to learn writing but feel frightened or stifled about doing so. An intermediate student wrote: "I hope this will tell you something about me so that I can learn to write freely, Thank You." This comment represents the relatively few comments written on the questionnaires. In general, these comments indicated a genuine hope that teachers of composition will learn more about each student's behaviors, habits, and attitudes. The questionnaire seemed to tap a whole range of emotions from the students: fear, frustration, anticipation, anxiety, determination, and hope. As such, the questionnaire

gathered information about the behaviors and attitudes of advanced, intermediate, and basic writers. In doing so, the similarities and differences between the three groups became more apparent and more useful to both composition researchers and teachers. As a group, the intermediate writers became more focused and more known as a particular group of people with problems and possibilities all their own.

II. Placement Essay Analysis

The placement essays were read and analyzed from the three groups: advanced, intermediate, and basic composition students. Using a technique based on Shaughnessy's Errors and Expectations, I read 210 essays (70 basic, 72 intermediate, and 68 advanced, not all essays were located) and looked for stylistic and error patterns which would identify these categories of students.[4] After several holistic and analytic readings of all the essays, I deducted a particular pattern for the intermediate student setting up both descriptive stylistic qualities and particular error types. My evaluation of these patterns as intermediate in character was validated by a juried rating of 60 randomly collected papers (20 from each group). Bill Ellis (Ph.D. in English), Mary McGann (Ph.D. in Humanities - Education), and Marcia Holbrook (M.A. in English) selected to an 89% level those papers which conformed to the intermediate style, basing their decisions upon my criteria. Given the widespread ambiguity usually used in placing students in categories, my technique has a remarkably high uniformity in deciding what determines an intermediate writer. The three evaluators chose these papers out of the sixty based on the criteria listed below.

A. Descriptive Categories

    (1) <u>Style</u>: Tentative and unfocused.

        a. Diction - vague, non-specific, and/or undefined.
The use of the language indicated a submissive posture. Dominant use
of pat phrases and cliches for description and elaboration of ideas
often appeared. The examples below indicate style, use, and type of
word choice generally employed by the intermediate writer:

<u>Pat phrases and cliches</u>:	"today's modern world" "people today" "is the next step" "mean a great deal" "interesting people" "due to the fact that" "you are more than just a number" "learning experience" "further your" "get a good" "different types of people"		

<u>Word choices</u>:	"a lot" "challenging" "you" "today" "various" "nice" "people" "important" "anything"	"everything" "benefit" "things" "factor" "facet" "different" "certain" "person" "interesting" "only"	"it" "experience" "education" "hard" "fun" "very" "great" "is" or "are" "life"

        b. Sentence Structure: Nominalization. Sentences tend
to be simple in structure but often wordy--due to the lack of clarity
about the subject matter and the unfocused word choice. Sentences
generally contain 1 t-unit and often rely on linking verbs for con-
nection. Sentences are often nominalized: the typical position of
the subject is taken over by groups of words (often nominalized verbs)

so that the subject of the sentence becomes cumbersome, though it may be more specific.[5] Stylistically, the nominalization of sentences could be a clever way of evading responsibility for the ideas expressed. The writing also appears formidable--as if one has a great deal to say. Bureaucratic writing relies heavily on nominalizations because there is no clear or obvious subject. By making all the clauses depend on unspecified nouns, and by eliminating particular subjects, the sentence seems to collapse upon itself. Examples follow below:

> "The most important reason for coming is to better myself."

> "The reason why I entered college is that I've been out of school for a few years."

> "Being a medical secretary means not having to work everyday."

> "Entering college will be the subject which I am writing about."

> "It also means that I will be able to do things that a regular secretary wouldn't get to do."

  c. Logic: Closure of ideas is not achieved. Because of unspecified topic sentences, the closure of ideas is murky, hard-to-grasp for the reader. Generally, intermediate writers have a basic idea of what they want to communicate, but the idea is unsynthesized and often undefined. Topic sentences often hinge upon vague, non-specific diction ("important," "a lot," "challenging," "interesting"-- see list under Diction) as the key words of the paper's controlling sentence. If the key words don't define clearly, the resulting topic sentence is dense and vaguely communicated. As Shaughnessy describes it, the intermediate writer has the same kinds of problems other fresh-men have--"the failure to stay with a line of thought, to elaborate or to push into the thick of an idea, where contradictions and real

questions arise," (p. 273).[6] Because the topic sentence is vague, the essay too tends to stay on a general level, avoiding or ignoring the use of specific descriptions or examples.

By taking an unchallenging stand on particular issues, the intermediate writer offends no one--though certainly he/she does not impress the reader to a great degree either. The intermediate's essay tends to get by, thus allowing these writers a way out of a frustrating and potentially dangerous situation (one in which they could "fail"). The following examples demonstrate the intermediate writer's typical topic sentences.

"Why are final examinations so important?"

"Why I decided to go to college is because I need to go."

"I decided to come to college because I hope it will help me make improvements that will better myself."

"People today need to go to college and receive some sort of training."

"I chose the technology I'm enrolling in because of the fact that I discovered I liked working with the functional aspects of technology."

    d. Blurred Idiomatic Use of the Language. Intermediate writers often use prepositions incorrectly or inexactly, frequently using inaccurate prepositions for the objects they modify. Combined with the intermediate's unfocused word choices in his/her sentences, the garbled use of prepositions further accentuates the intermediate's dense and inexact style. Examples follow below: "College educations are heavily stressed upon." "Entering college will be my theme topic on the essay I will be writing." "I may have the experience for working but I need the knowledge for the other aspects."

e. Voice: Grammatical and Rhetorical. The writer's voice in a writing indicates both a grammatical and rhetorical stance toward the topic and the writer's audience. Grammatically, the voice of a sentence depends upon the verb of the sentence: if the subject is performing the action, the voice is "active"; if the subject is acted upon, the voice is "passive." Passive voice is usually associated with a form of the verb "to be" followed by the past participle and the word "by." Rhetorically, the writer's voice is one which has a particular tone (due to word choice, specifics used, level of expression, length, topic and other factors). For example, the "tone" of a writing could be "neutral," "academic," "satirical," "belligerent" and a whole range of emotions and attitudes. Tone is usually designed to act as a particular approach to the writer's audience. Sometimes the tone of a writing is more connected to a non-conscious approach to a topic and audience than a conscious one.

The intermediate writer tends to have both a passive grammatical and rhetorical voice. Grammatically, the intermediate's use of passive voice is probably directly connected to his/her use of nominalizations in his/her sentences. Passive voice may also have a connection to the fear of writing, or a fear of confrontation with the audience, as posited by Leonard Doob in his article "Behavior and Grammatical Style." Doob hypothesizes that passive writers would cooperate more fully by writing more words, by using future tense more frequently, and by referring to themselves fairly often. They would also be more interested in general action than in specifically changing the environment, to abstract less, and of course, to write in the passive rather

than the active mode.[7] Although Doob's experimentation with active and passive writers did not make a completely clear distinction between the two groups, Doob did conclude that "Resorting to the sign test, nevertheless, produced trends which suggest that grammatical style has at least some tenuous connection with personality."

The intermediate writer often employs passive grammatical and logical voice in his/her sentences. The more abstract the topic, the more the student relies upon passive sentences. Passive voice tends to add weight to a sentence without emphasis or responsibility on the part of the writer. The examples below demonstrate the intermediate's use of passive voice in sentences. The sentences below were all written by students who tested as highly apprehensive of writing on the questionnaire:

> "Those ideas of which have to be rehabilitated have to have extensive improvements or are substituted with correct capabilities thereof."

> "Also, that so many things are being offered to me."

> "In today's modern world, the challenges must be met by the average person."

> "To get more progress, education must be sought by the student."

More common to the intermediate writer is the use of the passive rhetorical voice. Using disclaimers, the intermediate writer feels free from the weight of his/her statements. Disclaimers are phrases which absolve the writer of any responsibility for the subsequent statements he or she makes. "I feel," "I think," "in my opinion," "to me," "I believe," "it seems to me," are all disclaiming phrases which allow the writer subjective freedom in the following remarks he or she makes.

The following examples indicate the intermediate's disclaiming voice and were seen most often in students who tested as very apprehensive of writing:

> "I feel that if I can help people in some way that it would mean a great deal to me."

> "In my case, college will further my education plus supply me with the knowledge in the career I choose."

> "It took so long for me to get myself going but I am on my way and there's no turning back."

> "For me college would draw me out of myself."

(2) Error Categories

Style as it applies to the intermediate writer does not necessarily mean "error." Style refers to the individual's method of presenting his/her work through such choices as vocabulary, tone, sentence construction, and specifics. Although Silva discovered in her dissertation that no one generalization described the basic writer's errors, certain specific trends seemed to be apparent. For example, basic writers generally have difficulties with subject/verb agreement whereas intermediates usually do not.

The correcting of errors often takes much of an English teacher's time with a student. If errors could be seen less as a idiosyncratic problem and more as a trend for types of students, then correcting these errors could be done in a more holistic fashion. Specific errors then could be seen as symptoms of a larger problem--rather than as the problem themselves.

With this thinking in mind, I read the 72 intermediate placement essays to ascertain whether the essays indicated particular error

patterns. Although the intermediate writer's errors are generally more esoteric and diffuse than those of the basic writer, certain errors occurred more often than others. Three types of error seemed particularly endemic to the intermediate student writer: shifting of person (pronouns) in a sentence; incorrect punctuation (external); and incomplete or incorrect sentence construction, and all suggested intermediate writing.

    a. Shifting of person in a sentence means mixing first, second, and third person in the use of pronouns within that sentence. Although this "error" is not a major difficulty, shifting of person can be confusing as well as distracting to a reader. Intermediate writers tend to shift person because they are unsure of how the reader will respond. Often the writer will shift because he/she feels that a writer should not write in the first person. Sometimes the writer too will want to distance himself/herself from the topic or make an abstract generalization about the subject. For example, students often write in first person shifting to second ("you") when they are generalizing about the experience.

"Person shift" is very common to student writers and can be helped through instructing the student about his/her audience and building the student's confidence. The examples cited show this type of error in the intermediate student's writing. All examples were taken from the CTI placement essays:

"_I_ need the feeling of satisfaction that _you_ get from college."

"It is important to _me_ to pick a goal and strive for it and never stop to _you_ have successed at it."

"Feeling that there is something more I want to do then just working 8 to 5 in an average job and returning home for the evening to either watching TV or going out with friends with the main adjective to meet someone to meet their dreams."

"Meeting the right people is important if one plans to succeed in their abilities."

"I feel that if I can help people in some way that it would mean a great deal to me."

"College associate's people with wisdom and knowledge and success in finding out what he wants to know."

The intermediate's shift of person often results in a tangled essay that is eroded further by other errors.

b. External punctuation errors. External punctuation errors (comma splices) are also common to the intermediate's work. External punctuation refers to the incorrect use of commas to link two independent clauses (known as common splices). As such, external punctuation errors are related to the intermediate's habit of writing both fragmented and run-on sentences (incorrect sentence construction).

1. Common splices (run-ons). Comma spliced sentences are common to intermediate writers and occur most frequently in my sample on papers belonging to very apprehensive writers. Frequently, a comma spliced sentence (run-on) will be followed by a fragment or a series of fragments. This particular pattern seems to indicate an awareness that some part of the sentence needs punctuating, but the writer doesn't know where. The run-on followed by the fragment also implies that the writer becomes concerned that his sentence is too "long," so he/she just "punctuates." The result is a run-on followed by a fragment. Run-ons generally occur when the writer

becomes overly anxious to explain something. The examples below

demonstrate the comma spliced sentences/run-ons:

> "I have been a housewife and very happy being one but there's
> times when a person haft to make a change, I find myself a
> widow and three boys and I am the head of a household."

> "Each and everyday I want to become more spiritual minded,
> what I mean by that is to always put Christ first."

> "I feel a better education will make me feel more sure of
> myself. After high school I became lazy, I find myself coming
> across things I've forgotten already."

      2. Fragments. Although comma splices are often

seen in intermediate papers, fragments are more typical of an inter-

mediate writer's performance. As stated earlier, often both run-ons

and fragments are seen in the same essay and seem causally related.

Fragmented sentences often make sense and can contribute to the

emphasis of the student's essay. However, the fragment's incomplete

thought also sets-up a lack of clarity for the reader. The inter-

mediate's lack of confidence in his/her writing generally results in

a lack of clarity and coherence in his/her essays. Below are several

examples of fragmented sentences seen on the CTI placement essays

written by the intermediate students there:

> "I decided to come to college because it is time. <u>The right
> time for me, to help me become more whole.</u>"

> "It also means that I will be able to do things that a regular
> secretary wouldn't get to do. <u>Such as, giving shots, taking
> blood pressures, calling and writing out prescriptions.</u>"

> "Going to college I have a good feeling I'm on my way to be-
> comming what I want to be. <u>Know that there is nothing in my
> way to stop me now.</u>"

3. Run-ons followed by fragments. Fragmented sentences often appear in context--that is, after a very long, usually "run-on" type of sentence. This phenomenon suggests that the intermediate writer is "editing" his/her work from a sketchy understanding that some punctuation is needed and that the previous sentence is "too long." The intermediate writer generally lacks the knowledge or the confidence to write complicated, compound sentences; thus, his/her writing will often have a vacuous, uneven quality.

After courses in composition writing, intermediate writers often start to use both compound sentences and semi-colons more frequently. Although using such structures does not mean the student is a "better" writer, the student's use of them indicates a more sophisticated notion of language use. Below are several sentences illustrating the run-on followed by a fragment often seen in intermediate writing. These examples were taken from the CTI placement essays:

> "I decided I wanted something different I wanted a career! Not somewhere that you think of as just a place to work but a place where I would enjoy."

> "I think meeting different types of people especially since I am from a country school where everyone seems to be interested in the same things, farming and the opposite sex. Which are alright but their are many other things to do and people to meet."

> "My junior year in high school, I decided to get a job at a nursing home, so I would see if this is really what I want to do the rest of my life. See if I could manage to work with sick people."

Placement Essay Analysis Correlated with Individual Apprehension Scores

After polling the intermediate students' attitudes via my quesionnarie and analyzing their placement essays according to stylistic

considerations and error types, I further divided the intermediate
category into three groups according to the degree their essays con-
formed to the intermediate pattern: True Intermediate, Moderate -
Intermediate, and Intermediate - Advanced. Knowing that the apprehen-
sion scores of the intermediate category were significant to an .07
level when compared to the basic and advanced groups, I was curious to
know whether there was some relationship between a student's level of
apprehension and his/her subsequent style and errors, i.e., the
intermediate style.

The scoring of the apprehension is such that a "5" on the 26
questions on the Writing Apprehension Instrument indicates the student's
confidence or a low degree of apprehension. A scoring of "1" indicates
no confidence or a high degree of apprehension. A perfect score of
"5" on all questions would amount to a "130" score on the questionnaire,
and an answering of "1" on all questions would amount to a "26."

"True Intermediates" were placed into the sub-group if the
student essay showed three or more descriptive categories and at least
one error type. "Moderate - Intermediate" were placed into the sub-
group if the student essays showed two descriptive categories and at
least one error type. The "Intermediate" - Advanced" have one
descriptive category and one or fewer error types.

The "True Intermediate" category had 37 students placed within
it, according to the above criteria; this number is a little more than
50% of the entire 72 intermediate student essays that I read. Of
these 37, thirteen students scored very high on the Apprehension
Instrument: below 70; and the greatest apprehension level was a "50"

in this group. The average apprehension score of the entire group was 72.081. These findings seemed to validate that the fear of writing definitely led to certain stylistic patterns in the students' essays. This finding further suggests that emotional blocks can stymie, if not stop, written communication.

"Moderate - Intermediate" showed a similar pattern to the "True Intermediates" in that they demonstrated two descriptive categories and at least one error type. Their essays were generally longer, with more specific examples and personal voice indicated. Twenty-four students were categorized as moderately intermediate by this process (one-third of the entire 72 students in the sample). Of these 24, four students scored 70 or below on the Writing Apprehension Instrument; the greatest apprehension score in this group was a "51." The average apprehension score of this group was 87.333. These findings further indicate that confidence has a positive effect on a student writer's success in writing, as posited earlier in this study.

"Intermediate - Advanced" students were easily separated; their essays were lengthy, usually on sophisticated urban and political topics with concrete examples used for support. Intermediate - Advanced have no more than one descriptive category and one or fewer error types. Eleven students were placed in this group out of the 72 essays read, or a 15.2%. No students score "70" or below on apprehension in this group; the lowest apprehension score was a "74." The average apprehension score of this group was a 95.272. This entire process was a convincing and reinforcing one in that it further validated the idea that anxiety could negatively influence (and

alternately, that confidence could positively support) the tangible style of a student's essay. This correlation, which statistically agrees with the holistic evaluations made of the placement essays, then leads to the question of how anxiety could affect individual performance, style, and voice in writing.

Case Studies

Working with large groups of students leads to certain conclusions about the mass in general, but research must also analyze the individual to fully comprehend the issues involved. My research has followed the traditional pattern of using questionnaires and analyzing essays, but a more in-depth work and knowledge of the intermediate student is needed. Thus, case studies or certain individuals are needed to add a profundity to the discoveries made in the other areas of research.

Case studies extend farther than statistics and information; they are real people for whom the study was conducted. Thus, analyzing these people adds clarity and depth to research and, in the final stages, tailors the ideas within the study to the situation as it really exists.

Case studies investigate particular people within the sample to see how those individuals fit the theory and how they differ from the theory and from each other. In composition research, Emig conducted a significant research study, The Composing Process of Twelfth Graders,[8] primarily through the case study method. Her study established the case study method as a viable source of information for

composition researchers, who earlier had depended primarily on quantitative research. Kellogg, Hunt, and O'Dell were thus limited in the interpretation of their empirical findings. Case studies complete the process of learning how and why students write.

The case studies in my particular dissertation are absolutely vital to its research and philosophy. As stated earlier, the intermediate student has been ignored and bypassed as uninteresting or unknowable. Giving the intermediate writer an identity is the primary purpose of this study so that better teaching and communication will result. By focusing on particular individuals, the study can clearly describe and profoundly understand the people and problems involved. Case studies can add the in-depth knowledge necessary to do this.

I have chosen three individuals as case studies for this dissertation. All three were analyzed as "True Intermediate" with significant levels of writing apprehension; student A scored 50, student B scored 69, and student C scored 55 on the Writing Apprehension Instrument. All three students underwent the same testing procedure with the placement essays and final examinations. Each has filled out my questionnaire as to his/her writing habits, global attitudes, and level of writing apprehension. All three had different instructors and ended up with significantly different grades.

This study intends to discover the level of similarities and differences that distinguish these students by analyzing their personal attitudes and essays in-depth in order to analyze the grammatical and linguistic features of their writing. Features measured will be how the writings indicate the intermediate style previously described

in this dissertation. Personal attitudes will be gleaned from both the questionnaire and from contacting their former instructors, all of whom are still connected with the Columbus Technical Institute.

The research that I have conducted for my study of the intermediate student writer has been varied and thorough. It is important to analyze these students as fully as possible, if only to dispel the idea that no real or significant concerns exist for them as members of a group or as individuals themselves.

The research for this study was conducted through questionnaires, placement analyses, and case studies, and has developed and thereby enriched the field of composition.

NOTES FOR CHAPTER III

[1]Clare Silva, "A Comparative Study of the Needs and Concepts of Individual Students in a Post-Secondary Remedial Writing Program," Diss. Ohio State University, 1977, p. 47.

[2]John A. Daly and Michael D. Miller, "The Empirical Development of an Instrument to Measure Writing Apprehension." Research in the Teaching of English, Vol. 9, no. 3. Winter 1975. (Bulletin of the NCTE). Urbana, Illinois, pp., 247-255.

[3]Andrea Lunsford, "Remedial English: A Descriptive and Evaluative Report," Department of English, The Ohio State University, 1976: Columbus, Ohio (typewritten), p. 7.

[4]Personal interview with Lorita Langdon, Director of the Communication Skills Department, Columbus Technical Institute, Columbus, Ohio: Fall 1977. The topics given for the placement essays were:
1) I chose to attend Columbus Technical Institute because_____;
2) I chose the technology I am enrolling in because_____;
3) The historical event I feel has had the most impact on American society today is/was_____. Ms. Langdon noted that these topics had been validated through repeated testing since 1971 and had been based upon topics established at The Ohio State University English Department.

[5]Robert E. Lees, The Grammar of English Nominalization (Bloomington, Indiana, 1968), p. xviii. Lees writes, "When we examine the internal structure of more complex nominals, we see that it usually incorporates the major relations found in whole sentences. That is, within the complex subject of a sentence, for example, we might find the transformed subject, verb and object of an underlying sentence."

[6]Mina Shaughnessy, Errors And Expectations (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), p. 273.

[7]Leonard Doob, "Behavior and Grammatical Style," Journal of Psychology, 1958, 50, pp. 398-400.

[8]Janet Emig, The Composing Processes of Twelfth Graders (Urbana: NCTE, Research Report, no. 13, 1971). Professor Emig evaluated the writings of eight twelfth graders through audio tapes of their thought processes while composing ideas for their essays. This type of student-centered research had added a more humane and personal direction to research about student performance in written composition.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

I.   The Questionnaire

As stated in Chapter III, the questionnaire probed three general areas: Pre-writing and composing activities; societal attitudes toward written communication; and the level of anxiety affecting the students' written performance. All three areas were probed of the basic, intermediate and advanced composition students enrolled at Columbus Technical Institute, Fall 1977, with the main research emphasis directed toward discovering particular phenomena affecting the intermediate writer's methods, skills, and attitudes.

The questionnaire's initial questions probe the pre-writing attitudes and methods of the students with the main purpose of discovering whether differences in these areas could account for the success or failure of a particular group's written performance. Further, if specific trends toward preparing for and writing compositions were known to teachers of composition then the teachers · could better tailor their classes for these particular writers and their particular needs. In the pre-writing portion of the questionnaire (questions 1-23), the questions have been further divided into two groups: lifelong behaviors and personal composing habits.

Pre-writing: lifelong behaviors

Success in communication is a longitudinal experience, extending from listening and talking to more literary activities such as writing personal letters to composing creative writings such as poems or stories. Generally, a proficient writer learns to communicate through extensive experiences with the language; writing generally does not exist as an isolated activity from the mainstream of other social interaction. This section of the questionnaire seeks out these activities of the basic, intermediate, and advanced students and in what qualitative ways they differ.

TABLE I: PRE-WRITING--LIFELONG BEHAVIORS: BASIC, INTERMEDIATE AND ADVANCED STUDENTS

QUESTIONS	BASIC	INTERMEDIATE	ADVANCED	ANSWERS
QUESTION #3: I write letters often	36.7	41.6	36.6	Rare
QUESTION #4: I keep or have kept a diary	70.0	77.0	66.0	Never or rare
QUESTION #12: Grammar hampers writing	11.2	18.0	3.7	Always or most times
QUESTION #13: Write creatively	54.1	58.4	30.5	Never or rare
QUESTION #17: Talk to others about writing	48.0	57.3	47.6	Never or rare
QUESTION #23: Trouble with writing	37.6	42.7	28.0	Always or most times
QUESTION #20 Dislike writing	22.0	26.0	21.0	Always or most times
QUESTION #21 Read only school books	4.1	10.0	4.9	Always

The intermediates show less involvement with social interaction through written communication, more alienated from task of writing.

Although the findings in this section were not absolute, one trend seemed to stand out as relevant to the intermediate student. The intermediate writer seemed more disconnected and alienated from written communication as social interaction than the basic or advanced writer. Further, this alienation spilled over into particular dissatisfaction with school experiences. (See Table I)

Responding to Question #3, "I write letters often," 41.6% of the intermediate responded that they "rarely" did so, in comparison to the almost equivalent responses of the basic students (36.7%) and the advanced (36.6%). Fewer "sometime" wrote letters as well (21.3%) as compared to the basic (32.7%) and the advanced (28%). Fewer intermediate students wrote creative writings (Question #13). Thirty-one and one half percent of the intermediates "never" wrote creative writings as compared to the basic (24.5%) and the advanced (14.6%) who never did. Moreover, 58.4% of the intermediates rarely wrote creatively as contrasted to 54% of the basic students and 30.5 of the advanced.

Further, fewer intermediates wanted to talk to others about their ideas before writing them (Question #17). 57.3% never or rarely talked to others before writing while 48% of the basic never or rarely did so and 47% of the advanced responded in the same manner.

Some intermediates seemed to indicate a greater alienation from the intellectual process of written communication, especially in the academic context. More intermediates agreed that "in general, I dislike writing anything" (Question #20). Twenty-six percent responded

that they always or most of the time disliked writing as compared to 22% of the basics and 21% of the advanced.

Many intermediates also tended to read only those books assigned in school (Question #21). Ten percent of the middle group agreed that this was "always" the case as contrasted to 4.1% of the basics and 4.9% of the advanced.

Moreover, more intermediates perceive writing as troublesome. Although more basic students always experience "trouble with writing" (Question #23), more intermediates have trouble with writing "most of the time." 13.3% of the basics "always" have trouble, compared to 9% of the intermediates and 2.4% of the advanced. But 33.7% of the intermediates have trouble most of the time as contrasted to 24.5% of the basics and 25.6% of the advanced. Intermediates also believed that "grammar problems usually hampered their writing" (Question #12). Eighteen percent responded that this was "always the case" as compared to 11.2% of the basic students and 3.7% of the advanced respondents.

Personal Composing Habits

The psychology behind a successful piece of writing is complicated and diffuse, thus making research in written composition challenging and difficult. Thus, probing what phenomena affect and determine success in writing must investigate several facets of the composing process. Section I of my writing questionnaire singles out the pre-writing attitudes and activities of the intermediate writer when he/she faces a writing project. Besides a type of training and

mental outlook, the intermediate writer also follows certain steps in composing a piece of writing.

Such activities as "outlines" and "thesis statements" are the stock and trade of the English teacher's training of students. But are these methods successful--or even used?

Janet Emig first asked this type of question in The Composing Process of Twelfth Graders whereupon she analyzed the verbal mechanisms of several twelfth graders as they orally organized their ideas for writing. Emig posited that such studies of pre-writing behaviors should extend to particular groups, such as high creatives or students with high IQ's. As she states:

> Do high creatives follow a composing process
> that is telescoped or transmogrified when com-
> pared with the composing process of, say, students
> with high IQ's or students with low creative
> ability? Is there a correlation between a certain
> personality and a certain composing process profile:
> for example, is there a high positive correlation[1]
> between ego strength and persistence in revising?

Stimulated by Emig's thesis that inquiry into pre-writing activities could better train composition teachers, I investigated the pre-writing of a particular group, the intermediate writers. The questions investigate particular pre-writing habits and writing techniques that the three groups used when completing a writing assignment, with the particular research emphasis directed toward the intermediate writer.

TABLE II: PERSONAL COMPOSING HABITS OF BASIC,
INTERMEDIATE AND ADVANCED STUDENTS

QUESTION	BASIC	INTERMEDIATE	ADVANCED	ANSWERS
QUESTION #2: I make outlines before writing	12.2	10.1	18.3	Always
QUESTION #11: I like to plan my papers as I write them	16.0	15.0	19.0	Never
QUESTION #15: I have a main idea	28.0	31.0	38.0	Always
QUESTION #16: I wait until just before the assignment is due to start it	6.0	2.2	1.2	Always
QUESTION #19: I use specific examples when I write	19.0	20.0	27.0	Always or most times

Highest percentage of advanced writers lead one to belive that they
follow patterns traditionally slated toward successful writing.

The findings in this section seemed to divide into two major conclusions. First, that the success of a particular piece of writing seemed connected to following the classical methods of composing, such as outlining and revising. (If one can assume that the advanced writer's methods would, on the whole, be more successful than those of the basic or intermediate groups). The second conclusion bears out the findings of the lifelong behaviorial questions of the preceding section: that some intermediate writers appear more alienated and estranged than either the advanced or basic writing student.

Question #2 straightforwardly asks whether students make outlines before writing a paper. Given McLuhan's linear analysis of what writing does and how it is achieved, making outlines could produce a more uniform piece of writing. 18.3% of the advanced group responded that they "always" use outlines as compared to 12..2% of the basic and 10.1% of the intermediate groups. Moreover, 30.7% of the advanced responded that they "never" or "rarely" used outlines as contrasted to 41.3% of the basic and 33.7% of the intermediate. The largest response of the intermediates came under "sometimes," (34.8%)--which is not surprising given the general apathy demonstrated by this group on other questions in the questionnaire.

"I like to plan my papers as I write them" (Question 11) corresponds to the outlining probe of question 2. The findings are similar: 19% of the advanced students responded that they never or rarely do this, whereas 16% of the basic answered the same and 15% of the intermediates. Correspondingly, 13% of the basic students said

they always planned as they wrote as compared to 12% of the inter-
mediates and 10% of the advanced students.

Having a "main idea" in a paper is a particular lesson taught
by composition teachers, usually translated as the "thesis statement."
Again, the linear quality of writing often demands such a close-knit
purpose. Question 15, "I usually try to have a main idea in my
writing," probes the perceived uniformity of the students' work. The
resulting answers corresponded to the group's scholastic success level:
38% of the advanced students said they "always" had a main idea con-
trasted to 28% of the basic students and 31% of the intermediates.
Moreover, 1.2% of the advanced responded that they "never" or "rarely"
had a main idea as compared to 4% of the intermediates and 5.5% of the
basic students questioned. None of the advanced responded that they
"never" tried to have a main idea in their writing.

Question 19, "I use specific examples when I write," correlates
with question 15 in that it fits the general formula for successful
writing that composition teachers impress upon their students. Again,
the responses fell along the particular lines of success in school as
demonstrated by the three groups: 27% of the advanced students re-
sponded that this was "always" or "most times" the case as compared
to 19% of the basics and 20% of the intermediates. Surprisingly, none
of the intermediates answered that they "always" use specific examples
when they write, a finding that I cannot interpret clearly. It could
be a form of passive resistance on the student's part, to the process
of writing or to the questionnaire itself. If so, this finding would

agree with the general level of estrangement demonstrated by intermediates on other questions.

Again, the findings on this question were consistent with traditional writing patterns: 11% of the advanced students answered that they "never" or "rarely" used examples, compared to 26% of the basic students and 21% of the intermediates. Previous instruction in composition seems to account for this phenomenon: 33% of the advanced students had taken one course of composition before the questionnaire compared to 20% of the basic students and 23% of the intermediates. Thus, the advanced students would realize its audience's expectations (teachers) and be more able to fulfill them.

Another habit which bodes general confusion to the writing process is waiting until the last few hours to finish an assignment. This procrastination is almost endemic to the writing process, but it is a habit that English teachers have continually preached against. Question 16, "I usually wait until just before the assignment is due to write my paper," reaped predictive results; the basic students generally waited the longest while the advanced students rarely did. Thus, 6.1% of the basic students always waited the longest to write their papers whereas 1.2% of the advanced students did and 2.2% of the intermediates followed suit.

Although the particular techniques used in preparing papers were interesting, the attitudes brought to these tasks were more provocative. Several of these technical questions produced results which indicated a level of estrangement on the part of the intermediate student. Question 8, "I usually try to write the teacher's ideas,

even if they're not my own" seemed most reflective of this attitude. Thus, 4.5% of the intermediates responded that this was "always" the case, compared to the more comparable 2.0% of the basic students and 2.4% of the advanced. And 11% of the intermediates said this was the case "most times" as compared to 9% of the basic and 8% of the advanced.

A timidity on the part of the intermediate writer ties into his/ her subsequent disenchantment with the writing process. Several questions and their responses seemed to glean the intermediate's caution with writing as a potentially dangerous activity. Question 1, "I take many hours to write anything, especially school assignments," gathered the intermediate conservative response: 12.4% of the intermediates said this was "always" the case compared to 8.2% of the basic students and 0% of the advanced. Three percent of the intermediates answered that this deliberation was "never" the case compared to the less serious 6% of the basics and the more concerned 0% of the advanced.

Question 18, "After I've written an assignment the first time, I don't usually make changes in it," also produced similar results. Thirteen percent of the intermediates said this was "never" the case while 7% of the basics and 8% of the advanced students agreed. Generally, 54% (over half) of the intermediates said "never" or "rarely" while 35% of the basics and 44% of the advanced responded in like manner. Some intermediates seemed most concerned about tinkering with their papers until they were acceptable.

TABLE III: PRE-WRITING ACTIVITIES OF BASIC, INTERMEDIATE, AND ADVANCED STUDENTS

QUESTIONS	BASIC	INTERMEDIATE	ADVANCED	ANSWERS
QUESTION #8: I usually try to write teacher's ideas, even if they are not my own	11.0	15.5	10.4	Always or most times
QUESTION #1: I take many hours to write, especially school assignments	8.2	12.4	0.0	Always
QUESTION #9: I think about who will read my papers as I write them	46.0	36.0	43.0	Always or most times
QUESTION #18: After I've written an assignment, I don't make changes in it	35.0	54.0	44.0	Never or rarely

Other Pre-writing Tasks Which Exhibit Intermediate's Lack of Security With Task of Writing.

This type of concern about writing and response from the reader could account for the following questions' results. Question 9, "I think about who will read my papers as I write them," was designed to tap the student's level of audience awareness. As such, the intermediate student responded as the least sensitive to the audience, consciously or unconsciously: 17% of the intermediates said they "never" thought about their reader, compared to 9% of the advanced and 14% of the basic writers. The intermediate's reactions seem to convey a sense of apartness from their readers, and this reaction could be translated as a type of resistance on their part. Again, these responses are not necessarily absolute but the general consistency of the intermediate's insecure attitude seems telling.

Global Attitudes

Part II of the questionnaire (questions 24-36) probes the students' global attitudes toward writing as a valuable method of communicating in society. These questions were based on Silva's study, A Comparative Study of the Needs and Concepts of Individual Students In A Post-Secondary Remedial Writing Program,[2] and in general provide a more in-depth analysis of what attitudes these students hold toward the task of writing successfully.

Questions 24, 25, 29, and 32 generally investigate what students perceive about the act of writing in society--its import, its use, its function and its meaning. Responding negatively to these questions would imply a sense of frustration on the student's part. For example, more intermediates agreed and strongly agreed (15.7%) that "Writing

TABLE IV: GLOBAL ATTITUDES OF BASIC, INTERMEDIATE,
AND ADVANCED STUDENTS

QUESTIONS	BASIC	INTERMEDIATE	ADVANCED	ANSWERS
QUESTION #24: Writing is important to learning how to communicate	91.0	87.0	92.0	Strongly agree or agree
QUESTION #25: Writing papers, letters, memos, and other writings will be obsolete or unnecessary someday	12.2	16.0	8.5	Strongly agree or agree
QUESTION #29: A good writer can think clearly	19.3	26.9	15.9	Strongly disagree or disagree
QUESTION #32: A person who can't write clearly doesn't know very very much	86.8	95.9	91.0	Strongly disagree or disagree

Intermediates seem less convinced and more separated from writing as an important social skill or contribution.

papers, letters, memos and other writings will be obsolete or un-
necessary someday as opposed to the advanced (8.5%) and the basic
students (12.2%). The intermediates also disagreed most (and agreed
least) that "A good writer can think clearly." Intermediates re-
ponded most negatively (26.9%) as compared to the advanced (15.8%)
and the basic (19.3%).

Chart IV lists the intermediates' reactions to this and other
global questions and shows graphically the level of estrangement some
intermediates feel in reaction to written communication in society.

Writing Apprehension

Part III of the questionnaire (questions 37-62) investigates the
level of ear or apprehension of the writing that the students hold.
Further, these questions form an instrument which gauges the depth of
writing apprehension as designed by James Daly and Michael D. Miller
for the National Council of Teachers of English in 1975.[3] This section
of the questionnaire probes more closely into the student's private
attitudes toward the skill and task of writing both individually and
as a group. Fear of writing can severely block communication and as
such forms an important facet to this study's research--trying to mea-
sure and document the criteria which affect the intermediate student's
attitudes and performance.

In my pilot test of this questionnaire given to 50 Ohio State
students during the fall of 1977, I discovered a strong level of writ-
ing apprehension affecting the intermediate students' attitudes. This
finding was statistically validated in my CTI study through the
Scheffe procedure to a .07 level.

As an instrument, these questions pinpoint the level of fear that students feel toward writing. These feelings are vital because writing is as personal as it is a skill: one's own identity is expressed through his/her writing, if only by the types of words chosen to describe thoughts and experiences. All three groups demonstrated a significant level of fear; no group felt entirely comfortable with the task of writing. Intermediates displayed the most fear to a .07 level of significance as compared to the basic and advanced students in the same study.

Analyzing these questions on a single item basis, I discovered that the intermediate students exhibited differences from the other two groups on 15 of the 25 questions on the instrument, or on 60% of the items posed.

The intermediates displayed particular differences on several questions which break down into questions of two types: questions which analyze the actual fear of writing and questions which evaluate the level of gratification the student receives from communicating his/ her ideas through the written word. Of the two groups, six of the questions the intermediates showed most differences on were items which measure the fear of writing. The other nine items evaluate the student's personal belief in writing as a skill he/she wishes to learn and is willing to work hard at in order to know.

Of the six questions which probe the writer's fear, three of these are connected to the fear of being evaluated. Intermediates seem fearful of being judged by teachers and other evaluators. The intermediates' avoidance of writing seems very much connected to the

findings of the questionnaire's previous two sections. In question 38, "I have no fear of my writing being evaluated," 10.1% of the intermediates strongly disagreed with this statement as compared to 3.7% of the advanced students and 3.1% of the basic who strongly disagreed. Further, fewer intermediates agreed and strongly agreed that they had no fear: 49.6% of the intermediates responded positively as compared to 53.6% of the advanced and 54.1% of the basic students.

Question 40, "I am afraid of essays when I know they will be evaluated," rephrases the statement of Question 38 with a counter emphasis. Again, the intermediates responded with the most fear of being evaluated: 10.1% of the intermediates strongly agreed that they feared essays when they were evaluated as compared to 6.1% of the advanced and 5.1% of the basic students questioned. Fewer intermediates disagreed and strongly disagreed as well; 43.8% of the intermediates responded positively, compared to 51% of the advanced and 48% of the basic students.

Some intermediates also had negative expectations about their specific performances on papers and in the classroom. On question 58, "When I hand in a composition. I know I'm going to do poorly," 16.8% of the intermediates strongly agreed and agreed with this; 7.3% of the advanced answered in like manner and 14.3% of the basic students responded thus. Question 55, "I expect to do poorly in composition classes even before I enter then," is a revealing question. Of the intermediate students polled, 14.6% agreed and strongly agreed that they expected to do poorly in these classes even before they entered them; 7.3% of the advanced students and 13% of the basic agreed.

Seemingly, many intermediate students have less hope that writing can do much for them or that writing classes will help them.

Besides the fear of being evaluated, some intermediates fear the act of writing specifically because they feel frustrated in being unable to produce it exactly. Questions 47 and 52 both measure the writer's ability to write clearly and his/her confidence in this ability. Question 47, "I feel confident in my ability to clearly express my ideas in writing," engendered a particular intermediate response; 41.6% strongly disagreed and disagreed with this statement as compared to 22% of the advanced respondents and 31.6% of the basic. Moreover, 10.1% of the intermediates strongly disagreed.

Question 52 rephrased this statement in a more gentle way; "I never seem able to write down my ideas clearly." Again, the intermediate response was distinctive: 46.1% strongly agreed and agreed (nearly half). This compares to 35.4% of the advanced who felt this way and 42% of the basic students. None of the intermediates strongly disagreed that they were never able to write down thoughts clearly.

Finally, more intermediates agreed that "Taking a composition course is a very frightening experience" (Question 41). Many have already taken such a course and seem to question its value to them and are clear about the threat of evaluation. Thus, 29.2% of the middle group agreed and strongly agreed that "taking a composition course is frightening" as compared to 22% of the upper group and 24% of the lower. Of the intermediates, 9% strongly agreed that this was the case as compared to 3.7% of the advanced and 2% of the basic. In
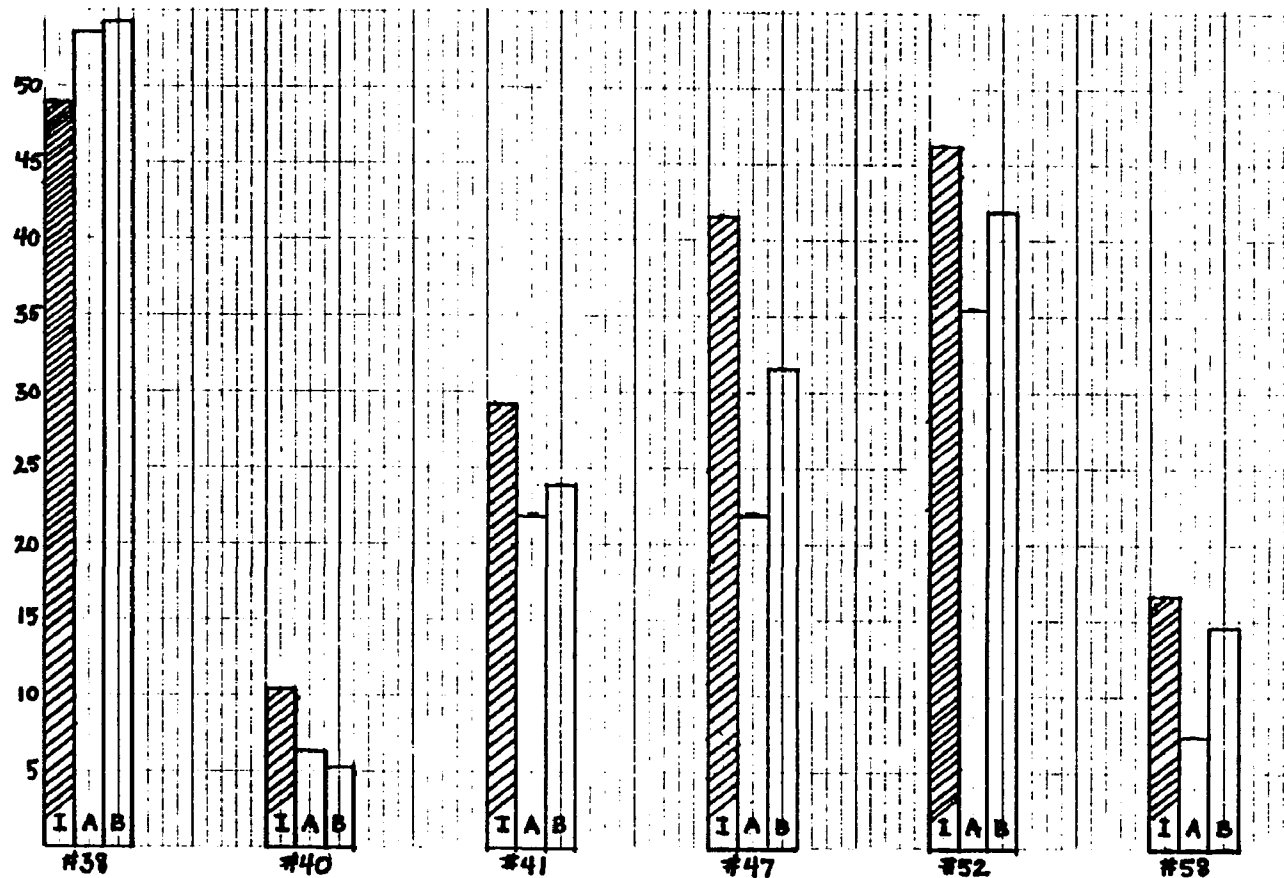
Figure I: Intermediates' Percent of Agreement Among Groups for Items Measuring Fear of Writing and Evaluation

QUESTIONS:
38. I have no fear of my writing being evaluated.
40. I am afraid of writing essays when I know they will be evaluated.
41. Taking a composition course is a very frightening experience.
47. I don't feel confident in my ability to write clearly.
52. I never seem able to write down my ideas clearly.
58. When I hand in a composition, I know I will do poorly.

I = Intermediates
A = Advanced
B = Basic.

general, in this study, at least 10% of the intermediates responded very strongly that writing was a fearful and frustrating experience for them.

The following nine items are notably different from the questions which elicit fear or lack of confidence from the respondent, as in the previous six questions discussed. These questions probe the person's feelings of gratification when engaged in the task of writing. As Norman Vincent Peale has stated, the power of positive thinking can help transform failure or insecurity into success. These questions seem designed to tap the respondent's belief in the process and product of writing.

Questions 45, 48, and 56 all ask whether the respondent wishes to share his/her writings with others. As in section I of the question-naire, "I usually talk over my ideas with someone else before I write them," some intermediates prefer not to. Question 45, "I would enjoy submitting my writing to magazines for evaluation and publication," seems to test the respondent's pride in his/her work (would like others to read and evaluate his/her work). More intermediates strongly dis-agreed and disagreed with this idea. In general, the intermediates seem least convinced that writing holds very positive experiences for them. Further, they seem less likely to share their writings with others, engage in public written activities or to believe these activities are worthwhile. The questionnaire's previous two sections (pre-writing activities and global attitudes) indicated that for some intermediates the level of isolation and estrangement was greater than

that of the other two groups. The writing apprehension instrument seems to have tapped a similar response. More than half (56.7%) responded negatively as compared to 48% of the advanced and 45.9% of the basic writers. Almost 25% alone of the intermediates strongly disagreed with being evaluated (as compared to 15.9% of the advanced and 14.3% of the basic). Again, some intermediates did not want to be evaluated by authorities.

Many intermediates do not want friends to read what they have written, either. Question 48, "I like to have my friends read what I have written," produced strongly negative responses from the intermediates: 49.4% strongly disagreed and disagreed, as contrasted to 22% of the advanced and 24.5% of the basic students polled. Moreover, fewer intermediates agreed to have friends read their work; 26.9% agreed as contrasted to 47.6% of the advanced and 39.8% of the basic students.

Some intermediates don't want to discuss their writing with others as well. As section I of the questionnaire demonstrated, many intermediates are least engaged in language activities in a public or private manner. Question 56, "Discussing my writing with others is an enjoyable experience," produced these responses: 24.7% of the intermediates disagreed and strongly disagreed with this idea; 19.5% of the advanced students responded in like manner and 18.3% of the basics. Again, fewer intermediates wanted to discuss their writings. Twenty-eight percent of the intermediates agreed (with 2.2% strongly agreeing) as contrasted to 42.7% of the advanced (6.1 strongly agreed)

and 4.9% of the basic (10.2% strongly agreed). The threat of evalua-

tion seems especially frightening to them.

Fewer intermediate students seemed very captivated or enthu-

siastic about writing. These questions seemed to elicit less personal

as well as public enthusiasm for writing. As the pre-writing segment

of the questionnaire demonstrated, fewer intermediates wrote diaries,

letters, or creative writings. Writing seemed to hold less personal

satisfaction for them.

The following items on the apprehension questionnaire appeared

to produce similar reactions. Fewer intermediates "look forward to

writing down" their ideas (Question 39): 31.5% of the intermediates

disagreed and strongly disagreed, as contrasted to the similar 19.5%

of the advanced and 19.4% of the basic reactions. Moreover, fewer

intermediates agreed (39.3%) as compared to (46.3%) of the advanced

and (54.1) of the basic students.

Question 46, "I like to write my ideas down," provoked a similar

response; 31.5% of the intermediates disagreed and strongly disagreed

as compared to 22% of the advanced and 16.3% of the basic. Again,

fewer agreed (39.4%) as compared to the more positive advanced (54.9%)

and basic (59.1%).

Some intermediates denied that writing could be a satisfying,

even "fun" experience. The following questions all include words which

describe writing as an enjoyable and positive activity. Some inter-

mediates were most definitive in disagreeing with these statements.

Question 51, "I enjoy writing," straightforwardly sets forth this idea.

Thirty percent of the intermediates disagreed and strongly disagreed,

as compared to 23.2% of the advanced and 25.5% of the basic students.
Fewer intermediates thought writing was enjoyable (39.4%) as compared
to 55.1% of the advanced and 46.9% of the basic respondents.

Question 53, "Writing is a lot of fun," also attempts to present
writing as a happy and enjoyable experience. Thus, 31.5% of the inter-
mediates disagreed, along with 25.7% of the advanced and 27.5% of the
basic writers. Fewer intermediates thought positively (37%) as com-
pared to the more optimistic 43.9% of the advanced and 47.9% of the
basic writers.

Fewer intermediates "liked seeing their ideas on paper"
(Question 54) or agreed that "handing in a composition makes them feel
good" (Question 42). Twenty percent of the intermediates disagreed
that they liked seeing their ideas on paper; 9.8% of the advanced
denied this statement, and 10.2% of the basic students followed suit.
Significantly fewer intermediates admitted to liking their ideas on
paper (45%) as contrasted to 63.4% of the advanced and 64.3% of the
basic students.

Many intermediates generally viewed the experience of writing
as an unhappy experience. Fewer intermediates agreed and strongly
agreed (35.5%) that handing in compositions make them feel good. Thus,
56% of the advanced responded positively and 44% of the basic agreed.
Significantly fewer intermediates strongly agreed that writing makes
them feel good (4.5%) as contrasted to 20% of the advanced and 9.5%
of the basic writers questioned. Further, more intermediates denied
(22.5%) and strongly denied (3.4%) that writing could make them feel
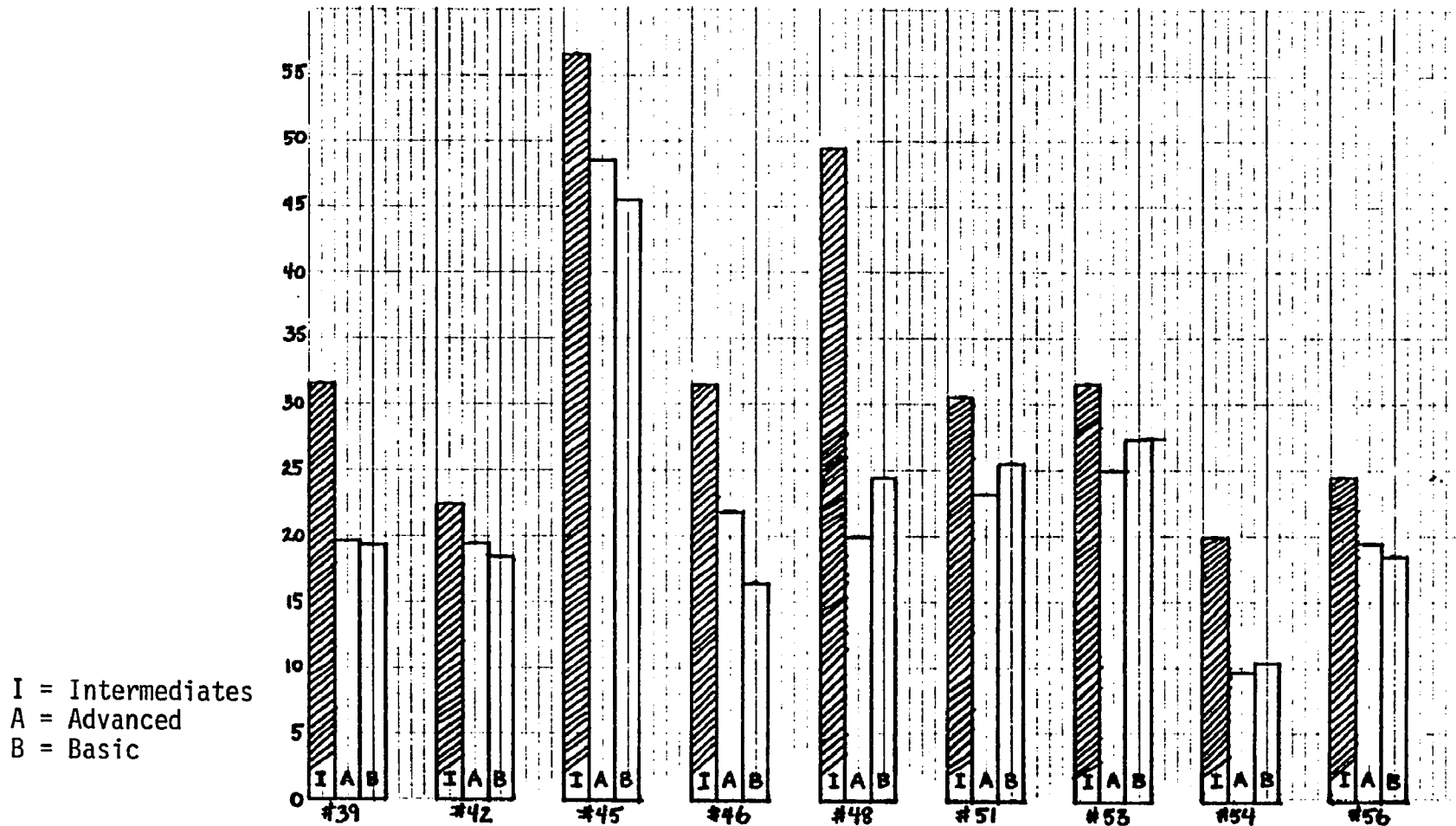
Figure II: Percent of Disagreement Among Groups on Items Measuring Enjoyment of Writing

QUESTIONS:

39. I look forward to writing down my ideas.
42. Handing in a composition makes me feel good.
45. I would enjoy submitting my writing to magazines for evaluation and publication.
46. I like to write my ideas down.
48. I like to have my friends read what I have written.

51. I enjoy writing.
53. Writing is a lot of fun.
54. I like seeing my ideas on paper.
56. Discussing my ideas with others is an enjoyable experience.

good; 19.5% of the advanced denied this, along with 18.4% of the basic.

Conclusion of Section I: The Questionnaire

When researching the literature on intermediate composition students, this writer discovered that there was little, if any, work done with these students. The implication appeared to be that the vastness of this group made generalizations and research about them impossible. In fact, there was no name for this group, excepting Shaughnessy's incidental reference to them in her research about the basic writer in Errors And Expectations.[4]

Thus, the significant discoveries about the intermediate writer brought to light by this questionnaire are vital to the composition field. Several attitudinal discrepancies identify a noticeable part of the intermediate group: apprehensiveness, isolation, and alienation often describe their behavior.

First, the level of fear intermediates projected is notable for teachers and researchers of composition. Not only do many of these students fear what writing is, they fear its consequences upon them (evaluation). They find little to feel good about or derive little satisfaction from the act of writing. They most often view it as an imposition and a chore.

Some intermediates appear to avoid writing as much as possible. As the pre-writing section of the questionnaire proved, many intermediate students seem isolated from human communication situations. They not only write less for school, but they also avoid verbal

situations such as talking to friends, writing in diaries, or reading books other than prescribed school books. They are least engaged in personal development from verbal situations, especially those connected with writing.

Finally, some intermediate students appear alienated and estranged from writing and all of its facets. They view writing as most likely to become obsolete. They found less joy in it--as the writing apprehension instrument indicates. Intermediates also held the most dislike for writing in general (see pre-writing attitudes).

The intermediates' generally negative views characterize them as a difficult group to encourage and instruct. Although their grammatical problems are less crippling, the intermediates view them as difficult to overcome. They project less optimism that writing can help them. In sum, the teacher must win their confidence and faith before any meaningful experiences can take place. In the following section of Chapter 4, this writer will show how many intermediates also avoid communication (and possible failure) in their passive writing styles as shown in their essays.

II.   The Written Sample:

The Intermediate Style

As described by Shaughnessy, in Errors and Expectations,
the intermediate writer and his/her writing syle is charac-
terized by "a flat competence, by no means error-free but limited
more seriously by its utter predictability, safe syntax, and
platitudinous tone."[5] My research has identified several cate-
gories of style and error particularly relevant to the intermediate
writer as described in Chapter III: diction, sentence structure,
use of prepositions, voice punctuation, change in person, comma
splices, and fragments. These findings were validated by a team
of readers, Marcia Holbrook, Bill Ellis and Mary McGann to an
89% agreement among readers that these papers were representative
of the intermediate writing style.

Although these categories were not present on every paper
read, their frequency was such that a trend revealing the stylistic
reasons for the intermediate's "flat competence and utter predict-
ability" became apparent. Notably, the intermediate's dependence
on cliche-ridden ideas and descriptions reduced their writings to
a formulaic level of written expression. Further, this study's
findings from the questionnaire suggested some possible reasons
for the intermediate's limited level of communication to his/her
audience: fear of the task and its consequences (evaluation) and
alienation from the entire writing process.

Types of Intermediacy

As stated in Chapter III, the intermediate category of composition students was further sub-divided into three groups: True-Intermediate, Moderate-Intermediate and Intermediate-Advanced (according to the degree the essays within the groups matched the stylistic considerations and error types of the definition of intermediacy). All three groups demonstrated characteristics of the intermediate writer (diction, sentence structure, use of prepositions, voice, change in person, and sentence level punctuation errors), but to markedly different degrees.

"True-Intermediates" were placed into that sub-group if the student essays showed three or more stylistic qualities and at least one error type. The "True-Intermediate" category had 37 students placed in it; this number is 51.3% of the entire 72 student essays in the intermediate composition class.

"Moderate-Intermediate" students demonstrated similar characteristics to the "True-Intermediate" in that they demonstrated two stylistic categories and at least one error type. Their essays were generally longer, with more specific examples used and a more distinct individual personality to the writings. Twenty-four students were characterized as moderate-intermediates by this process, or 33.3% of the 72 student sample.

"Intermediate-Advanced" students were most differentiated from the intermediate classification of students. Their essays more clearly fit the advanced student's style of writing: lengthy

essays with concrete examples and a strong personal voice. Intermediate-Advanced students demonstrated no more than one descriptive category and no more than one type of error. Eleven students were placed in this classification, or a 15.2% of the sample read.

Factors Relating to Intermediacy

In general, some intermediate composition students appear very uneasy with the task of writing, especially when compared with basic and advanced composition students. Specifically, intermediate students tested as significantly more apprehensive of writing than the other two groups (basic and advanced) both in the Ohio State University pilot sample and in the Columbus Technical Institute's representation of students. At CTI, intermediates were judged more fearful of writing (based on the Daly-Miller Writing Apprehension Instrument)[6] to a .07 level of significance, establishing that these students were the most fearful of writing when compared to the basic and advanced students.

Further, dividing the intermediate class of students according to stylistic and error considerations further establishes the idea that fear of writing may have a direct connection to the tone and appearance of the written product. As the students were placed into the "very intermediate," "moderate-intermediate," and "intermediate-advanced" classifications, the level of apprehension toward writing fell. Moreover, when one investigates other factors besides

style and errors in this sample such as reading level, number of words per essay, subsequent grades received in the course, and the level of apprehension, one perceives that the tri-leveled intermediate category has real relevance to describing what the intermediate student is and does. (See Appendix B for examples of papers from each category.)

The following sections of the findings from the written sample demonstrate the style, types of errors, level of apprehension, reading level, number of words in essays, and grades received in the subsequent composition course of the true-intermediate, moderate-intermediate, and intermediate-advanced level of students. Precisely 33-1/3% of each group were randomly selected and analyzed, or twelve true-intermediates, eight moderate-intermediates, and four intermediate-advanced for these characteristics.

Analysis of Intermediate Categories

1) True-Intermediate

As stated, this group makes up more than 50% of the whole 72 students in the intermediate category (37 students). The twelve-student sampling ranked lowest in reading level, number of words in essays, and grades and highest in apprehension when compared to the moderate-intermediates and intermediate-advanced samples. The following chart illustrates these specific findings from each of the twelve true intermediate students. True intermediate students had an average reading score of 10.8. They

averaged 150.5 words per placement essay, and their subsequent grades in this composition course averaged out to a 2.5 or a "C+". They also exhibited the highest level of fear toward writing; their mean level of apprehension of writing measured 70 out of a possible 120 points. "True-intermediates" were placed in this group if the student essays showed two descriptive categories and at least one error type. (See Appendix B for an example of one of these papers.)

The true-intermediate sampling displayed the most intermediate types of writing traits, especially in cliched word choice, unfocused thesis statements, and a lack of a personal voice in their writings. The following statistics and examples bear out the true-intermediate's conformity to the style and error types described in Chapter III as a theoretical model of the intermediate student's written performance. The following chart and statistics bear out the preceding discussion.

TABLE V: Statistics Showing True-Intermediates

Name	Sex	Fear	Reading	1001 Grades
Person 1	F	53	14.0	C
Person 2	F	76	10.4	B-
Person 3	F	71	13.0	C
Person 4	M	69	13.6	B
Person 5	F	75	11.9	B
Person 6	F	77	10.2	A
Person 7	M	66	6.0	A
Person 8	M	67	10.3	C
Person 9	F	50	13.6	A
Person 10	F	61	9.8	C
Person 11	F	55	9.0	B
Person 12	M	79	8.0	C

Average number of words per essay: 150.5
Average apprehension score: 70.0
Average reading score: 10.8
Average grade received in 1001:   2.5 or C+

I. Style

A. Diction

1. Cliches and Pat Phrases: 58.33%
    Person 3   Person 9   Person 12
    Person 7   Person 10
    Person 8   Person 11

2. Diction (see Chapter III):   83.3%
    Person 1   Person 7   Person 11
    Person 2   Person 8   Person 12
    Person 4   Person 9
    Person 6   Person 10

B. Sentence Structure: Nominalization   33.3%
    Person 3   Person 4
    Person 9   Person 11

    all high in writing apprehension

C. Logic/Closure of ideas: 100.00%
    Person 1   Person 5   Person 9
    Person 2   Person 6   Person 10
    Person 3   Person 7   Person 11
    Person 4   Person 8   Person 12

D. Blurred Idiomatic Use of Language (Prepositions)
25.0%

    Person 1   Person 4   Person 11

E. Voice
    Passive: 41.6%
    Person 2   Person 8
    Person 4   Person 11

    3 high in apprehension

    Rhetorical: 58.3%
    Person 1   Person 5   Person 11
    Person 2   Person 9
    Person 4   Person 10

    5 high in apprehension

II. Error Categories

A. Person Shift: 33.3%

    Person 4   Person 7   Person 10

B. External Punctuation:

    1. Comma Splices   75.0%
       Person 1   Person 7   Person 12
       Person 2   Person 8
       Person 3   Person 9
       Person 4   Person 10

    2. Fragments   41.6%
       Person 4   Person 7
       Person 5   Person 11
       Person 6

    3. Run-ons/fragments   33.33%
       Person 6   Person 10
       Person 7   Person 11

I. <u>Style</u>

    A. Diction--vague, non-specific, undefined.

        1. Cliches: 58.33% of the true intermediates relied upon
cliches or hackneyed thinking to communicate their ideas
to their readers. The examples below illustrate the
use of cliches in these papers:

Person 3: "I would like to <u>better myself.</u>"

Person 7: "By getting a degree in a certain field, it
will <u>open the doors for my</u> future. . ."

Person 8: "College is a place to <u>further your education
and meet new people.</u>"

Person 9: "For me, college would <u>draw me out of myself.</u>"

Person 10: "I know that college is not <u>fun and games.</u>"

Person 11: "I also feel that this type of work has <u>a lot
to offer me in life.</u>"

Person 12: "Respiratory Therapy has a great future and
I think every respiratory therapist should have the
<u>knowledge to meet the challenge.</u>"

        2. Word Choices

Closely related to the use of cliches is the use of vague
and non-specific word choices which are frequently employed
in intermediate writing. The following list, set-up in

Chapter III, describes various words which are used by intermediate writers for description and elaboration of ideas in their papers.

always	interesting	person
a lot	everything	it
challenging	benefit	experience
you	things	education
today	factor	hard
various	facet	fun
nice	different	very
people	certain	great
important	person	is or are
anything	only	life

Thus, 83.3% of the true-intermediate category leaned heavily on vague and non-specific word choices to describe their ideas. Examples of their dependence on a bare and diffuse vocabulary follow below:

Person 1: "My present job can only benefit from a college degree. I will meet different people from all facets of life."

Person 2: "I'm always searching for something new and different to learn and enrich my horizons."

Person 4: "College makes you more aware of what's around you. It can open your eyes to a lot of new ideas and ways of dealing with people."

Person 6: "I may have the <u>experience</u> for working with <u>people</u> but I need the <u>knowledge</u> for the other <u>aspects</u> of <u>it</u>."

Person 7: "I decided to go to college to <u>further</u> <u>my</u> <u>education</u>. There are <u>a lot</u> of jobs to get into but <u>you</u> need the <u>knowledge</u>."

Person 8: "In coming to college, I plan to learn <u>more</u> about what I'm <u>interested</u> <u>in</u>. College <u>is</u> a place to <u>further your education</u> and meet <u>new people</u>."

Person 9: "<u>College</u> would be a very <u>rewarding</u> <u>experience</u> for me. <u>Education</u> <u>is</u> an <u>important</u> reason, also."

Person 10: "I <u>feel</u> that <u>today</u> <u>life</u> and our <u>everyday</u> <u>society</u> in <u>general</u> are in a <u>great</u> need of <u>people</u> who can <u>relate</u> to human <u>life</u>."

Person 11: "I'm the one who loves to <u>meet different people</u>. I also <u>feel</u> that <u>this type of work</u> has <u>a lot</u> to <u>offer</u> me <u>in life</u>."

B. Sentence Structure: Nominalization.

Intermediates often use wordy sentences to convey ideas as if the added words will pad their meanings and give them more support. An intermediate writer appears to use nominalized sentences more frequently than either the basic or advanced writer. Nominalized sentences are sentences which substitute groups of

words (most often nominative forms of verbs) for the tradi-
tional position of the subject. The result is a top-heavy
sentence which tends to be overly precise and confusing.
Nominalization may result from the writer's fear of the audi-
ence. By using unclear sentence constructions, the writer
tries to evade criticism of the thoughts expressed: 33-1/3%
of the true-intermediates demonstrated nominalized sentences
on their papers. All of these students also measured as highly
fearful of writing; some connection could be posited between
the two. The following examples demonstrate the nominalized
sentences found on the papers.

Person 3: "The most important reason for coming is to get a
better education, and to better myself."

Person 4: "Also the feeling that you have done something
with your life, other than just leaving high school and
calling it quits."

Person 9: "There are many reasons a person chooses to go
to college: higher education, better paying jobs and a chance
to find out about the world."

Person 11: "It also means that I will be able to do things
that a regular secretary wouldn't get to do."

C. Logic/Closure of Ideas

Generally intermediate writers rarely achieve closure of
their ideas; their topic sentences, or thesis statements,
are vague, muddled and usually too broadly defined (due to

the dependence on imprecise key words, see diction). The
true-intermediates performed poorly when constructing topic
sentences. All twelve set forth murky and vague topic sen-
tence--or 100% of the sample evaluated. They rarely grasped
and aggressively put forth a solid idea, due in part to their
ego-centric topic choices. The following sentences demon-
strate the topic sentences seen on these papers.

Person 1: "I decided to come to college because I hope that
will help me to make improvements that will better myself."

Person 2: "Having been out of high school for 17 years; I
decided to give college a try."

Person 3: "I have decided to come to colledge to get a better
education."

Person 4: "College makes you more aware of what's around
you."

Person 5: "To get more of an education, I would have to go
on in school."

Person 6: "And the only place to get knowledge and education
is at college."

Person 7: "I decided to go to college to further my education."

Person 8: "I didn't come to get a good job, but I did come
to get a better understanding of life."

Person 9: "My main reason is to find out about the world."

Person 10: "I decided to come to college because, College associates people, with Wisdom and Knowledge and success in finding out what he wants to know and feels in order to gain fame within himself."

Person 11: "I choose this particular technology because I feel that it best suits me and my life style."

Person 12: "The field of respiratory therapy has greatly expanded."

D. Blurred Idiomatic Use of Prepositions

Another distinctive stylistic characteristic separating intermediate writers from those on other levels is their tendency to use prepositions incorrectly or inexactly. Intermediates more often use prepositions to modify objects incorrectly or inappropriately. Although this finding is not as widespread as the diffuse language use or the ambiguous topic sentences, the blurred use of prepositions more strongly identified the true-intermediate writer; 25% of the sample showed this phenomenon on their papers; 12.5% appeared in the moderate-intermediate category; and 0% in the intermediate-advanced. Most probably, the appropriate use of prepositions is established by the student's viewing of them in context through reading. The true intermediate has the lowest reading level. The following sentences demonstrate the incorrect or inexact use of prepositions found in the true intermediate sample of papers.

Person 1: "College Educations are highly stressed <u>upon</u>."

Person 4: "You couldn't really talk to them knowing that they have more knowledqe <u>to</u> you do."

Person 11: "I feel that it will be very exciting <u>from</u> a reqular secretary job."

E. Voice: Grammatical, Logical and Rhetorical

"Voice" in a piece of writing communicates the writer's stance toward the subject and the audience, both grammatically, logically, and rhetorically. As established in Chapter III, the intermediate's voice tends to be passive gramatically and apologetic logically and rhetorically. Although the intermediate does not write all passive constructions, his/her tendency toward tentativeness leads to a cautious, unchalleng-ing group of sentences. Further, the intermediate's constant justifications for his/her views creates an apologetic rhetorical tone to his/her writings as well: 41.6% of the very intermediate students had passive constructions on their papers. The following sentences were taken from this group (passive voice):

Person 1: "Society pressures have made me feel inadequate if I do not continue my education."

Person 4: "Also going to college can help me with staying on the same level as some of the people I know."

Person 11: "It means that I will be able to do something different, meetinq and talkinq to different people everyday."

Person 8: "This school suits me all but one thing and that is sports."

Person 9: "My main reason is the last one I have listed."

58.33% of the true intermediates depended on disclaimers (phrases which absolve the writer of any responsibility for the subsequent statements he or she makes) in their writings. Disclaimers tend to add an air of apology for the writer's views, as if he/she feared the consequences of having aggressive viewpoints. The following sentences exhibit the true intermediate's tentative rhetorical tone.

Person 1: "I feel a better education will make me feel more sure of myself."

Person 2: "Also, I feel that I am finally able to do these things in life."

Person 4: "I belive that I can make it through with the thought of how proud my parents and relatives will be when they know there is a college graduate in the family."

Person 5: "For me it was easy to learn my way around."

Person 9: "College would be a very rewarding experience for me."

Person 10: "I feel that today life and our everyday society in general are both in great need of people who can relate to human life."

Person 11: "And I know that it will be the right one for me."

II. Error Categories

"Style is the way one presents his/her work; it is not necessarily
"wrong," though it could be inappropriate or poorly constructed. Style
refers to the presentation of one's work through such choices as
vocabulary, sentence construction, voice and examples. "Error" means
that the writer has violated some rule of the language, such as in-
correctly spelling a word.

The intermediate writer is different from the basic writer whose
problems and errors were deliniated in Errors and Expectations. The
analysis of the 72 placement essays of the intermediate students
reveals these common types of errors: shifting of person in a sentence,
incorrect external punctuation, and incomplete or incorrect sentence
construction.

A. Shifting of Person: Mixing first, second, and third
   person in the use of pronouns within that sentence.

   "True intermediate" writers were usually identified by
   their mixing of pronouns in their sentences. This "mixing"
   of pronouns could be caused by a confusion in the writer's
   mind about what "tone" his/her writing should have for
   his/her audience (note the marked use of "you" in these
   papers). The writer often goes from first to second person
   in generalizing about an experience (33-1/3% of the true
   intermediates sampling of papers demonstrated this shift
   in pronouns).

   Person 1: "I need the feeling that you get from college."

Person 3:   "<u>I</u> want to be able to learn everything

<u>you</u> can from my studies."

Person 7:   "<u>I</u> realized that <u>you</u> can get into certain jobs

with out college but <u>you</u> can only go so far and then that

is it."

Person 10: "<u>I</u> decided to come to college because, college

associates people with, Wisdom and Knowledge and Success

in finding what <u>he</u> wants to know and feels in order to

gain fame within <u>himself</u>."

B. External punctuation errors

        External punctuation errors refer to the incorrect

use of linking two sentences by a comma (also known as a

"comma splice"). This error also leads to fragmentation

and run-on sentences; both errors are common to the inter-

mediate writer.

1. Comma splices (run-ons)

        This particular error clearly distinguished the three

divisions within the intermediate category: 75% of the

true intermediates used run-on sentences in their papers

compared to 37-1/ % of the moderate-intermediates and 25% of

the advanced-intermediates. Most intermediate writers

are unaware of the semi-colon as a mark of punctuation,

and many punctuate better when they become aware of its

use. Many also do not understand compound sentences. The

following sentences are taken from the true-intermediate's

papers.

Person 1: "After high school I became lazy, I find myself coming across things I've forgotten already."

Person 2: "Being one of eight children, my parents couldn't afford to assist me financially in college and at that time I wasn't motivated enough to work and attend college at the same time."

Person 3: "First of all I didn't finish school, I didn't think it was necessary."

Person 4: "No one in my family has done it so far and it would be great if I could be the first one."

Person 7: "I realized that you can get into certain jobs with out college but you can only go so far and then that is it."

Person 8: "School is fun and I enjoy school."

Person 9: "I grew up in a small town and I was deprived of many things that people from large cities take for granted."

Person 10: "I want to work as a Social Service Worker, I feel that today life and our everyday society in general are both in great need of people can relate to human life. . ."

Person 12: "Because of air pollution, cigarette smoking and dangerous aerosols that are effecting our health today, Respiratory Therapy has a great future and I think every Resiratory Therapist should have the knowledge to meet the challenge."

2. Fragments

Fragments, incomplete sentences, also typify the intermediate writer. The fragment's incomplete thought usually results in a confusing essay whose clarity is further eroded by the intermediate's lack of precise diction or a pointed topic sentence. The intermediate student usually has an incomplete idea of what is correct or what is expected; thus his/her essay will be criss-crossed with fully-formed and partially formed sentences. The very intermediate group again showed a strong tendency to write fragmented sentences; 41.6% did so. Below are these sentences found on their papers.

Person 4: "About half of them are going to a college, either 2 or 4 years.

Person 5: "To work hard and learn in my field."

Person 6: "See if I could manage to work with sick people."

Person 7: "And keep on going farther up."

Person 11: "Such as, giving shots, taking blood pressures, calling and writing out prescriptions."

3. Run-ons followed by fragments

Fragmented sentences sometimes appear after a comma splice, or run-on sentences. The two errors in conjunction imply that the student is aware that the combined sentences need punctuation, but he/she guesses incorrectly as to where the punctuation should go. The combination of these sentences creates an uneven quality to the student's work--further contributing

an anxious tone to the writing. Thus, 33-1/3% of the very

intermediate writers wrote run-ons followed by fragments;

all these student writers had high levels of apprehension

about writing, as measured by their questionnaires.

Person 6: "My junior year in high school, I decided to get

a job in a nursing home so I would see if this is really

what I want to do the rest of my life. See if I could manage

to work with sick people."

Person 7: "By getting a degree in a certain field it will

open the doors for my feature so that I will have the chance

to get the better job and keep it. And keep on going farther

up."

Person 10: "I want to work as a Social Service Worker, I feel

that today life and our everyday society in general are both

in great need of people who can relate to human life and I

would like to learn what is needed. to help someone see that

their is more to living than getting rich."

Person 11: "It also means that I will be able to do things

that a regular secretary wouldn't get to do. Such as, giving

shots, taking blood pressures, calling and writing out pre-

scriptions."

2) The Moderate-Intermediate

The moderate-intermediates make up 33-1/3% of the 72 students in

the entire intermediate category, or 24 students. The eight student

sampling of this group was midrange in their reading scores, number of words per essay, grades, and in level of apprehension when compared to the true intermediates and intermediate-advanced student samples. The following chart illustrates these specific findings from each of the eight moderate-intermediate students. Moderate-intermediate students had an average reading score of 11.6. They averaged 165 words per placement essay, and their subsequent grades in this composition course averaged out to a 2.8 or a "B-". They also exhibited a notably lower level of apprehension of writing (when contrasted to the true intermediates); their mean level of apprehension measured 90 out of a possible 120 positive points.

The moderate-intermediates also demonstrated fewer stylistic qualities and error types of intermediacy than did the true intermediates. Their percentages are higher, however, than the intermediate-advanced student sampling. They especially demonstrated a stronger personal voice than did the true intermediates and a more specific vocabulary and clearer topic statements. Moderate-intermediates showed a similar pattern to the true intermediates in that they demonstrated two descriptive categories (Style) and at least one error type (Errors). See Appendix B for an example of one of these papers. The following statistics and examples bear out the less extensive but still intermediate properties of the moderate-intermediate group.

TABLE VI: Statistics Showing Moderate-Intermediates

Name	Sex	Fear	Reading	1001 Grades
Person 13	M	105	15	B
Person 14	F	60	11.9	B
Person 15	F	109	6.9	C
Person 16	M	96	11.9	C
Person 17	F	98	9.2	C
Person 18	M	79	15.0	B
Person 19	F	90	9.0	A
Person 20	F	87	11.6	C

Average number of words in essays: 165
Average level of apprehension: 90
Average reading level: 11.6
Average grade in 1001:   2.8 or B-

I.   Style

   A.   Diction

      1.   Cliches and Pat Phrases: 25%
           Person 13
           Person 15

      2.   Diction in Chapter III: 37½%
           Person 13
           Person 15
           Person 17

   B.   Sentence Structure: Nominalization   0%

   C.   Logic/Closure of Ideas: 37½%

           Person 13
           Person 15
           Person 16

   D.   Blurred Idiomatic Use of Language
        (Prep's):   12½%

           Person 14

   E.   Voice/Passive: 37½%

           Person 13
           Person 14
           Person 18

F. Rhetorical: 50%

       Person 13
       Person 14
       Person 15
       Person 17
       Person 18
       Person 20

II. Error Categories

A. Person Shift: 25%

       Person 15
       Person 17

B. External Punctuation

1. Use of Compound Sentences: 50%
       Person 14
       Person 15
       Person 18
       Person 19

2. Comma Splices: $37\frac{1}{2}\%$
       Person 14
       Person 17
       Person 18

3. Fragments: 50%
       Person 14
       Person 16
       Person 17
       Person 18

4. Run-on's Followed by Fragments: 0%

II. <u>Style</u>

    A. Diction--vague, non-specific, undefined.

        1. Cliches: 25% of the moderate-intermediates depended

            upon hackneyed phrases to communicate their ideas

            (a difference compared to the 58.33% of the true

            intermediates). These are the cliches or pat phrases

            found in the moderate-intermediate papers.

            Person 13: "I had better start doing something <u>to</u>

            <u>enhance the outlook of my future</u>."

            Person 17: "<u>Food service had never crossed my mind</u>."

        2. Diction: list of intermediate words (see Chapter III).

"always"	"everything"	"reason"
"a lot"	"benefit"	"it"
"challenging"	"things"	"experience"
"you"	"factor"	"education"
"various"	"facet"	"hard"
"nice"	"different"	"fun"
"people"	"certain"	"very"
"important"	Person"	"great"
"anything"	"only"	"is" or "are"
	"interesting"	"life"

In this sample, 37½% of the moderate-intermediates

depended upon vague and non-specific word choices to

a striking degree. Examples from these writings

follow:

Person 13: "My <u>reason</u> to enter college was based on <u>personal feelings</u> about myself and the <u>need</u> to improve myself for a higher position in <u>life's</u> work."

Person 15: "In order to find a <u>good</u> job, <u>you</u> have to go to college and <u>take up</u> the skill you are <u>interested</u> in and get <u>your</u> degree."

Person 17: "I had decided on taking a <u>various number</u> of <u>things</u> of <u>interest</u> to me."

This diffuse language is less prominent than the true intermediate's 83.3%. Examples from other papers demonstrating the moderate intermediate's more specific vocabulary and subject matter follow below:

Person 14: "Watergate <u>is</u> an event that most Americans could not believe was happening in the United States."

Person 18: "I decided to come to college because, number one, Uncle Sam would pay me to come. I spent three years of my life earning that right and I would be foolish not to take advantage of it."

Person 18: "I chose the technology I am enrolling in because this <u>is</u> the <u>type</u> of work that is <u>rewarding</u> and that I would be most happy doing."

Although the moderate-intermediate still depends on abstract word choice (even person 18 has several vague words in her topic sentence), this group still has a more direct and precise use of the language. This

more direct tone has several effects on their
writing: their essays tend to be clearer, more spe-
cific, crisper and easier to follow. None of the
moderate-intermediates had nominalized sentences evident
in this sample, attesting to the less wordy style of
this group.

C. Logic/Closure of Ideas

The moderate-intermediates had less trouble formulating
sharper topic sentences: 37½% had undifferentiated topic
sentences, as compared to the true intermediate's 100% in
this category. The lack of a sharply defined topic sentence
appears to be a very critical and fundamental lacking of
the intermediate category. As such, this particular tech-
nique should be stressed in the intermediate composition
class. Below are the sentences making up the unclear topic
statements of the moderate-intermediate sample.

Person 15: "I decided to come to college because I wanted
to become more whole."

Person 20: "My goals are to achieve the highest level of
knowledge and skills in every course."

Person 16: "I have decided to come to college because of
the beneficial development of my mind and future."

These unclear topic sentences contrast with others in the
sample, representing the more skilled writers in the
moderate-intermediate category.

Below are examples of these:

Person 17: "Knowing that I love to cook, I decided to take up a trade in Food Services that I would really enjoy."

Person 18: "So with what I learned in high school, my practical experience from the service and just life, I feel college will help me earn a larger income and gain an important position in the business world."

D. Blurred Idiomatic Use of Prepositions

As stated earlier in this chapter, intermediates seem to confuse the meaning and use of prepositions more than either the basic or advanced composition students: 25% of the true intermediates demonstrated this phenomenon on their papers whereas a smaller 12½% (or one student) demonstrated this confusion on her paper in the moderate-intermediate sampling. Below is the sentence showing this stylistic problem:

Person 13: "Many American people must have their doubts of what's going on in the White House."

E. Voice: Grammatical, Logical, and Rhetorical

As the true-intermediate student, the moderate-intermediate depends heavily on passive voice in his/her views, as observed by his/her use of disclaimers: 37½% of the moderate-intermediates exhibited passive construc-tions on their papers, compared to the true-intermediate's

41.6%. Further, 75% relied on disclaimers ("in my opinion," "I feel," "to me," etc.) to present their ideas to their audience, a larger percentage than the true intermediate's 58.3%. Both groups seem reluctant to take aggressive stands on issues, if grammatical and rhetorical voice indicate the writer's relationship to his/her audience. As previously stated in this study, the intermediate writer seems to be identified by a timidity expressed in the style and tone of his/her writings.

Below are the examples showing these statistics as they appear on the papers.

1. Passive/Voice and Logic:

    Person 13: "To get more progress, the challenges must be met by the average person."

    Person 14: "It makes me wonder if there could be anything else going on like Watergate; and if so, will we ever find out about it?"

    Person 18: "It is a lot different coming from high school into the working world."

2. Rhetorical/Disclaimers

    Person 13: "I feel that these next two years will be very beneficial to not only myself, but also to my employer."

    Person 14: "Watergate, I think, has made the American people more aware of the importance the president has on our everyday living."

Person 15: "You have to have a degree in order to get a job you are interested in <u>like</u> <u>myself</u>."

Person 17: "But, now that I have made up my mind to go into food service, <u>I</u> <u>know,</u> when I get out, I will at least have a job I like."

Person 18: "Another reason is <u>I</u> <u>feel</u> I have certain leadership abilities."

Person 20: "<u>In</u> <u>my</u> <u>opinion</u>, CTI offers a wide range of course and degrees."

III. Error Categories

The moderate-intermediate also demonstrated errors similar to those exhibited in the true-intermediate's papers but to a lesser degree. Unlike the true-intermediates, the moderate-intermediates seemed more familiar with the more sophisticated uses of the language. Persons 14 and 18 connected sentences with semi-colons, not seen at all in the true-intermediate sampling. Vocabulary use was more complex--though still diffuse and general in many places. The most common error to the moderate-intermediates appeared to be fragments. Although many could be read as emphatic in context, the fragmented sentence cropped up more frequently than did the other errors. Moderate-intermediates may have more of a personal voice and confidence to risk using unconventional sentence level constructions. More research would have to be developed to

evaluate whether such a phenomenon is happening or not. Below are the errors seen on these papers.

A. Shifting of Person: Mixing first, second, and third person in the use of pronouns within that sentence.

Moderate-intermediate writers also switched pronouns within their sentences, usually to generalize about a situation as the true-intermediates had: 25% of the sample exhibited this error on their papers, smaller than 33-1/3% of the true-intermediate category. Below are the examples which appeared on the papers.

Person 15: "Myself in order to find a good job, you would have to go to college and take up the skill you are interested in and get your degree."

Person 17: "I say this because you not only make good money but you could travel too."

B. External Punctuation Errors

Moderate-intermediates also demonstrated a strong trend toward errors involving the limits of a sentence, i.e., comma splices (run-ons) and fragmented sentences. Within this sample, the tendency was toward more fragments than other errors, a larger percentage showing this error compared to the true-intermediate sample.

Some moderate-intermediates in this sample appeared to be familiar with the compound sentence and used semi-colons and commas correctly in this context. No person

within the moderate-intermediate sample exhibited the run-on followed by a fragment. It is possible that the moderate-intermediate could be confident or aware enough to tinker with the language so that more complicated but not always correct sentences result. There is not enough evidence to draw any firm conclusion from this surprising finding. However, the moderate-intermediates did appear to have a greater mastery of the language on the sentence level.

C. Compound Sentence Use

Half (50%) of this sample demonstrated at least a partial knowledge of compound sentences on their papers. Person 18, especially, showed a tendency to write compound sentences on his rough draft but which resulted in fragments in his finished essay (perhaps because he thought his sentences were "too long"). Below are the compound sentences found on the moderate-intermediate's papers.

Person 14: "It makes me wonder if there could be anything else going on like Watergate; and if so, will we ever find out about it?"

Person 15: "You would probably have to wait until that position is open, and when the position is open, you may have the opportunity for the job as a key punch operator."

Person 19: "Medical lab is a fast growing field for which there is always a need, and I would be most happy working in this field."

Person 18 at first wrote: "I feel college is going to help me earn a larger income, and I will gain an important position in the business world and help me get the things I want out of life." (rough draft). He later revised this to: "I feel college is going to help me earn a larger income, gain an important position in the business world. But most of all, help me get the things I want out of life." (fragment).

1. Comma splices (run-ons)

Comma splices did not appear as frequently for the moderate-intermediates as for the true-intermediates: 37½% demonstrated comma splices as compared to the true intermediates' 83.3%. Perhaps the moderate intermediates have a larger vocabulary to draw from or perhaps they are more familiar with the conventions of the language. In any event, their comma-spliced sentences were fewer, and no run-ons followed by fragments were observed. Below are the moderate-intermediates' comma-spliced, run-on, sentences.

Person 15: "My technology will be Data Processing, I can take this skill up in college for two years."

Person 17: "There was a job opening in Hawaii for a food service manager who could also cook, the pay was $18,000.00 a year."

Person 20: "I work now as a computer operator, I never have a chance to use them."

2. Fragments

Moderate-intermediates demonstrated more fragments (50%) than did the true intermediates (41.6%). Most of these fragments appear as emphatic statements in context or as results of editing for the paper's evaluator (as observed on the rough drafts). Some confusion about the boundaries of sentences must exist for students who, at one point, will use compound sentences and then will also produce comma splices and fragments later in the essay (person 14, person 15, person 18). These students seem somewhat beyond the true-intermediates' general tendency toward obscureness and placation (see their general reading and grade levels). Perhaps their essays tend to become denser with error as their style becomes more individual. Shaughnessy posits such a phenomenon for developing basic writers, and this could be the case here. Below are the fragments which appear on these papers.

Person 14: "A mistake that stunned the entire nation."

Person 17: "Because I have heard that there is a great need for people in the food service industry."

Person 16: "And to use my mind to its maximum in anything I do."

Person 18: "But most of all, help me get the things
I want out of life."

3. Run-ons followed by fragments

None were observed in this sampling as compared
to the true-intermediates' 33-1/3%. This seemed to
further establish the moderate-intermediate's greater
facility with the language. The following section
(the intermediate-advanced student writers) will
further support the developmental notion of the inter-
mediate group of writers.

3) Intermediate-Advanced

This group makes up 15.2% of the entire 72 students in the
intermediate category (or 11 students). Most essays are lengthy,
usually on social and political topics (unlike the ego-centered
topics especially seen in the true-intermediate group) with con-
crete examples used for support. In analyzing these papers, I
found that the intermediate-advanced group generally had no
more than one stylistic and descriptive category and one or
fewer error types of the intermediate category. See Appendix
B for example of one of these papers.

The four student sampling had the highest average reading
score (12.1); largest number of words used in their placement
essays (226); highest subsequent marks in the English class
(all A's); and lowest level of apprehension toward writing (108
out of a possible 130 points). The following chart illustrates

these findings from this group of students. The intermediate-
advanced group generally had a strong personal voice present
in their essays which notably reduced their likeness to the
general intermediates' cautious and unchallenging tone. These
students probably could have been placed in the advanced class,
but perhaps needed more experience with writing to really develop
their skills. (See following chart for statistics).

TABLE VII: Intermediate-Advanced

Name	Sex	Fear	Reading	Grade in 1001
Person 21	F	130	12.2	A
Person 22	F	101	10.7	A
Person 23	M	116	13.0	A-
Person 24	F	97	12.7	A

Average number of words in essays: 226
Average level of apprehension: 108.25
Average reading level: 12.1
Average grade in 1001:   A

I. Style

   A. Diction

      1. Cliches and pat phrases: 25%
         Person 24

      2. Word choices (See Chapter III):   50%
         Person 23
         Person 24

   B. Sentence structure/nominalization
      Person 21   25%

   C. Logic: Closure of Ideas
      0

   D. Blurred Idiomatic Use of Language:
      (Prep's)   0

   E. Voice   25%

      1. Passive:
         Person 22
      2. Rhetorical/Disclaimers
         Person 21   50%
         Person 24

II. Errors

   A. Person Shift
      Person 23   25%

B. External Punctuation

    1.   Run-ons (comma splices)
        Person 21   25%
    2.   Fragments
        0
    3.   Run-ons followed by fragments
        0

I. Style

A. Diction--vague, non-specific, undefined.

1. Cliches: 25% of the intermediate-advanced sampling showed cliches. Because most of these papers discussed more complex issues (such as car-pooling), the papers tended to be less dependent on pat phrases and "canned thinking." Below is the example of the cliche; note the following ideas which make the cliche less formulaic and more imaginative.

Person 24: "<u>College is a stepping stone</u>, an adventure, and a sign of independence."

2. Word choices:

Because of their higher reading ability, most intermediate-advanced students demonstrated more sophisticated word choices in their essays. Even so, 50% of this sample did exhibit a notable dependence on the vague words in the intermediate list:

always	everything	it
a lot	benefit	experience
challenging	things	education
you	factor	hard
various	facet	fun
nice	different	very
people	certain	great
important	person	is or are

anything   only   life

interesting   reason

Both of these students used strong means of development,

which reduced the vagueness of some of their diction.

Below are examples showing some unclear or specific

word choice, though clarified by the following sentence.

Person 23: "People today would also be able to reach

their job destination in the shortest possible time

by grouping together in a car pool. Commuting by bus

can be bothersome and distressing for someone waiting

for its arrival."

Person 24: "Education is part of the framework of a

good, solid and fulfilling life. My goal, my objective,

is to widen my views through technology."

B. Sentence Structure: Nominalization

Intermediate-advanced students demonstrated many embeddings

in their sentences (as established by this sample). Most

sentences were actively set-up, without nominalized construc-

tions because, perhaps, more specific word choices were

available to this group of students. One student, or 25%

of the sample, exhibited a nominalized construction on her

paper. This sentence, which describes the American people's

reaction to Watergate, is a lengthy and ponderous idea, which

may explain its reliance on a rather circumloquacious con-

struction: "The most obvious reaction that the American

people had was one of disbelief because this was the
first time anything like the Watergate bugging had
ever happened, or maybe, the first time someone got
caught doing it."

C. Logic: Closure of Ideas

The lack of or a very imprecise topic sentence is
a key indicator of the intermediate student. As stated
in the true-intermediate discussion, 100% of the true-
intermediate group lacked a focused topic sentence. In
the intermediate-advanced group, all of the students
had strong topic sentences, though one student needed
more clarification in her definition of terms. These
students seemed to enjoy writing--an observation based
on their lengthy essays, high confidence, and a willing-
ness to take a stand. The topic sentences, which follow,
were found in the intermediate-advanced papers.

Person 21: "The Watergate Break in and the resignation
of Richard M. Nixon from the office of the President of
the United States has had a severe impact on the nation's
morale."

Person 22: "More and more companies are starting to use
computers as part of their daily routine."

Person 23: "I have found that by car pooling with a
friend or a co-worker, one can reduce the cost of trans-
portation needs drastically."

Person 24: (who needs greater definition of terms):
"Just as one would build the frame of a puzzle to make
the entire maze fit together easier, I have decided
to continue my education to encourage life to be more
rewarding and uncomplicated."

D. Blurred Idiomatic Use of Prepositions

No students in the intermediate-advanced sample
demonstrated this stylistic problem on their papers.
These students seemed to perceive their audience as
receptive, or at least not hostile, thus allowing them
a more even tone to their writings. Their proficient
level of reading also would probably explain their more
adept use of the language, i.e., matching the appro-
priate preposition with the correct receiver.

E. Voice: Grammatical and Rhetorical

"Voice" in an essay represents the writer's stance
toward his/her audience both grammatically and rhetoric-
ally. A writer can be aggressive, passive, conciliatory,
or any number of postures and can indicate this posture
through sentence construction and diction (thereby
creating "tone" in the writing). The intermediate-
advanced writer appears to have the most developed and
specific personal voice in his/her writings; thus his/
her reliance upon passive voice both grammatically and
rhetorically would probably be less. The findings from

this sample bear out this more developed and assertive voice: 25% of the intermediate-advanced writers demonstrated passive grammatical voice (as compared to 41.6% of the true-intermediates and 37.5% of the moderate-intermediates). Further, fewer intermediate-advanced writers relied upon disclaimers for support, as compared to the true-intermediates and the moderate-intermediates. Half (50%) of the intermediate-advanced sampling demonstrated disclaimers, whereas 58.3% of the true-intermediates and 75% of the moderate-intermediates relied upon them. The intermediate-advanced students appear to have more control over the language and feel less of a need to apologize for their ideas. In this behavior and attitude, they resemble more advanced writers than intermediate. Below are examples of these findings:

1. Passive Grammatical/Logical Voice:

    Person 22: "The idea of punching the keys and working in an office fascinated me." (Note the compound gerundive subject; this sentence appears after several starting with the word "I".)

2. Rhetorical Disclaimers

    Person 21: "I also feel that Nixon did an acceptable job as U. S. president, despite the Watergage Break-in." (This is a very controversial topic

which may have resulted in the writer protecting
her views through the disclaimer.)

Person 24: "<u>I feel</u> that college will help me over-
come the failures and <u>a</u>void the downfalls that
plague so many peoples' lives."

II. Error Categories

The intermediate-advanced student sample showed fewer errors
and more developed sentences. All four students demonstrated
compound sentences on their papers, or 100%. They tended to imbed
ideas more often and with more facility. One person (25%)
demonstrated a comma splice, or run-on sentence; no students
showed fragments or run-ons followed by fragments. One student
shifted pronouns in his sentence (25%), in an attempt to generalize
about a topic (as other intermediates had done in earlier dis-
cussions). In general, the intermediate-advanced sampling again
showed a marked flair for and facility with the language.

A. Shifting of Person: Mixing first, second, and third person
in the use of pronouns within that sentence.

One fourth (25%) of the intermediate-advanced students
demonstrated this, as compared to 33-1/3% of the true
intermediates and 25% of the moderate-intermediates.

Person 23: "Car pooling can dramatically reduce <u>one's</u>
need for spending money on such things as gas for <u>your</u>
car by simply eliminating the use of the car, except when
necessary."

B. External Punctuation

All the intermediate-advanced were more adept at con-
structing sentences and in using more complex and compound
sentences. All the students demonstrated compound sentences
in their essays; note the following examples:

Person 21: "He did have good foreign relations, and he put
an end to the war."

Person 22: "Columbus Technical Institute gave me the most
complete information, and they were very courteous in ex-
plaining the course and the school when I came for a visit."

Person 23: "The car pooling concept would efficiently
eliminate delays from in-town traffic during winter periods,
and this would also provide a confident means of reaching
your job destination on schedule."

Person 24: "I made the decision to attend college out of
my own free will, and for me it was one of my first major
decisons."

1. Comma Splices (Run-ons)

Although the intermediate-advanced students were
noticeably more proficient than either the true-
intermediate or moderate-intermediate groups, they
sometimes garbled their ideas in an attempt to really
communicate. This seems to explain the 25% statistic
for the intermediate-advanced students' possible tendency
to write comma splices, or run-on sentences.

Although the true-intermediate sample demonstrated comma splices to an 83.3%, the moderate-intermediates 37-1/2% and the intermediate-advanced 25% are much closer in range.

In general, the intermediate-advanced students wrote at length (note the 226 word average of their essays), and thus their tendency to write longer (if not always correct) sentences would be greater. Thus, their essays develop further their ideas and they seem to risk making more errors. For example, note the comma-spliced sentence which follows:

Person 21: "It is almost unbelievable that the results of these two transactions could have such an effect X but it has."

2. Fragments

3. Run-ons Followed by Fragments

Neither of these errors were found in the intermediate-advanced sample. The intermediate-advanced student showed a greater perspective and coherence to his/her writings and thereby may not have had the tendency to write as piecemeal as the other two groups. "Fragments" as an error may fit the idea of another thought or an added notion that the writer brings to an essay as a last minute addition. Since the intermediate-advanced students appear to have more
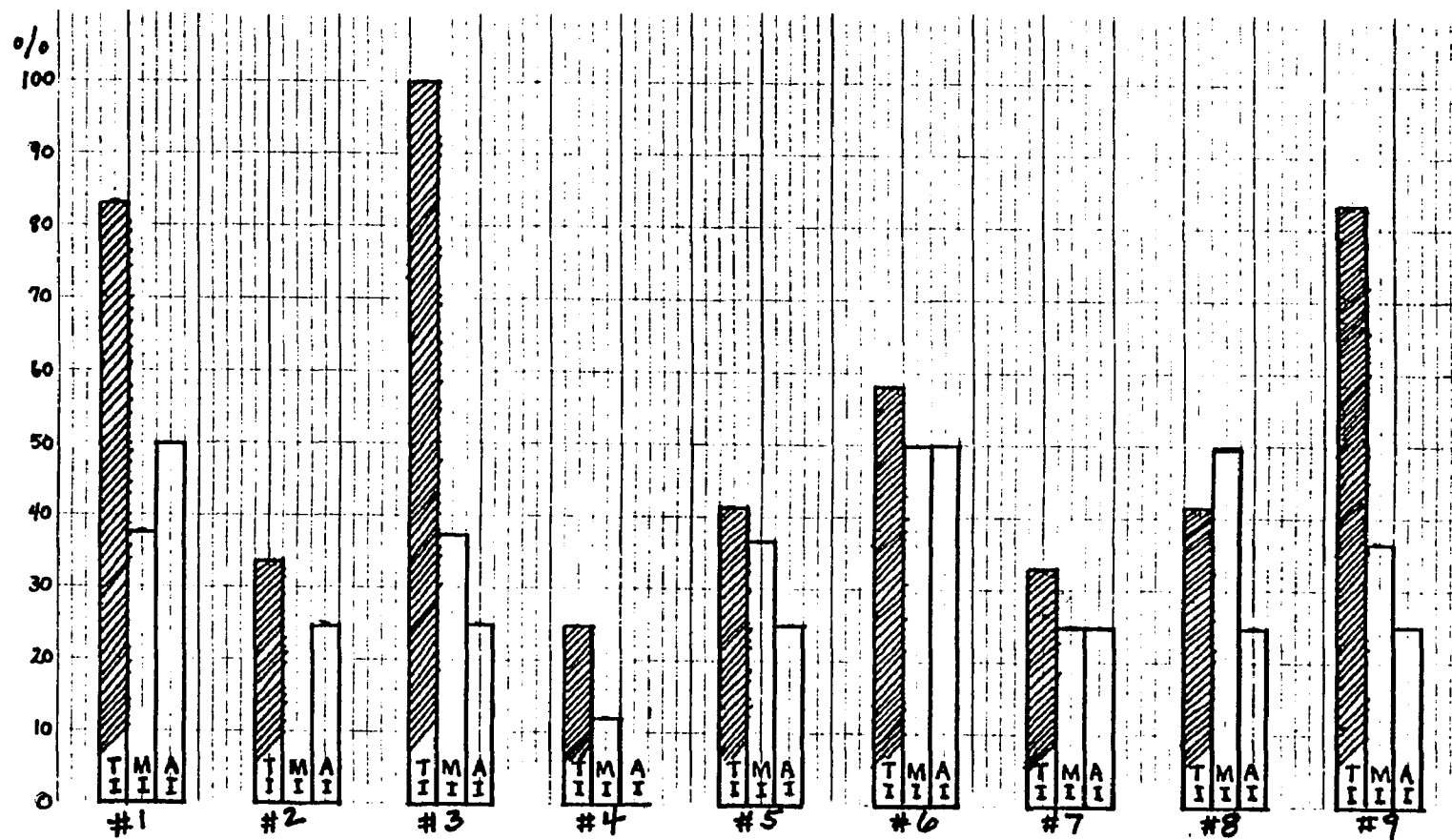
Figure III: Percent of Agreement Among Groups on Items Measuring Style and Errors

Style and Errors of the Intermediates
Categories

TI = True Intermediate
MI = Moderate-Intermediate
AI = Advanced-Intermediate

STYLE:
1. Diction (vague and
     unspecific)
2. Sentence Structure
     (nominalizations)
3. Logic (topic sentence)
4. Unclear Idiomatic use of
     Language (prepositions)

5. Use of Passive
    grammatical voice.
6. Use of Rhetorical
    Disclaimers.
ERRORS:
7. Person Shift.
8. Fragments.
9. Comma Splices.

control, (note their more sophisticated language use and more precise topic sentences), they would be less prone to this type of error.

Conclusion to Findings

The Written Sample

In this study, I have sought to identify the intermediate writer through attitude and style--both collectively and individually. To this end, a profile of the intermediate's writing problems was formed and three groups of intermediates have emerged: true-intermediate, moderate-intermediate, and intermediate-advanced. All three share similar problems and have similar needs.

As described, intermediate writers demonstrate a flatness, a lack of depth and a predictability in their prose. Moreover, the intermediate's safe style seems connected to his/her insecurity toward writing. By saying little, the writer risks less chance of making errors.

All three groups show these stylistic qualitites but as the group becomes less intermediate, their resemblance to the model lessens as well. True-intermediates make up the majority of the intermediate category and share these problems to the greatest degree. The following case studies will investigate the true-intermediate's identity on an individual basis.

TABLE VIII: Showing Differing Levels of Intermediacy

	Reading Level	Grades	Apprehension	Average number of words in Essays
Advanced-Intermediate	12.1	A	108.25	226
Moderate-Intermediate	11.6	B-	90.0	165
True-Intermediate	10.8	C+	70.0	150.5

CHAPTER IV

III. Case Studies

Case studies investigate the real people involved in any study. As Janet Emig demonstrated,[8] case studies can project the realities behind the statistics of an empirical investigation and as such are vital to research involving human subjects and behavior. The case studies which follow were conducted to research more thoroughly the true-intermediate student: his/her abilities, characteristics and problems.

Three students were chosen who indicated high apprehension toward writing. All three had contrasting experiences with their writing courses and emerged with different results. Thus, their successes and/or failures could be telling in light of the previous documentation and could further aid in setting up a guide for the intermediate composition instructor.

Student A: Fear of Failing

Teresa represents a very specific type of incoming Columbus Technical Institute student: older, apologetic, hard-working, and cautious. For her, writing presents a difficult problem for she perceives it as an intellectual talk which will demand of her abilities she believes she does not possess. Basically a capable and willing student, Teresa is most hampered in learning to write well by her

lack of self confidence and by her passivity. These negative personal expectations show in her writing, revealing a tentative tone and intermediate type errors. Her questionnaire, too, reinforces these impressions; her apprehension score is high (50); and her answers to specific questions are self-deprecating.

Teresa's placement essay demonstrates her true intermediate characteristics. She depends on very general word choice: "important," "rewarding," "reasons," "everyone," "always." Further, her topic sentence is unfocused: "Why I decided to go to college is because I need to go." Her tone is unsure: "For me, college would draw me out of myself." She uses passive sentence constructions: "My main reason is the last one I have listed." Teresa indicates a facility for the language beyond the basic composition student's experience: note the uses of both the colon and semi-colon. However, she later writes a comma splice (an intermediate error) in "I grew up in a small town X and I was deprived of many things that people from larger cities take for granted."

> Ever since I graduated from high school I wanted to go to college.
> There are many reasons a person chooses to go to college; higher education, better paying jobs, and a chance to find out about the world. My main reason is the last one I have listed.
> Why I decided to go to college is because I need to go. I grew up in a small town and I was deprived of many things that people from larger cities take for granted. For me college would draw me out of myself; I am a quiet, introverted type of person. College would be a very rewarding experience for me.
> Education is an important reason, also. Everyone could always use a higher education. A college education is a big asset when its time to start earning your own living. Education and a better job seem to go together.

Teresa's questionnaire projects her as an apprehensive, though willing, student. She is a methodical and deliberate writer: She usually takes many hours to write anything, (Question 1) and she usually re-writes a paper several times (Question 22). She lacks confidence and fears the consequences of writing. She strongly agrees that she is "no good at writing" (Question 62) and that she is "afraid of essays" when she knows they will be evaluated (Question 40). She also strongly agrees that she never "seems able to write down ideas clearly" (Question 52). Moreover, she strongly disagrees "that it is easy for her to write compositions" (Question 59). Teresa has a high degree of anxiety which seems to show in her subsequent writing. Altogether, Teresa resembles a number of intermediate writers whose errors are not manifest but whose writing is flat and uncertain.

At a closer look, however, Teresa has several characteristics which later led to a good performance in this composition class (her final grade was an A-). Teresa has an open mind about learning; she disagrees that she "expects to do poorly in composition classes even before she enters them" (Question 55). She also believes that she will be a "much better writer after she finishes this class" (Question 36). Her feeling is a lack of security about her own performance, not a skepticism toward language itself.

She has a basic understanding of how to communicate to an audience. Her placement essay, though uncertain, still presents a coherent and sympathetic argument; college is going to be a growing experience. She does not center on her own personal

expectations but uses a global discussion of why one would want to go to college. Her reading score reveals her to be at a high level (13.6), and her word choice periodically demonstrates this: "introverted," "deprived," "chooses." Further she uses both a colon and semi-colon (not usual for an incoming intermediate student).

Teresa's final shows a great gain of solidity to her writing. Although her topic sentence is still somewhat general, her writing is more focused (her example of the pets left to die). Her sentences are well-formed; she tripled the number of compound sentences from her placement essay. Her writing voice is active and aggressive. Her topic centers on an objective idea, and she uses no disclaimers. She has one intermediate error, the mixing of pronoun number in the last sentence.

> Dogs are very nice animals, so why do some people treat them bad? For example, about one-half of all pets are left to die of hunger because their owners get sick of feeding them. Many owners let their dogs have litter after litter of puppies, and then they kill all the ones they can't get rid of by other means. Can't people do something about the suffering they do to their pets? If they don't want them, why don't they give them away. They might be able to find a girl or boy who would just love to have a little puppy of their very own.

Teresa resembles the typical older student, especially the housewife whose abilities have been traditionally underrated in American society. Her open mind and her teacher's sympathetic understanding, however, helped her become a more competent and confident writer. Dr. Clare Silva, her teacher, encouraged her to proceed at her own pace (which lessened her fear of failing).

Dr. Silva also stressed that Teresa had significant things to say, and Teresa bloomed under such skillful and nurturing guidance. As an entering intermediate student, Teresa's writing showed a lack of clarity and confidence. It is important for teachers of composition to reach out to students such as these, since their lack of confidence can be very inhibiting, and their potential for growth is substantial.

Student B: Fear of the Unknown

As a young, entering freshman, Kelly represents a typical college student: spontaneous, unmolded and unperturbed. Unlike Teresa, Kelly's fear of writing is not as debilitating (his score was 69). His skills appear intermediate in character, but his major writing problems seem to be inexperience and a lack of direction. Through his composition class, however, Kelly, too, mastered these problems to some degree (ending up with a B- in the course). Kelly's writing voice, like Teresa's, needed guidance and strengthening.

Kelly's placement essay is rife with intermediate characteristics and errors. His diction is unimpressive: "you," "aware," "open," "dealing," "people," "a lot," "benefits." His topic sentence, "It can open your eyes to alot of new ideas and ways of dealing with people" needs focusing. He uses passive voice, "Also going to college can help me with stay(ing) on the same level as some of the people I know," as well as disclaimers, "I _feel_ I can make it through college. . ."

Kelly has a nominalized sentence, "the other reason why I decided to go is that my family is expecting me to be the first one to make it through." Kelly, too, uses an incorrect preposition, "You couldn't really talk to them knowing that they have more knowledge to you do. . ." Kelly's placement essay is filled with sentence fragments and comma splices as well: "About half of them are going to college, either 2 or 4 years. . .," "No one in my family has done it so far$_X$ and it would be great if I could be the first one."

> I decided to go to college because of the benefits
> I could receive after I graduated. Also the feeling of
> knowing that you have done something with your life, other
> than just leaving high school and calling it quits. College
> makes you more aware of whats around you. It can open
> your eyes to alot of new ideas and ways of dealing with
> poeple.
> Also going to college can help me with stay on the
> same level as some of the people I know. About half of
> them are going to a college, either 2 or 4 years. You
> couldn't really talk to them knowing that they have more
> knowledge to you do. I would like to be on a even level
> with my friends at all times.
> The other reason why I decided to go, is that my
> family is expecting me to be the first one to make it
> through. No one in my family has done it so far and it would
> be great if I could be the first one. I feel that I can
> make it through college with the thought of how proud my
> parents and relatives will be when they know that there is
> a college graduate in the faimly.

As striking as Kelly's stylistic qualities are, one also notices his need for peer group/societal approval. This is further established in his questionnaire. Kelly's problems seem more diffuse than Teresa who seems to blame herself rather than other forces for any failing. Perhaps Kelly's identity as a male makes him less timid and fearful (2/3 of the sample judged true-intermediate were women). Kelly uses

few "strongly agree or disagrees" in his questionnaire. He does strongly agree, however, that "One needs to know how to write well in order to succeed in a career" (Question 26). He also strongly agrees that he "dislikes writing anything" (Question 20) and "his mind seems to go blank when he works on a composition" (Question 20).

All in all, Kelly's writing problems appear to stem from apathy; he doesn't seem very engaged by the process. He confesses that he sometimes "writes the teacher's ideas, even if they're not his own" (Question 8). Further, he sometimes uses "big words because teachers like them" (Question 10). Kelly's writing needs to become more expansive, less used only as a way of getting by in the course. Kelly needs to take chances and challenges in order to learn how to express himself in writing.

Kelly has an open mind about learning to write which, to some extent, motivated him to become a better writer. He agreed that he "would be a better writer after he finished the class" (Question 36). Further, his final shows a marked improvement over his placement in skill and style.

> Coherence, development and unity are important to writing because of many reasons. Coherence is important because the reader has to understand what the writer is trying to say or the meaning would be lost. If the writer had fragments or words in the wrong places you would have a hard time reading it. Development is important to writing so that the reader would not have to read every other sentence to catch how the writer is bringing along his work. Also whether or not the writer puts emphasis on the topic he chose to write about. Unity is also important to writing because this determines how a story would end. You couldn't talk about snakes all during the writing then end up talking about cars.

His topic sentence reflects some intermediate qualities, but it is focused and developed. He addresses his ideas methodically and ends up with a strong, vigorous conclusion, "You couldn't talk about snakes all during the writing then end up talking about cars." Moreover, he has only one error, the fragment "Also whether or not the writer puts emphasis on the topic he chooses to write about." His paragraph topic deals with an esoteric subject (writing), and he seems fascinated by it.

As a writing student, Kelly presents a challenging problem for composition teachers. He needs guidance and development as well as discipline to focus his thoughts and feelings. Kelly is a marginal intermediate student; one who can drift through classes without much change. His grade in 1001, as well as his final, indicate that he at least has corrected his editorial problems. A creative and intense teacher could also help him develop a strong and individual writing voice. His passivity and alienation from extending himself represents a major problem for today's teachers and one very relevant to the intermediate writer.

Student C: Fear of Writing

Karen represents a sizable portion of the intermediate category of students who are personally and socially rebellious against writing. As her placement essay and questionnaire suggest, Karen fears writing as a meaningless, tedious, and painful process. She has very negative expectations, and her work in the class indicates that these expectations were somewhat reinforced.

Karen's apprehension score was a "55" (high), and evaluating her answers to the various questions indicates that she is a person very uneasy with writing. She finds little personal satisfaction in it. She never wrote diaries or creative writings (Questions 4 and 13). She strongly disagrees that "writing is a lot of fun" (Question 53) or that she "enjoys writing (Question 51). Further, Karen expects to do poorly in composition classes even before she enters them (Question 55) and agrees that most of the concern about writing is in schools (Question 33).

Like many intermediate writers, Karen seems determined to minimize writing's importance because it intimidates her. She agrees that "language is used to confuse, baffle, or deceive people" (Question 27). She strongly agrees that she "doesn't like her compositions to be evaluated" (Question 61). She also feels strongly that expressing ideas through writing is "a waste of time" (Question 44).

Karen also has a low opinion of her ability to write clearly. She feels frustrated by a task or process that she finds hard-to-understand. She underrates her own abilities. She strongly agrees that she's "no good at writing" (Question 62) and that she "always has trouble with writing" (Question 23). She strongly disagrees that it's "easy for her to write composition" (Question 59). Moreover, she feels strongly that she "doesn't write as well as other people." Karen's expectations and opinion of her own abilities are negative.

Although Karen's placement essay demonstrates many intermediate characteristics, it is no more incoherent or error-ridden than the

two previous case studies. Her poor attitude significantly affected her work in the course (ending up with a "C" in the class). Karen's word choice depends heavily on generalizations: "new," "interesting," "different," "people," "a lot," "life style." Her topic sentence is undefined; "I choese this particular technology because I feel it best suits me and my life style." She depends heavily on disclaimers, "I feel that if I can help people in some way it would mean a great deal to me." Further, passive voice appears in her essay: "It means being able to do something different, meeting and talking to different people everyday." She has several fragments (see previous sentence) and uses an incorrect preposition, "it will be very exciting from a regular secretary job."

> I choese this particual technology because I feel that it best suits me and my life style. I have always wanted to be a nurse or airline-stewardeses, because I love meeting all kins of new and interesting people.
>
> I feel that if I can help people in some way that it would mean a great deal to me. Being a medical secretary means not having to come to work every day doing the same thing. It means being able to do something different, meeting and talking to different people every day. It also means that I will be able to do things that a regular secretary woulnt get to do. Such as giving shots, taking blood pressure, calling and writing out prescription. A regular secretary wouldn't get to do or learned all of these things. In other words I think it will be a very exciting job. I feel that it will be very exciting from a regular secretary job.
>
> And I know that it will be the right one for me. After all I'm the one who love's to meet different people. I also feels that this type of work has a lot to offer me in life.

However, there is a sense of excitement in her essay. She appears very pleased with her decision about her career. This excitement

with her career is in contrast to her final which has both more

errors and less of a sense of identity in it.

> Why are final examinations so important?
> Final examination are important in most schools and
> colleges, because they play a very important role in deter-
> mining our final grade, for either the school year or
> quarter.
> Many students hate to take final examines, because
> just the fact of knowing they have to take a examines
> upset's them.
> Why? Because many students are scare of the fact
> of failing a examine.
> But final examines is something that every school
> has a rule that every student must take them, to past
> the course. Finals examines count about one-half of the
> student final grade; and the only way to get out of taking
> them is to past all the tests with all A's, then the stu-
> dent might be lucky enough to get by without having to
> take one.

Several more spelling errors occur in her final than in her

placement essay. Her topic sentence is again unfocused, "Why are

final examinations so important?" She relies heavily on generali-

zations, as she did in the placement, but these are more garbled and

unclear. She uses one semi-colon and a compound sentence (which is

more developed than the placement).

Moreover, her tone in the final is tentative and fearful. She

writes, "Because many students are scare of the fact of failing an

examine," and "just the fact of knowing they have to take a examines

upset's them." Several errors appear in this final which were not

present in the placement; notably the incorrect apostrophe and the

two incorrect verb endings in the last sentence.

As a case study, Karen is an important subject to the study of

this dissertation. She exhibits the fear of writing, the lack of

focus to her writing, and a strong sense of alienation from written communication. Her sense of self and her ability to reach others through writing needs development. Writing teachers can inspire students such as these through a processive approach to the subject. By helping the student overcome his/her fear of the process, the student can learn to write more freely and openly. For this student, evaluation is a harsh experience. Using more descriptive and less grade-oriented evaluation will help the student overcome some of his/her block to the process. As much of the data in this chapter has shown, many intermediate writers are the most difficult for teachers to reach because their problems are less obvious and their attitudes are negative. A student like Karen can be instructed to become a forceful writer, but the teacher must be aware of and strive against this block to communication.

NOTES FOR CHAPTER IV

[1]Janet Emig, _The Composing Processes of Twelfth Graders_, (Urbana: NCTE, Research Report no. 13, 1971), p. 96.

[2]Clare Silva, "A Comparative Study of the Needs and Concepts of Individual Students in a Post-Secondary Remedial Writing Program," Diss. The Ohio State University, 1977, p. 55.

[3]John A. Daly and Michael D. Miller, "The Empirical Development of an Instrument to Measure Writing Apprehension." _Research in the Teaching of English_, Vol. 9, no. 3, Winter 1975. (Bulletin of the NCTE.) Urbana, Illinois, pp. 247-255.

[4]Mina Shaughnessy, _Errors and Expectations_ (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), p. 2.

[5]_Ibid_.

[6]Daly and Miller, p. 246.

[7]Robert E. Lees, _The Grammar of English Nominalization_ (Bloomington, Indiana University, 1968), p. xviii.

[8]Emig, pp. 2-3.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS; CONCLUSIONS; RECOMMENDATIONS.

A.   Findings

The findings of this study are the following:

1.   Intermediates as a group of entering composition students have not been investigated or analyzed by composition researchers to the extent that advanced and basic composition students have been. As a result, intermediates have not been defined for both pedagogical theory and practice.

2.   Intermediates expressed less interest in and experience with language activities, especially writing, than either the basic or advanced students (according to the attitude questionnaires in this study).

3.   Intermediates tested as most apprehensive of writing according to the Daly-Miller Empirical Instrument to Measure Writing Apprehension to a .07 level of significance as compared to the basic and advanced students in this study.

4.   The intermediate appears to have particular stylistic and error problems in his/her writings, particularly an unfocused thesis, ambiguous word choice, insecure writing voice, passive grammatical and rhetorical constructions, sentence level errors (especially fragments and run-ons) and a confused idiomatic use of the language as

determined by a juried rating of the basic, intermediate and advanced papers in the survey.

5. Within the group of intermediates there emerged degrees of intermediacy: true intermediates, moderate-intermediates and advanced-intermediates. Degrees of intermediacy were determined by the amount of intermediate stylistic problems and errors that were found in the 72 papers: True intermediates showed three or more descriptive problems and at least one error type; and intermediate-advanced demonstrated one descriptive problem and one or fewer error types.

6. Degrees of intermediacy were further correlated with the level of apprehension shown in the individual's questionnaire. True intermediates tested as most apprehensive (average score: 72); moderate-intermediates tested as less apprehensive (average score: 87); and intermediate-advanced tested as least apprehensive (average score: 95) out of a possible 125 positive points.

7. There appears to be a connection between the level of writing apprehension and the type of style and voice in a student's essay. A great level of apprehension generally correlates with the true intermediate's passive and unfocused writing style and a timidity toward his/her audience. Fifty per cent of the intermediates were judged true intermediates; none of these students demonstrated low apprehension on their questionnaires.

8. Case studies were undertaken to determine to what degree these findings applied to the specific intermediate students involved.

In each case emotional blocks inhibited the particular student's writing and aggravated already existing grammatical difficulties.

B.   Conclusions

1.   Intermediate students appear to have special problems as a group of composition students. Specifically, true intermediates appear more alienated and dissassociated from communication activities. Intermediates as a group seem most uninvolved with the process of expression and communication when compared to basic and advanced students.

2.   Intermediates do have specific composition problems, especially a lack of foci to their writings and an undeveloped personal voice. They seem most disconnected to their perceived audience, usually teachers and evaluators.

3.   Anxiety levels seem to have a direct and significant effect upon resulting writings. True intermediate students, especially, seem to avoid risk taking and personal disclosure through a passive and unthreatening writing style and rhetorical voice.

4.   It appears in this study that emotional blocks, i.e. fear of writing and evaluation, can impede clear, even correct, writing to a great degree (as much, perhaps, as a lack of experience and/or knowledge).

5.   More research is needed on the topic of intermediate students, especially in a student-centered context. The findings in this study are tentative, if only because no longitudinal study has been made of this large segment of the entering student population. Follow-up

research is needed to support, clarify and investigate the findings of this study. Empirical, as well as literature-based, research needs to be undertaken and pursued vigorously. At the same time, this research should be unobtrusive so that the students will be helped, not harmed by it.

6. Intermediates need some special, tailor-made instructional approaches, just as research has established specific instructional needs for both basic and advanced student writers. The following recommendations will suggest some possible instructional techniques for intermediate student writers. As this study sought mainly to identify the entering intermediate student's skills, attitudes, and methods, the recommendations will only be suggestions based on the researcher's experiences and reading.

C.   Recommendations

Rose's article "Rigid Rules, Inflexible Plans, and the Stifling of Language: A Cognitivist Analysis of Writer's Blocks" analyzes in part two types of treatment for the easing of anxiety and the promoting of written communication: affective and cognitive.[1] The affective mode deals with the individual's emotional and/or physical blocks to writing which, when confronted, can be sequentially broken down. The cognitive mode deals with the teaching of various intellectual strategies which, when presented as guides rather than as rigid rules, can help the student develop confidence beyond a specific lesson or class. Both of these modes will be discussed in this section of Chapter V followed by some practical lessons for the classroom teacher.

1. Affective Mode:

The Affective Mode generally means the emotional environment in the classroom (which is usually established by the teacher). Two very important elements in this environment are the trust and honesty set up by both the teacher and students. As Dennis Szilak points out in "Tricks" (College English, Vol. 36, No. 5), "passivity is the necessary result of an operational situation;" that is, most college age students are understandably cynical about how much freedom they really have in the classroom to say and write what they want. The teacher is still the determiner of their fates (grades); thus they will follow the teacher's philosophy, rather than formulate their own. The teacher needs to be honest with students in the beginning and tell them what to expect (both in assignments and grades). In terms of affective anxiety reduction, the teacher could have several assignments which are not graded but gone over by both teacher and student in a non-threatening manner (such as an informal discussion in the teacher's office). The teacher should not encourage students to believe that they will never be evaluated; this only contributes to the erosion of trust in the classroom.

What teachers can do is to make the evaluation system less harmful, threatening and pre-determined. In "A Study to Determine the Predictability of an Individual Student's Improvement in Writing Ability from his Performance on his First Writing Assignment," Martin found that a student's subsequent grade could be predicted

within ten points from his first assignment. Students with average skills, especially, changed little.[3] Teachers should try to incorporate in their grading a means whereby the student can benefit from subsequent improvement and not be stereotyped by past performance. Such approaches as many impersonal writings to a larger writing (with grades assigned on the later writings) can help, and always trying to comment positively to a student's writing can help to save the situation from a given failure for both teacher and student.

Peer evaluation can also be helpful; Hawkins suggests such a treatment in Group Inquiry Techniques for Teaching Writing.[4] Establishing trust and a sense of community can help the teacher and students "know" their audience. The students, through peer seminars and consultations, become less inhibited and more verbally communicative. They also become more learned about what makes effective writing.

Written profiles or histories of students can help teachers understand what experiences have formed a particular student's attitudes and behavior. Going over these together in a personal, yet unpretentious, way can produce a constructive pedagogical atmosphere for both teacher and student. What should be stressed in the "affective" mode of teaching is that growth develops from work, trust, and the notion of risk-taking for both student and teacher.

Rollo Brown notes in How the French Boy Learns to Write that in the French classroom there is an air of commotion, but it is a commotion of productivity. He states, "Furthermore, there is within

the classroom no deathlike quiet. . . The 'order' in the American schools was better. . . but there was also less work. The French boy understands that he is to do something as soon as he enters the schoolroom. Whether there is noise or not, there must be mental activity."[5] The classroom need not be a place of somberness and rigidity; the teacher should encourage the students to communicate both orally and in writing. Pre-writing activities such as brain-storming on a topic or just free association about the weather, sports, new experiences or whatever will help create more powerful written expression later. Telling jokes as a group often familiarizes the students and the teacher with each other. Most students "know" some jokes, and this will help to stimulate a sense of involvement in the situation. The teacher need not be the only person who talks; he/she should find ways of helping students communicate.

2. The Cognitive Mode:

Teaching cognitive devices can also help reduce anxiety for many students and formulate for them methods of writing which they can depend upon later. Macrorie's "freewriting"[6] can help students start to write when they are blocked or afraid. Freewriting is an associative technique whereby the student starts writing whatever comes to his/her head. From these "notes," the student then molds the writing into a more structured piece of writing. If the student can't think of anything to write, he/she writes "Nothing comes to mind" until something does. This technique can help students who

are so blocked that they are nearly "mute;" it also helps free the student from over controlled diction and stale ideas.

Journal writing, too, can help stimulate students to a freer, more individualized expression of ideas. Journals can be kept in several ways: as a log of ideas and experiences; as an ongoing narrative about social and personal topics; and/or as a pre-writing device to try out ideas for subsequent papers. Journals can be used for all three functions, and their true strength lies in the student's investment in them. They should not become a gimmick for either student or teacher; otherwise their whole purpose of informal use is lost. As James Britton pointed out in his lecture at The Ohio State University (October, 1978), journals properly handled are for when the student has something to say, not as a forced assignment, such as a writing everyday.

Internalization of writing rules can help students to write more freely and competently. Teaching fairly clear rules, such as punctuation, can encourage students to write because they now "know" something (how to punctuate an idea). Sentence combining may help here; as the students learn to put together several ideas, they may develop a more powerful and effective voice in their writings. Sentence combining as a means to an end, that of aiding students to a richer, more profound writing style, may be a very effective technique. Rules which are not clear and/or simple can be taught through individualized instruction and/or having students practice

writing many different exercises. Sometimes having students read aloud their papers will help them "hear" their own mistakes and will then become better editors.

Teaching "types" of papers can also instruct students about styles and purposes of a paper for a type of audience. Just as the journalism teacher instructs beginning writers in the four W's and one H (who, what, where, why and how), the composition teacher can show students how to structure an effective topic sentence (key words) and subsequent paragraphs (thereby detailing the parts of the topic sentence). It should be stressed, however, that the teacher should not insist on a particular method or claim that there is a particular method to writing clearly. This can ultimately lead to the rigidity and fear of making mistakes that was there previously. What the teacher should teach is how to think through a writing project; how to begin to write; and how to reach an audience.

Reaching an audience is a key issue for the writing class. Most students feel, with a great deal of validity, that their only audience is the teacher or "teachers." Instructing a class about what an audience is and how it responds is tricky but very important to the purpose of the class. Seminars and small group learning can establish a real audience for a particular person. Showing one's work to one's peers often makes the class much more effective. It can also make the class more fearful for the person so the teacher needs to handle the situation adeptly. Removing the names from papers can take away

some of the embarrassment of public disclosure. Making oneself (the teacher) available for guidance before the paper is due can also strengthen the student's belief that he/she can write an effective essay. Students can also form "buddies" in the classroom; someone to whom he/she writes letters and papers. This relationship can work to both affectively and cognitively influence the student to a more powerful writing style.

All of this interaction, between teacher and student, student and student, and student and self, takes time, energy and effort. As pointed out in Chapter I, Smith's composition survey found that more schools have less time and programs for beginning freshmen[9] (intermediate students). For example, The Ohio State University reduced its composition requirement from three courses (nine hours) to one (five hours). Although the nine hour sequence appeared not as effective as it should have been, the five hour course definitely cannot bridge the gap for incoming students who need to know how to write. One recommendation would be to analyze how effective current courses are and how they could be sharpened and strengthened. More hours of devoted work from both teachers and students would yield more qualitative work. Many students need time to develop and recognize what and how to write. The following section will discuss some particular exercises teachers can use to stimulate the intermediate writer in his/her writing development.

3. Teaching Techniques for Intermediate Writers

Some books which I have found helpful in planning to teach intermediate writers are Peter Elbow's Writing Without Teachers; Classroom Practices in Teaching English 1975-1976: On Righting Writing (edited by Ouida Clapp); Daniel Dietrich's Teaching About Doublespeak; and Macrorie's Telling Writing.

The books listed above all try to stimulate student communication (both orally and in writing) and to develop student awareness about his/her audience and power as a writer. As such, the writers address the fundamental problems of teaching writing: that writing is not unimportant or unknowable; it can and should have meaning for both writer and reader.

Elbow's Writing Without Teachers has several useful exercises for students who have trouble generating ideas and the words themselves. His thoughts on the autobiographical process and the production of thoughts and words (which he calls "cooking") are extremely helpful and stimulating to both teacher and student.[10]

On Righting Writing presents several ingenious techniques for encouraging and clarifying student writing. Cramer's "Twenty-Eight Creative Ideas for Writing" does exactly that--it sets forth very novel notions to stimulate students to want to write such as "What would you say in a note that was going to be put in a bottle and cast into the sea?"[11] Berlin and Millers' "Help, I'm a Prisoner in a Letter Factory!" suggests the method of having two classes of students exchange letters

and papers so that they can write with more direction and purpose, not to mention enjoyment. The idea of audience becomes much more relevant as well.[12] All the articles in this book are very helpful.

Dietrich's Teaching About Doublespeak is less broadly based than On Righting Writing, but the articles within do contain pithy ideas for both language sensitivity and audience awareness. Hardaway's "Practical Applications of Public Doublespeak Teaching: A Crap Detector for the Junior College Student" presents methods for analyzing what advertisements really mean to consumers (what does "intensive care" mean in medical doublespeak?).[13] This type of language awareness has real meaning and purpose for students. Fontenat's "The War of the Words" suggests several ways of enlightening students about words and their meanings (such as asking students what they would like to be called, "kids," "teenagers," "adolescents," or "young adults. . .?").[14] One important technique that she suggests for writing is that the students experiment with advertising claims (how many time capsules does "Contact" really have?) and then writing the company and telling the manufacturer the results they've gathered. This type of writing takes assignments out of the realm of theory and really gives the student a purpose for writing.

All these ideas are helpful, provocative, and engaging for both teacher and student, but the main techniques for causing change are committed teachers and interested students. The teacher is a very significant element in creating the dialogue between the student and the class and the student and himself/herself. The teacher must try

in as many ways as he/she can to make the class meaningful and enrich-

ing. As Brown notes in How the French Boy Learns to Write:

> The most significant of the other characteristics center
> about the teacher's one great desire to create in the
> pupil, a permanent state of mental activity. He is an
> enthusiastic teacher. Faults he may have, sometimes
> abundantly, but he does not suffer from a passive or
> indifferent attitude. . . he sets a good example through
> his own enthusiasm, his own apparent delight in his work.[15]

Passivity, fear of involvement, and personal retreat seem to

identify social and formal communications in the modern urban society.

People, in general, feel powerless, frustrated, and distrustful because

of the threats of judgment, harm, confusion, and individual vulner-

ability. As the Report to the President: White House Conference on

Children (1970) stated:

> In our modern way of life, it is not only parents of
> whom children are deprived, it is people in general.
> A host of factors conspire to isolate children from the
> rest of society. The fragmentation of the extended family,
> the separation of residential and business areas, the
> disappearance of neighborhoods, zoning ordinances, occu-
> pational mobility, child labor laws, the abolishment of
> the apprentice system, consolidated schools, television,
> separate patterns of social life for different age groups,
> the working mother, the delegation of child care to
> specialists--all these manifestations of progress operate
> to decrease opportunity and incentive for meaningful
> contact between children and persons older, or younger,
> than themselves.[16]

This erosion of social trust and involvement affects all stages

of urban life and seems to be mirrored in the intermediate writer.

The teacher of written composition has a social and moral commitment

to create for his/her students some sense of social involvement and

investment. This study has identified a type of personal anger and

social retreat for many intermediate writers. As educators, we must try to repair some of the alienation that has cut deeply into the basic fabric of our society and to reverse the deterioration of human communication.

Like "Barteby the Scrivener," many people prefer not to communicate with others because they fear the consequences of making themselves vulnerable to scorn and rejection. Only with a belief in and extension of self to others, can the American society thrive and flourish. Hopefully, through the training of intermediate writers, teachers of composition can inspire a new belief and trust in human communication and involvement.

[1] Mike Rose, "Rigid Rules, Inflexible Plans, and the Stifling of Language: A Cognitivist Analysis of Writer's Block," (typewritten). Dept. of English, University of California at Los Angeles, 1979, pp. 119-120.

[2] Dennis Szilak, "Tricks," College English, Vol. 36 (1975), no. 5, p. 526.

[3] Josiah Martin, "A Study to Determine the Predictability of an Individual Student's Improvement in Writing Ability from His Performance on His First Writing Assignment," Diss., University of Northern Colorado, 1973.

[4] Thom Hawkins, Group Inquiry Techniques for Teaching Writing. (Urbana: NCTE, 1976), p. 6.

[5] Rollo Brown, How the French Boy Learns to Write. (Champaign: NCTE, 1964), pp. 205-206.

[6] Ken Macrorie, Telling Writing. (New Jersey: Hayden Book Company, 1970), p. 8.

[7] James Britton, "Learning to Write and Writing to Learn," The Ohio State University Faculty Club, 10 October, 1978.

[8] Frank O'Hare, Sentence Combining, (Urbana: NCTE, 1971).

[9] Ron Smith, "Fall 1973 Survey of Composition Requirements," College Composition and Communication XXV (May, 1974), pp. 138-148.

[10] Peter Elbow, Writing Without Teachers (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973), pp. 16-67.

[11] Ronald L. Cramer, "Twenty Eight Creative Ideas for Writing" in On Righting Writing, ed. Ouida Clapp (Urbana: NCTE, 1976-1976), p. 10.

[12] Carole Berlin and Nancy Miller, "Help, I'm A Prisoner In A Letter Factory!" in On Righting Writing, ed. Ouida Clapp (Urbana: NCTE, 1975-1976), p. 48.

[13] Frances Hardaway, "Practical Applications of Public Doublespeak Teaching: A Crap Detector for the Junior College Student" in Teaching About Doublespeak, ed. Daniel Dietrich (Urbana: NCTE, 1976), p. 188.

[14]Christine Fontenot, "The War of the Words" in Teaching About Doublespeak, ed. Daniel Dietrich (Urbana: NCTE, 1976), p. 144.

[15]Brown, pp. 198-199.

[16]Urie Bronfenbrenner, "Children In America: The Roots of Alienation" in Educational Reform for a Changing Society, ed. Louis Rubin (New York: Allen and Bacon, 1975), pp. 31-32.

APPENDIX A

THE STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear Student:

I am conducting research about the writing process and the student's attitudes about it. Please help me by answering the questions listed on this questionnaire and be as honest as possible. All your answers will be kept strictly confidential and will only contribute to my work in this field. I sincerely thank you for your help.

Rita Bova

NAME:_____ CLASS:_____

DIRECTIONS: Below are a series of statements about the writing process. There are no right or wrong answers. Please indicate how each statement applies to you by circling the appropriate response for you. For example, if the question stated were "I eat breakfast every morning," you would respond that either you 1) never, 2) rarely, 3) sometimes, 4) most of the time, or 5) always eat breakfast every morning. If you always eat breakfast, this is the response you would circle, always. Take your time and be honest. Thank you.

1. I take many hours to write anything, especially school assignments.

Never   Rarely   Sometimes   Most of Time   Always

2. I make outlines before I write a paper.

Never   Rarely   Sometimes   Most of Time   Always

3. I write letters often.

Never   Rarely   Sometimes   Most of Time   Always

4. I have kept or am keeping a diary.

Never   Rarely   Sometimes   Most of Time   Always

5. I like to get an idea and and just start writing.

Never   Rarely   Sometimes   Most of Time   Always

6. I avoided writing in high school as much as possible.

Never   Rarely   Sometimes   Most of Time   Always

7. I can only write about an assignment if I'm interested in it.

Never   Rarely   Sometimes   Most of Time   Always

8. I usually try to write the teacher's ideas, even if they're not my own.

Never   Rarely   Sometimes   Most of Time   Always

9. I think about who will ready my papers as I write them.

Never   Rarely   Sometimes   Most of Time   Always

10. I always use big words, because teachers like them.

Never   Rarely   Sometimes   Most of Time   Always

11. I like to plan my papers as I write them.	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Most of Time	Always
12. Grammar problems are usually what hampers my writing.	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Most of Time	Always
13. I have written creative writings, (poems, stories, etc.).	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Most of Time	Always
14. I usually re-read what I write and correct it as I go along.	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Most of Time	Always
15. I usually try to have a main idea in my writing.	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Most of Time	Always
16. I usually wait until just before the assignment is due to write my paper.	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Most of Time	Always
17. I usually talk over my ideas with someone else before I write them.	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Most of Time	Always
18. After I've written an assignment the first time, I don't usually make changes in it.	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Most of Time	Always
19. I use specific examples when I write.	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Most of Time	Always
20. In general, I dislike writing anything.	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Most of Time	Always
21. I usually read only the books that are assigned in school.	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Most of Time	Always
22. I usually re-write a paper after I've written it once.	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Most of Time	Always
23. In general, I have trouble with writing.	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Most of Time	Always

Part II

DIRECTIONS: Below are more statements about writing. There are no right or wrong answers. Please indicate the degree to which each statement applies to you by circling whether you 1) strongly disagree (SD), disagree (D), not sure (NS), agree (A), or strongly agree (SA) with the statement. For example, if you strongly agree with the statement that the United States should continue the space program, then you would circle SA (strongly agree). Again, thank you.

24. Writing is important in learning how to communicate.	SD	D	NS	A	SA
25. Writing papers, letters, memos and other writings will be obsolete or unnecessay someday.	SD	D	NS	A	SA
26. One needs to know how to write well in order to succeed in a career.	SD	D	NS	A	SA
27. Language is often used to confuse, baffle or deceive people.	SD	D	NS	A	SA
28. In general, most people my age have trouble with writing.	SD	D	NS	A	SA
29. A good writer can think clearly.	SD	D	NS	A	SA
30. It doesn't matter how one says it; the message conveyed is most important.	SD	D	NS	A	SA
31. I don't usually notice how one expresses himself in writing.	SD	D	NS	A	SA
32. A person who can't write clearly doesn't know very much.	SD	D	NS	A	SA
33. Most of the concern about good writing is in the schools and doesn't affect me very much.	SD	D	NS	A	SA

34. I know my writing needs improvement, but I don't know what it needs specifically.   SD   D   NS   A   SA

35. One reason that I have difficulty with writing is that I don't have much to say.   SD   D   NS   A   SA

36. I think I will be a much better writer after I finish this class.   SD   D   NS   A   SA

37. I avoid writing.   SD   D   NS   A   SA

38. I have no fear of my writing being evaluated.   SD   D   NS   A   SA

39. I look forward to writing down my ideas.   SD   D   NS   A   SA

40. I am afraid of writing essays when I know they will be evaluated.   SD   D   NS   A   SA

41. Taking a composition course is a very frightening experience.   SD   D   NS   A   SA

42. Handing in a composition makes me feel good.   SD   D   NS   A   SA

43. My mind seems to go blank when I start to work on a composition.   SD   D   NS   A   SA

44. Expressing ideas through writing seems to be a waste of time.   SD   D   NS   A   SA

45. I would enjoy submitting my writing to magazines for evaluation and publication.   SD   D   NS   A   SA

46. I like to write my ideas down.   SD   D   NS   A   SA

47. I feel confident in my ability to clearly express my ideas in writing.   SD   D   NS   A   SA

48. I like to have my friends read what I have written.   SD   D   NS   A   SA

49. I'm nervous about writing.	SD	D	NS	A	SA
50. People seem to enjoy what I write.	SD	D	NS	A	SA
51. I enjoy writing.	SD	D	NS	A	SA
52. I never seem able to write down my ideas clearly.	SD	D	NS	A	SA
53. Writing is a lot of fun.	SD	D	NS	A	SA
54. I like seeing my thoughts on paper.	SD	D	NS	A	SA
55. I expect to do poorly in composition classes even before I enter them.	SD	D	NS	A	SA
56. Discussing my writing with others is an enjoyable experience.	SD	D	NS	A	SA
57. I have a terrible time organizing my ideas in a composition course.	SD	D	NS	A	SA
58. When I hand in a composition, I know I'm going to do poorly.	SD	D	NS	A	SA
59. It's easy for me to write good compositions.	SD	D	NS	A	SA
60. I don't think I write as well as other people.	SD	D	NS	A	SA
61. I don't like my compositions to be evaluated.	SD	D	NS	A	SA
62. I'm no good at writing.	SD	D	NS	A	SA
63. How many years did you take English in high school?	0	1	2	3	4
64. Please indicate how many courses you had had in English composition before CTI?	0	1	2	3	4

65. Please indicate the grade   _____
you received in your last
English class.

Thank you very much. Any remarks that you would like to make, feel
free to write them below.

APPENDIX B

EXAMPLES OF THE PLACEMENT ESSAYS WRITTEN BY TRUE

INTERMEDIATE, MODERATE-INTERMEDIATE AND INTERMEDIATE-

ADVANCED STUDENTS IN THE STUDY'S SURVEY

True Intermediate:

I decided to come to college because I hope that it will help me to make improvements that will better myself. I feel it will be helpful with my job I now have. I hope too that I will be able to build my self-confidence during this time. Society pressures have made me feel I will be inadequate if I do not continue my education.

My present job can only benefit from a college degree. I hope to gain a better understanding of how a business operates. My chances for high positions will increase.

I feel a better education will make me feel more sure of myself. After high school I became lazy I find myself coming across things Ive forgotten already. I think I will be looked down on for only having a high school diploma. College educations are highly stressed upon.

Moderate-Intermediate:

I chose the technology I am enrolling in because this is the type of work I would be most interested in and happy at doing.

Medical laboratory is a very rewarding field. There are many good points about it, being a laboratory technician, one is being able to help people and to me that is very important. Another one is being able to learn all about blood and the different types of cells.

Medical laboratory is a very challenging position. It offers a variety of places to work, such as: hospitals, clinics, laboratories, etc. There is always a need for laboratory technicians almost any-where so you should't have any trouble at all finding a job.

Med. Lab. is a fast growing field for which there is always a need and I would be most happy in this field. I like working with new things and people.

Advanced-Intermediate:

As the world is continuously changing, so is technology. More and more companies are starting to use computers as part of their daily routine. Data processing is only a small portion of the computer world. Data processing is also the beginning of my career in the computer field.

I first became aware of Data Processing through short contacts with several Data Processing Operators, while employed at Comtrac, Inc. I had taken typing for several years in high school. I began to really enjoy typing. The idea of punching the keys fascinated me. Data Processing consists of punching keys and often working in an office.

My interest in the field grew when my mother told me of all the opportunities that would be given if I went to school and studied the course in full, instead of taking some course that was advertised on television or in the newspaper. Columbus Technical Institute gave me the most complete information, and I then made up my mind to attend Columbus Technical Institute and study Business Data Processing.

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