# AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE CONCEPT OF PARAGRAPH AWARENESS AND ITS IMPLICATION FOR THE TEACHING OF COMPOSITION
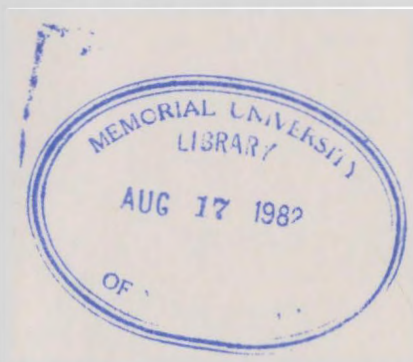
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AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE CONCEPT OF PARAGRAPH AWARENESS

AND ITS IMPLICATION FOR THE TEACHING OF COMPOSITION


by

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ABSTRACT

The purposes of this study were as follows:  to provide an exhaustive review of the literature dealing with the notion of paragraph; to determine whether selected grade nine students were sufficiently cognizant of the concept of paragraph to be able to differentiate between units of print which were paragraphs and units of print which were not paragraphs; and to provide suggestions dealing with curriculum and instruction of the paragraph.

The subjects for this study were 331 grade nine students from four high schools in Newfoundland.  The schools are located in four distinct geographical regions of the province.

A ten-item test was administered to the subjects. The test was comprised of five items that were paragraphs and five items that were non-paragraphs.

The results suggested that, in general, the subjects could not differentiate between paragraph and non-paragraph items.  This inability was interpreted as reflecting a lack of knowledge on the part of the subjects as to what a paragraph is.

Recommendations for teacher training programs, curriculum and instruction modifications, and further research were proposed.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Why is it that after nine years of schooling, many students still have problems with writing?  Do the majority of students really know what a paragraph is?  Is such awareness necessary in order for a person to be able to write effectively?  This study is an enquiry into these and other questions that pertain to the art of writing.

Before proceeding, the reader might wish to examine some definitions of paragraph.  These are provided on pages 28 and 29.

> In the usual progress of learning, the baby learns to say words, the small child learns to speak short sentences, and the early school child learns to write sentences.  The student writer then reaches the point of learning to communicate by paragraphs and it is here the die will be cast:  he or she becomes an effective writer or does not depending on whether he or she learns to write by paragraphs.
>
> In order for students to master paragraph writing, they must first understand what a paragraph is and how it functions in writing. They must see that a paragraph is the basic formal unit by which writers' generalizations are finally expressed on the detailed level and finally made specific and complete for the benefit of the reader.
>
> Students must understand that a paragraph consists of a simple limited statement formulated with care and developed in detail.  To say it in another way, it is a general statement illuminated or elaborated by specific statements.  It is the building blocks of larger writings such as essays, reports, news stories, novels, and short stories. The paragraph, in short, is where writing happens.

> But a good paragraph doesn't just happen.
> Good writers know what they are doing and
> make deliberate choices, rather than putting
> down sentences as they come to mind without
> conscious reason.  (Stanford and Smith, 1977,
> p. 25)

A perusal of the language-arts curriculum guides for

both Ontario and Newfoundland reveals that it is the

philosophy of both Departments of Education involved that

an understanding of what constitutes a paragraph is an

inherent component in the teaching of composition.  The

Newfoundland language-arts curriculum guide prescribes the

teaching of "paragraph sense" as one facet of writing skills

to be taught at the grade five level (Division of Instruction,

Department of Education, Government of Newfoundland and

Labrador, 1978, p. 23).

There is reason, however, to question how efficiently

and to what extent this is taught.  For example, markers of

the English public examinations for Newfoundland in 1978

report that the grade eleven students who wrote the examination

that year demonstrated a lack of mastery of paragraphing

(Public Examination Annual Report, 1978, p. 12).

The problem though is not just a local one, nor is

it a problem that has only recently come to be.  Gordon (1965)

contends that a problem exists with regard to students'

writing abilities in general, and in particular with regard

to organizational ability of which paragraphing is an example

(p. 145).  Hillocks, McCabe, and McCampbell (1971) also

suggest that there is a problem with regard to students'

writing (p. 476). As they see it, traditional methods of instruction as manifested by students' writing have not proved satisfactory.

Hillocks, McCabe, and McCampbell suggest that instruction in composition must be made much more systematic (p. 477). Sauer (1961) even more directly maintains that students do not write well because they are not instructed how to do so in a systematic way in high school (p. 88). Squire and Applebee (1968) conclude that there is very little instruction in the area of composition in the high schools. They report that only 15% of class time in high school is set aside for writing activities and of this amount of time, only a fraction is devoted to instruction in composition (p. 121). Citing a content analysis done by Lynch and Evans, they further contend that much of what is classified under "Writing" in high school English textbooks is actually material dealing with grammar, usage, and mechanics. They point out that in the so called "Writing" sections of these books, twice as much attention is devoted to these three areas as is devoted to rhetorical principles or composition (p. 128). Evans and Walker echo similar sentiments when they write about an overconcern with grammar, usage, punctuation, and spelling and a lack of concern with developing in students an awareness of how to put their thoughts on paper "to form a unified piece of writing" (p. 81).

Christensen (1967) contends that teachers do not really teach children how to write better but instead merely

expect them to (p. 3).  Hipple (1973) maintains that the act
of writing does not by itself teach writing and that an
increase in the number of writing opportunities does not
result in a statistically significant improvement in writing
skill (p. 143).  As the Incorporated Association of Assistant
Masters in Secondary Schools suggest, "It is not enough to
provide 'interesting' topics and expect nature to do the
rest" (p. 56).  It intimates however that many teachers
do just this in the belief that that this in itself is
sufficient to enable students to write.  Squire and Applebee
point out that in general, teachers are conscientious in
assigning and grading work in writing.  However, they go on
to point out that despite this demonstrated concern with
writing, there is an obvious lack of systematic instruction
in writing (p. 137).

Within the literature, there are some attempts to
account for this dearth of instruction in composition.
Christensen (1967) suggests that many teachers argue that
the only way to learn to write is to read literature.  This
argument presumes that instruction is unnecessary since the
ability to write would somehow or other be assimilated.
However, Christensen further states that while this process
of osmosis might be true over the course of a lifetime, it
is not true of the relatively short period of time students
spend in school (p. xiv).  Hillocks, McCabe, and McCampbell
say that although many teachers know the characteristics of
the finished compositions they want their students to pass

in, they do not know how to instruct their students how to
complete such an assignment (p. 478).

There is considerable evidence to suggest that the
facet of composition that should receive attention at the
high school level is the paragraph.  Loban, Ryan, and
Squire (1961), for example, maintain this is so.  They also
propose that principles of paragraphing such as unity,
coherence, and emphasis be taught as a part of composition
(p. 490).  Williams and Stevens (1972) admit that to teach
the concept of paragraphing and to teach students how to
recognize and utilize patterns of writing is a difficult
task.  They further point out that both textbook publishers
and classroom teachers tend to minimize such instruction.
This minimization of instruction is partially the result of
its difficulty (p. 513).  The point is, though, that
difficulty in acquiring any skill seems a weak rationale for
precluding the teaching of that skill.

Wresch (1979) finds it odd that at this time,
instruction in paragraph structure is being abandoned
because critics of such instruction claim it is "artificial"
and "constraining" while empirical research is showing that
there is a need for such instruction (p. 10).  As Hipple
points out, the majority of students will probably never
produce any unexpected brilliance in their writing but at
the same time, most students can be taught how to write a
paragraph (p. 148).  The situation seems to break down to
one wherein the high school teacher can risk constraining

some exceptional students for the benefit of the majority or, on the other hand, risk letting the majority flounder for the benefit of the few.

It has been established previously (Loban, Ryan, and Squire; Stanford and Smith) that the paragraph is the most natural unit of composition to be taught in high school. It has also been argued (Stanford and Smith; Wresch) that a knowledge of what constitutes a paragraph is necessary if students are expected to write using paragraphs. And finally, it has also been established (Christensen; Hillocks, McCabe, and McCampbell) that for one reason or another, very little instruction in composition takes place in the high school English class.

## Purposes of the Study

The purposes of this study are as follows:

(i)  To determine whether selected grade nine students have a sufficient awareness of what constitutes a paragraph to select five paragraphs from ten units of print, five of which are paragraphs and five are not. The implication (based on what Stanford and Smith, and Wresch say) is that if students don't know what a paragraph is, they can't be expected to write one.

(ii)  To provide an exhaustive review of the literature on paragraph structure.

(iii)  To provide an exhaustive review of the methodology of teaching paragraph writing.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

A Rationale for Teaching Composition

Charnock (1978) suggests that in today's age of the
computer print-out and electronic communications gadgetry,
there are concerns about the need to teach composition in
the schools. He then proceeds to attend to the concerns he
has just raised, by pointing out that though these non-print
devices transmit and receive information, they don't compose
it. Going further, he adds that he cannot envision the day
when people will not need the ability to organize their ideas;
in other words, to be able to write a composition. On the
contrary, he sees an increased need for people to be able to
write well (p. 92).

In terms of the educational process, several reasons
for teaching composition have been delineated. Hillocks,
McCabe, and McCampbell (1971) suggest one of the reasons
composition is taught in schools is because schools demand
that it be taught. They concede that this is an embarrass-
ingly circular argument but still it is an actuality (p. 506).
Doughty (1968), in a similar vein, suggests that another
reason for teaching composition is that there is a notion
that the school learner's competencies should include certain
specific writing abilities (p. 1). Because composition is
used as an evaluation tool, there are suggestions that the

schools feel a responsibility for teaching it. This point is made by Hillocks, McCabe, and McCampbell when they suggest composition allows the student to communicate data which is in turn used by the teacher to evaluate performance (p. 500). Hannon, Hannon, and Allinson (1969) contend that this is quite legitimate. They maintain that it is axiomatic that the student be able to show objective evidence outside himself of having acquired and developed ideas (p. 3). They also suggest that writing provides a permanent record of a student's work and that this permanent record is needed for checking, correcting, discussing, and guiding a student's progress (p. 3).

Hillocks, McCabe, and McCampbell state that because composition has been entrenched in the high school English program for so long, it has become an inalienable part of this program (p. 494). Similarly, Doughty says that it has become expected of the English teacher to develop the total linguistic resources of his or her pupils and, of course, writing is included amongst these linguistic resources (p. 36).

Doughty also suggests another utilitarian rationale for teaching composition. His view is that the schools have a responsibility to provide their students with the requisite composition skills to allow the students to progress in education and in occupations (p. 5). Marland (1977) explicitly points out that because written examinations often provide the ticket to degrees of affluence and social mobility, students demand that they be taught the skills necessary to cope with

these examinations. Composition, he maintains, is the chief of these skills and students therefore demand that they be taught it (p. 3).

In addition to these somewhat utilitarian reasons for teaching composition, several more esoteric reasons are suggested in the literature. Marland visualizes writing as a means of using language for thinking and developing thought processes and suggests that this is a valid reason for teaching composition (p. 147). Hannon, Hannon, and Allinson see writing as a means of getting children to think about and respond to issues facing them (p. 3). They also maintain that the products of composition - that is, the children's paragraphs, essays, compositions, and stories - have value in and of themselves, and this is enough to justify the teaching of composition.

As can be seen, there are various reasons suggested as to why composition should be taught in school. There are also different philosophies behind the rationales for teaching composition. However, the important point seems to be that a need does exist for teaching composition and that schools are attempting to fulfill that need by doing so.

As Lee (1973) points out, writing is a special manifestation of language and most students who can be taught to speak can also be taught to write things down in some order (p. 309). Because society values composition skills so highly, then it seems these skills should be taught.

## Some Problems with Instruction in Composition

Although there seems to be a consensus among most authorities in this field that the teaching of composition is needed and desirable, concerns about the efficacy and direction of such teaching in the past and at present are evident in the literature. Some of these concerns have been expressed in Chapter One. Hillocks (1972) echoes many of these concerns when he says:

> As we have seen, approaches to language, composition, and literature are highly traditional, seldom making use of recent developments in each area: the literature courses include a heavy percentage of survey and generic courses; a majority of language courses deal primarily with mechanics, usage and traditional school grammar; and composition programs are usually based on very naive notions about the composing process. Worse, many programs attempt to replicate the offerings of the college English departments. In fact, in many programs it appears that most courses are intended for the college bound (p. 120).

Hillocks, McCabe, and McCampbell voice a rather common complaint when they express their concern about an overemphasis on the part of teachers on the finished product and a lack of concern with the composing process (p. 504).

## Suggestions for Instruction in Composition

In addition to the criticisms regarding the teaching of composition, the literature also contains specific suggestions as to how the teaching of composition can be improved.

Christensen (1966) states that in the past, there has been a tendency to evade, and in some cases, to misrepresent the problems in teaching composition. He believes that composition is an art and as such is in need of prescriptive standards. For Christensen, the teacher's job involves more than supplying the student with topics or ideas, for as he says metaphorically, "the teacher's job is not just to get the spigot turned and let the water flow" (p. 66). Although he does not say so explicitly, Christensen implies that part of the teacher's job in teaching composition is to teach the composing process itself. Squire (1966), similarly, feels that composition must be taught and not merely provided (p. 250).

This is not to say, however, that composition classes be so committed to instruction that little or no time is provided for actual practice in composition. On the contrary, one of the points found consistently throughout the literature is that students be provided with many opportunities to write. This point is made by Britton when he contends that children learn to write by writing (Judy, 1974, p. 88). Squire (1966) and Hook (1965) similarly place emphasis on the need to have plenty of opportunities for writing in any composition program. As Hook states, composition begins by the person wanting to say something (p. 230). To paraphrase Hook, composition begins when a person has something to write about and an opportunity to write about it.

This is not to suggest, however, that people such as Hook and Squire are proponents of a composition program devoid

of any instruction.  Squire, for example, maintains that a good writing program is based on such things as critical reading, carefully planned discussions, and sequential instruction in rhetorical matters such as the organization and development of ideas and the ways of achieving greater clarity and effectiveness of expression (p. 250).  They do however take exception to the use of composition classes to teach spelling, vocabulary, grammar, and so forth with the avowed intention of increasing composition skills (Hook, p. 230; Squire, p. 250).

There are also suggestions that along with instruction in the composing process, models of the type of writing under discussion could be provided.  This is suggested by Hirsch (1977) and Hillocks, McCabe, and McCampbell.  This strategy would provide the student with concrete examples of the points under discussion as well as some idea of the expected product of the composition process.

Perhaps the following comment from McQuade and Atwan best makes the point that overall instruction in composition is needed:

> To be sure, learning to write well requires the conscious mastery of time honored rules and procedures.  That is an educational fact that nearly everyone who wants to learn how to write must face up to.  (McQuade and Atwan, 1980, p. xvii)

## Teaching the Paragraph

## The Paragraph as the Unit of Composition

Just as a case can be proposed for the teaching of composition in the high school, there is considerable evidence that the paragraph can be used as the fundamental unit for teaching composition. Hook (1965) for example, says that this is the case when he suggests that single, separate sentences befuddle students with swarms of minutiae while longer compositions of two or three pages occupy so much time that instruction in organization and development and the time available for writing are both shortened with possible detrimental effects (p. 263). Similarly, Gordon (1965) suggests that teachers need not be concerned with getting students to write more than a paragraph at any level of the high school program. He contends that the practice of requiring students to write longer compositions is a rather negative one in that students are asked to write too much while at the same time they are not required to write often enough. His suggestion is to key on the paragraph at the high school level (p. 6). Sauer (1961) makes the same point.

There are also suggestions that the processes and intricacies involved in writing a paragraph are very similar to those in writing longer compositions. Hoole (1964), for instance, maintains that once a person can write a simple straightforward, clear, logical paragraph, he has learned

to express his thoughts and ideas effectively - in other words, that person can write (p. 103). Hipple (1973), citing Watts, suggests that most of the desirable character- istics of good writing can be achieved just as easily by writing single paragraphs as they can by writing longer compositions (p. 156). Hipple, however, disagrees with those who maintain that high school students need not write pieces of writing lengthier than paragraphs. But he contends that for purposes of teaching the composition process, the paragraph will suffice and will spare both students and teachers considerable effort (p. 156). Sauer states that the single paragraph raises all the problems that longer compositions raise and he, too, suggests that the paragraph suffices as the unit of instruction in composition. As he goes on to point out, paragraph writing forces the writer to organize, to prepare, and to give shape to ideas. Initially, this is enough to expect (p. 87). He intimates that indeed most colleges would be happy if most students who came to them were accomplished paragraph writers (p. 87).

Hirsch (1977) indicates that there is a sound psychological reason for stressing the paragraph as the unit of composition (p. 151). He views the paragraph as a process entity with a sequential, one-item-at-a-time schema as its governing principle. He then goes on to say that this process is similar to the working of the human mind. As Hirsch points out, the paragraph is essential and if it did not already exist, it would have to be invented (p. 155).

The final point he makes is that the paragraph forces the writer to contextualize and to constrain; doing this allows the writer to communicate with the reader (p. 155).

There are suggestions even among those who advocate longer composition assignments at the high school level that mastery of paragraph writing is essential before the student proceeds with longer assignments. Sauer, for example, makes this point when he suggests that it is difficult to see composition advancing in anything other than an aimless, impressionistic nature if paragraphing has not been mastered (p. 91). Daigon and Laconte (1971) point out that in order for a writer to experience success in writing, he must have experienced a sense of completeness and a sense of form in his writing. They suggest that mastery of the paragraph allows the writer to experience such feelings (p. 358). Kenzel and Williams (1971) conclude that the composition process involves a sequence of six steps. Included in this sequence is the ability to put ideas into paragraph form (p. 2).

In addition to the rationales for using the paragraph to teach composition, there are also several somewhat tangential reasons suggested for teaching paragraphing. Fowler (1965) holds that an understanding of the organizational structure of the paragraph assists in speaking and in reading (p. 115). Hook suggests that learning the art of good paragraph construction assists in the development of "straight-thinking abilities". These concerns

seem to give added weight to the suggestion that mastery of paragraphing is necessary at the high school level.

The Need for Instruction in Paragraph Writing

If the paragraph is to be the unit of composition with which students are to grapple at the high school level, it seems that the issue of whether or not there is a need for instruction in paragraph writing needs to be examined. Within the literature, there seems to be pronounced agreement that there is indeed a need for such instruction.

Sauer indicates that an examination of student paragraphs will confirm that such a need exists, for, according to him, student paragraphs, as a rule, are woefully underdeveloped. He suggests that along with the provision of ample opportunities to practise paragraph writing, there is the need for specific instruction in how to develop a paragraph (p. 90). Hook agrees with Sauer, both as to the general state of student-written paragraphs and to the need for instruction in this area. Hook likens the paragraph written by the untutored student to the ideas that come to a person's mind while that person is strolling down the street. He goes on: "Both the paragraphs and the thoughts are often mildly entertaining but they are chaotic and unstructured with no pattern, no destination, and no future" (p. 237).

Rosen and Coleman (1975) feel that it is the job of the teacher to help students organize their thoughts and to

put them together for their audience.  They suggest that the
way to do this is to teach students how to write a good
expository paragraph (p. 3).  Hook suggests that students
entering junior high school possess lots of good ideas.  He
contends that what students lack and what they need
instruction in, are methods of organizing and developing
paragraphs and the ways to make them unified, coherent, and
emphatic (p. 238).  A similar stance is taken by the IAAMSS
(1952) when  it  suggests that the need to arrange, and to be
taught how to arrange, is present from the very first attempt
at writing (p. 61).  Similar concerns about the need for
instruction in the principles of paragraphing are expressed
by Dakin (1947), Hipple (1973) and KaKanis and Wilcox (1969).

It might be added that the difficulty of teaching
paragraph writing is recognized by many of the people just
mentioned.  This feeling is probably best stated by Hipple
when he suggests that the principles involved in paragraph
writing are not easy to teach nor easy to learn (p. 157).
But as Hipple goes on to state, this difficulty should not
deter the effort (p. 157).

## Instruction as it Pertains to the Paragraph

Within the literature dealing with instruction as it
pertains to the paragraph, there seem to be two main schools
of thought.  On the one hand, there is a group of people who
stress the teaching of "paragraphing" - in other words the
development through instruction of "paragraph sense" or

"paragraph awareness". On the other hand, there are the people who advocate that instruction focus on how to produce a paragraph. There is, not surprisingly, a third group who advocate combining both methods.

### Instruction in "paragraphing"

A theoretical substantiation of the ideas proposed by the first group is developed by Waters (1980). Having done analyses of student-produced writing, she concludes that the data suggest several hypotheses about the developmental process involved in the formation of schemata as they apply to writing. One hypothesis, she proposes, is that general rules for structuring materials are abstracted from particular instances (p. 165). Transposed to the teaching of the paragraph, the implication is that, by being exposed to examples of paragraphs and, as Waters suggests, by being made aware of certain features, the learner develops an understanding of what constitutes a paragraph (p. 165).

The notion that exposure to samples of paragraphs helps one to develop a "sense of paragraph" is evident in the works of several authors. Fowler (1965), for example, suggests that all students need help in developing a sense of paragraph. She suggests that one method of doing this is to provide lots of occasions where students are provided with samples of paragraphs and required to analyze how they are put together (p. 115). Christensen, in a somewhat categorical manner, claims he has discovered the structural relationships within paragraphs by a process of induction,

and concludes that this is the method used by most people to develop this awareness (p. 67). Hook also maintains that coherence, unity, emphasis, and the various possible methods of developing a paragraph, can be taught through an inductive process (p. 242). However, he and Christensen differ on possible sources to be used in the inductive process. Christensen states that the only valid source for finding the rhetorical principles which students should be made aware of is the work of professional writers (p. 66). Hook, however, advocates the use of any paragraphs; including paragraphs written by students themselves (p. 242). Marland (1977) concurs with Hook when he advocates the teaching of paragraphing through exposure to a variety of models (p. 166). His rationale for this is that exposure to samples other than those from professional writers forces the student to "encounter" the sample - to come to grips with it as opposed to the tendency to try to imitate the writing of professional writers (p. 166). Evans (1966) and Pooley (1960), however, think more in line with Christensen and espouse exposure to good literature for the purpose of providing models.

There are also several authors who concur with this methodology but who cast doubt upon the extent to which it is utilized at present. Williams and Stevens (1972), for example, advocate this type of instruction, but as they point out, the skills at which this instruction is aimed are not easily acquired nor easily taught. They maintain that because of these difficulties, both classroom teachers and textbook

publishers tend to minimize the worth of this type of instruction (p. 513). Wresch (1979) has quite similar feelings about this situation (p. 10). Friend (1977) suggests that although this method of teaching is superior to the lecture method, especially at the high school level, many teachers still try to develop this awareness in their students by lecturing to them (p. 17). The reason for this superiority, she suggests, is due to the fact that this method of teaching demands student involvement, which in turn leads to greater motivation and greater retention (p. 17). Hipple (1973) also suggests that teachers try to teach such concepts as unity, coherence, and emphasis by telling their students what the terms mean. However, he makes the point that, telling is not teaching and the way to acquire these principles is by relating the definitions to both positive and negative examples of the concept (p. 154).

The idea that "paragraphing" should be stressed as the instructional technique in teaching the paragraph is also proposed by Evans and Walker (1966). They, like most of the others mentioned previously in this section, do not see this type of instruction being used in isolation. Along with such instruction, many of these writers intimate, there is a need for the provision of opportunities to apply skills acquired to the actual writing situation.

### Instruction in paragraph production

As Gordon (1965) points out, a major problem exists in that there is very little verified information on

procedures for teaching the writing of paragraphs (p. 100).
He also argues that teachers for the most part have accepted
prescribed procedures without really knowing the rationales
for these procedures. Just this, he maintains, has led to
problems (p. 100). Daigon (1961) also contends that teaching
practices in this area have met with problems in the past and
this is attributable to the fact that such instruction has
not followed the "how to" model provided by professional
writers (p. 348). Bhatia (1977) also criticizes past
instruction by maintaining that the teaching of writing has
not been done in a sequential and systematic manner (p. 3).
Even though these authors criticize instructional procedures
which have been used for some time, they also recognize the
inherent difficulty in teaching how to write a paragraph. As
evidence of this difficulty, Gordon refers to the pressure by
members of college English departments to move away from the
teaching of composition and into the less difficult and
presumably more rewarding teaching of literature (p. 99).

There are also indications that English teachers and
educators in general might be over-ambitious in the teaching
of writing skills. As Mirrielees points out, only a few high
school students write well and to the average high school
student, the writing of every paragraph is a major task
(p. 197). Sauer agrees while offering the following quote by
Sir Herbert Read: "Poets are born not made but the ability
is given to every man of average intelligence to write clear
prose" (p. 85). Both Mirrielees and Sauer make the point

that recognizing this general inability on the part of most
high school students, the English teacher needs to provide
instruction such that as many students as possible can learn
to produce clear, logical paragraphs.

Among the people who stress that the paragraph be
taught by teaching the composing process, there is a group
who focus on the need to provide ample time for children to
write as a major strategy. Dunning (1969), Fowler (1965),
Hoole (1964), Morsey (1969), and Sauer (1961) all advocate
this approach. Sauer (1961) probably best exemplifies the
feelings of this group when he says, "With practice, the
writer acquires an automatic paragraph sense which guides
him almost without thought" (p. 92). It probably should be
noted that these people stress opportunity to write as the
focal point of teaching the paragraph but they do not stress
this to the exclusion of all other teaching strategies.
Hoole (1964) makes this point when he says that good
paragraphs do not materialize out of the blue and that the
process of paragraph composition involves "careful thought,
methodical composition, and careful revision" (p. 103).

There are also those who suggest that one of the most
important things to stress when teaching paragraph composition
is that careful preparation is necessary before the writer
begins to write a paragraph. These people seem to view the
writing of a paragraph as the culmination of a thinking
process. Loban, Ryan, and Squire (1961) and the IAAMSS (1952)
take this view of paragraph writing. Evans (1966) suggests

that with increasing attention being paid to the "new
rhetoric", teachers should pay more attention to placing
proper emphasis on preparation whereby students collect,
test, and logically sort their ideas before they are
written down on paper (p. 55).

There are also various authors who have offered
rather specific yet diverse suggestions for teaching
paragraph composition.

Christensen recommends that children at first should
be given opportunity to indulge in self-expression where
simple fluency is the goal. He maintains that the develop-
ment of a sense of form in the child's writing should not
become a concern until around grade six. Furthermore, he
recommends that narration and description be the forms of
writing stressed initially (p. xi). Christensen reasons
that narration and description lend themselves to temporal
and spatial arrangement respectively, hence these types of
arrangement are easier to teach and easier to learn (p. xii).

Stanford and Smith (1977) propose four methods of
teaching paragraph writing: (i) imitation, (ii) following
rules and patterns, (iii) writing with subsequent criticism
of results, and (iv) using the journal approach. First of
all, they contend that since most methods of learning employ
imitation, one way of utilizing this is to have students use
models for their writing. Their second technique would have
the teacher set purposes for each writing assignment by
supplying direct instructions on how to complete the task at

hand. This approach, they admit, assumes that there are, in fact, certain principles and formulas that students can follow in writing. The third method which they propose is rather a trial and error method in that students are required to write first and the results are then criticized by the teacher. They suggest that although this method may be frustrating and perhaps even punitive for the majority of students, for the highly creative and the highly motivated, this method seems to work apparently because it frees these students from constructive models and formulas. And finally, the fourth method, which they suggest will work for some students, involves the use of a journal. They submit that there is a major weakness in this approach, in that it includes no reference to the two basic ways by which humans learn, by precept and by example; instead it depends simply on sheer practice (p. 3). The following quotation reflects their feelings:

> To assume that regular, profuse writing in a journal will make one a better writer is like assuming that practicing a piano is sufficient to graduate from playing "Leap Frog Leap" to "Moonlight Sonata". Most of us also need lessons to show us how to play better and a sympathetic teacher to point out our mistakes (p. 4).

However, they do conclude that the journal, when used in conjunction with other methods, can be a valuable sustained writing activity.

Marland (1977) contends that the ability to write a paragraph is a developmental process. He maintains that the

process involves an increasing internalization of form and strategy, as well as an ability to incorporate models acquired from reading into the writer's resources (p. 159). Commenting on this same theme, but taking it just a step further, Loban, Ryan, and Squire (1961) contend that the ultimate development of such internalization varies with the abilities, experiences, and motivation of the learner, and with the nature of the instruction as well. They also suggest that the basic role of the teacher is to encourage students to form their own generalizations (p. 61). In Marland's view, the most dramatic change in writing occurs when the teacher moves out of the role of examiner and into the role of adult consultant (p. 166). Owens (1970) suggests similar ideas but he advocates in addition the use of pre-writing discussion as a strategy (p. 87). It should be mentioned that Owens also stresses instruction in techniques in paragraph development.

Harris (1966) suggests that the English teacher, when teaching how to write a paragraph, might also write an occasional paragraph, meanwhile following meticulously the very specifications prescribed for the students. As she suggests, this activity might well foster greater under-standing on the part of both teacher and student. The student will see that the assigned task can indeed be completed as prescribed, while the teacher will be in a position to grasp some of the perplexities which the student faces (p. 1).

There are researchers who insist that methods of developing a paragraph can and should be taught directly.

Shaw (1970) identifies eight methods of paragraph development. Of these, three methods are utilized most frequently: (i) arrangement by chronology, (ii) arrangement by physical point of view, and (iii) arrangement by logical reasoning (p. 373). Christensen, on the other hand, argues that this is not the case at all. He claims it is "almost impossible" to write a paragraph without employing a combination of these methods, contrary to what the handbooks suggest (p. 55). He further states that, upon analysis, not many paragraphs exemplify such developments or tidy patterns of movement (p. 55).

### An eclectic approach

There are several authors who advocate that instruction in the paragraph encompasses both methods mentioned previously. Charnock (1978), for example, maintains that the paragraph can, and perhaps should, be taught in both ways. In other words, he advocates teaching the paragraph both by "building" paragraphs and by analyzing existing paragraphs (p. 98). Sauer (1961) also proposes this somewhat eclectic approach. He suggests that students be taught how to build paragraphs but at the same time should be taught paragraph "sense" through the analysis of paragraphs from such sources as the works of professional authors, the daily newspaper, and magazines (p. 89). He contends that both methods are necessary and that analysis of

existing paragraphs will enable the student to see that a
paragraph is not merely a collection of sentences loosely
thrown together but that it is the thoughtful shaping of
an idea.  Hirsch (1977) also is a proponent of this
integrated approach, for, as he maintains, to teach any
practical art, the teacher builds on the practical knowledge
a student already possesses.  As he goes on to point out,
the basis of this type of instruction is the Piagetian
notion of "schema" (p. 159).  Again, to transpose this idea
to the teaching of the paragraph, the implication is to
develop an "awareness" of paragraph while at the same time
to get students to utilize such awareness in the production
of paragraphs.

The contributors to the Ontario Curriculum Guide,
1977 also propose a similar idea of using an eclectic
approach, but in the opposite direction to the proposals
mentioned above.  Suggested therein is the notion that
children learn to write by writing, therefore this is where
the emphasis should be placed initially.  It is proposed
that the development of an awareness of paragraph be
developed after the student has had lots of practice at
writing.

It seems that there is a wide variety of approaches
to teaching the paragraph.  There also seems to be a lack of
research into the efficacy of the various modes of instruction.
There does seem to be, nevertheless, a fairly substantial
amount of evidence to suggest that instruction of some form
is indeed necessary.

## Some Definitions of Paragraph

Even though the term paragraph has been used quite
extensively so far in this paper, no attempt has been made
to define what a paragraph is.  A fairly exhaustive search
of available sources produced the following definitions of
paragraph.

> The paragraph originally was a short
> horizontal stroke drawn below the
> beginning of a line in which a break in
> sense occurred.

> A symbol of character ( ¶ or ℙ )
> formerly used to mark the commencement
> of a new section of part of a narrative
> or discourse.

> A distinct passage or section of a
> discourse, chapter, or book dealing with
> a particular point of the subject, the
> words of a distinct speaker, etc.;
> whether consisting of one sentence or a
> number of sentences that are more closely
> connected with each other than that which
> stands before and after.

> - Oxford English Dictionary

> Paragraph - a subdivision of one or more
> sentences in a piece of writing, set apart
> by indentation or extra spacing.  The
> paragraph is a writer's device for breaking
> his composition into logical, inviting, and
> easily readable parts.

> - Encyclopedia International

> Paragraph - a division of written work
> consisting of one or more sentences, all
> related to the same idea.  Usually the first
> line is indented.  In some business letters
> paragraphs are not indented and a line is
> left blank between paragraphs.

> - The World Book Encyclopedia

Paragraph is a distinct section or subdivision
of a written or printed composition that consists
of from one to many sentences, forms a rhetorical
unit (as by dealing with a particular point of the
subject or by comprising the words of a distinct
speaker) and is indicated by beginning of a new,
usually indented line.

- Webster's Third New
International Dictionary

A group of sentences that belong together;
distinct part of a chapter, letter, or composition.
A paragraph usually has some unifying elements
such as meaning or subject that are not shared
with the sentences that come before or follow.
Paragraphs usually begin on a new line and are
indented, except in some business letters.

- World Book Dictionary

The paragraph is a device introduced into the
written language to suggest a kind of periodicity.
In principal, we should expect to find a greater
degree of cohesion within a paragraph than between
paragraphs, and in a great deal of written English,
this is exactly what we find.  (Halliday and
Raqaiya, 1976, p. 296)

A paragraph is a group of properly related
sentences which develop, with sufficient detail,
one topic only.  (Hoole, 1964, p. 103)

A paragraph is a group of statements or
sentences, developing an idea or a topic.
(Shaw, 1970, p. 353)

In addition to these somewhat formal definitions of

what a paragraph is, others have attempted less formal

definitions.  One example is Christensen (1967) who compares

the paragraph to a dance with the topic sentence drawing a

circle and the remainder of the paragraph doing a pirouette

within the circle (p. 33).  It might be of interest here to

note that Christensen does not limit the paragraph to the

realm of writing and printing.  He contends that the

paragraph is an attribute of some spoken language (p. 80).

## Characteristics of the Paragraph

Besides attempts at formal definitions of paragraph, there are also attempts to describe attributes or constituents of the paragraph. Christensen (1966) quoting Beckett, describes paragraphs as "multi-systemic units" marked by grammatical, phonological'(when read aloud), lexical, and rhetorical features (p. 69). Shaw (1970) sees the paragraph as the basic unit of thought in the writing process and the very heart of learning to write effectively (p. 353).

Barnet and Stubbs (1977) outline three necessary components of the paragraph. They say that a paragraph must have unity (it makes one point), organization (the point is developed according to some pattern), and coherence (the development, sentence by sentence, is clear to the reader) (p. 63). They go on to point out that although there are no hard and fast rules about paragraph length, most good paragraphs are between 100 and 200 words in length and most paragraphs contain more than two but fewer than eight sentences. Similar suggestions about the length of paragraphs are suggested by Leggeth, Meade, and Charavat (1970). As well, the ideas about unity and coherence are found in Leggeth, Meade, and Charavat, and Diederich (1974).

There is a variety of suggestions as to how paragraphs are developed. For example, the Encyclopedia International suggests that most paragraphs are "inductive" in that they start with a general topic which is followed by

statements which contain specific details about the topic.
Allington and Strange (1980) present four common types of
relationships used to develop paragraphs namely: (1) listing,
(2) chronological sequence, (3) cause and effect, and
(4) comparison and contrast (p. 194). Leggeth, Meade, and
Charavat are more general when they state that the principal
types of relationships are (1) chronological, (2) spatial,
and (3) logical (p. 210).

## The Paragraph as a Structural Entity

Allington and Strange suggest paragraphs are structures
that can be diagrammed and they proceed to describe the types
of paragraphs according to the geometric patterns that are
formed by the arrangement of ideas within the paragraphs. The
first type of paragraph they deal with is what they call the
"pyramid". In this type of paragraph, the topic sentence is
presented first and the remaining sentence in one way or
another are supportive of it. They term the second type of
paragraph the "inverted pyramid" and in this type of paragraph,
the details are presented and are tied together by a topic
sentence at the end. A third type of paragraph structure is
labelled the "hourglass". In this type of paragraph, the
topic sentence is in the middle of the paragraph and it is
preceded by and followed by supporting details. A fourth type
of paragraph they label the "diamond". Here, the topic
sentence is presented first and is followed by sentences
supportive of it. It differs from the pyramid in that the

concluding sentence is a reiteration of the topic sentence. They conclude by saying there are also paragraphs where every sentence is of equal weight; that is, there is no identifiable topic sentence (p. 183).

The idea that the paragraph is a kind of structure is also suggested by other people. Robinson (1978) concludes that all written composition including the paragraph has an underlying structure which gives unity and boundaries to the field. Halliday and Raqaiya suggest that the paragraph is an example of "discourse structure" which they define as "a type of structure of some postulated unit higher than the sentence" (p. 10). Using somewhat similar nomenclature, Burton (1970) proposes that the paragraph is an example of "rhetorical structure" which he defines as "the organization of symbols to which we respond in any units of communication" (p. 334).

Daigon and Laconte (1971) see the writer as an artist, and the writer like all other artists brings order or structure to disorder. The writer, they contend, needs structure or form to give meaning (p. 357). Weisman (1968) suggests that any creation needs form to be at its best. In a similar vein, Bernstein (1969) suggests that composition requires arrangement and ordering (p. 87). The authors just cited use a variety of terms such as form, arrangement, and ordering when referring to writing, but they all seem to be referring to what is being termed "structure" in this paper.

There are suggestions in the literature that it is necessary to make students cognizant of the structure within writing if they are expected to become good writers. Loban, Ryan, and Squire maintain that student writing, no matter how humble it is considered to be, has to have structure and order imposed upon it (p. 489). Gurrey (1963) states quite explicitly that the writer who is conscious of the need to structure his or her own writing provides much better communication than his other counterpart who is not so disciplined (p. 15).

There are also suggestions that poor writing may be a direct result of the lack of awareness or concern for structure. Stevens (1970) proposes that poor writing some-times suggests cultural impoverishment, but it may also suggest a lack of awareness or concern or both for what she calls "intellectual or rhythmical structure" (p. 452). Loban, Ryan, and Squire state that one of the deficiencies in poor writers is of the consciousness of structure. They also add that besides being unaware of the need for structure in their own writing, poor writers are generally unable to recognize structure in the writing of others.

Kar (1976) suggests that students of high school age have psychological needs which are satisfied by structured situations because they tend to provide a measure of security. He says that the development of a writing program around a structure such as the paragraph enables the student to come to grips with the writing task and complete it more easily

than if he were permitted to flounder (p. 2). Burton
suggests that children are geniuses at taking things apart
and putting them back together. He suggests using this
same talent by having students take rhetorical structures
apart to see interrelationships, and so forth (p. 339).

Several concerns about an overemphasis on structure
and form are evident in the literature. Friend (1972), for
example, expresses a concern about an overemphasis on using
models and formulae in teaching composition (p. 123).
Weisman expresses similar concerns but he counteracts them
by suggesting that if the writer is not made aware of
structure or form, then he is left to accidental discovery
of them. Weisman concludes that an awareness of form and
structure is necessary for effective writing.

It has been suggested that since the paragraph is a
distinct, discernible structure with parameters established
by certain concrete attributes such as length and shape, as
well as more subtle or abstract attributes such as unity and
coherence, some conceptualization of what constitutes a
paragraph is both possible and desirable (Gordon, p. 145;
Loban, Ryan, and Squire, p. 75). Gordon maintains that
conceptualization of form and structure should be the aim of
all education and not just that of composition courses.
Loban, Ryan, and Squire go on to suggest that the degree of
sophistication of the conceptualization of a paragraph can
be enhanced as the student progresses through high school,

if the proper opportunities, experiences and motivation are provided by the teacher (p. 75).

The paragraph, then, is a definable entity. Its length varies but for the most part falls within certain confines. It usually has an internal structure which follows one of several patterns. Finally, a conceptual awareness of paragraph and its components seems necessary if a writer is to produce effective composition.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

To this point, the major thrust of this paper has
been to establish the following premises:

      (a)   The paragraph is a definite and recognizable
           structure with definable characteristics
           (i.e., unity and coherence).

      (b)   The paragraph is the basic unit of composition
           and as such should receive most attention in
           high school English composition classes.

      (c)   An awareness of the concept of paragraph is a
           necessary prerequisite for effective
           composition.

Based on these postulates, and given the concerns
expressed previously about a lack of awareness of paragraphs
as manifested in the writing of Newfoundland students (Public
Examinations Annual Report, 1978) and students in general
(Gordon, p. 145; Hillocks, McCabe, and McCampbell, p. 476),
the investigator decided to procure an instrument to measure
student awareness of a paragraph. Study of The Eighth Mental
Measurements Yearbook and Reviews of Selected Tests in
English failed to produce anything which would measure this
concept. A search for such an instrument, formal or informal,
in the test holdings of the Reading Clinic at Memorial
University also failed to yield results. Subsequent

discussions with colleagues, school district language-arts
co-ordinators, and university faculty led to the decision
to develop an instrument, a description of which follows.

### The Instrument

The instrument (Appendix A) contains ten samples of
"groups of sentences" selected from the novel <u>Johnny Tremain</u>.
Five of these samples are paragraphs taken directly from the
source and the other five samples are "non-paragraphs" or
groups of sentences taken from the same source.

Rationale:

<u>Johnny Tremain</u> has been selected as the source for
the following reasons:

(i)  Use of the Fry Readability Formula determined
that the reading level of this novel is grade six.  It was
felt that the material to be read should be two or three
grade levels below the grade of the students being tested,
such to accommodate testees with lower than average reading
ability.  Since the novel has a readability of grade six
and the material is to be read by grade nine students, this
criterion is attended to.

(N.B.  Further description of the Fry Readability Formula is
available in the following source:  Fry, E.B.  <u>Reading</u>
<u>Instruction for Classroom and Clinic</u>.  New York:  McGraw-Hill
Book Company, 1972.)

(ii)   The protagonist in the novel is a fourteen year old - the age of most of the sample population. Therefore the interest level of the material is probably similar to the interest level of the sample population.

(iii)   Johnny Tremain is the winner of a John Newbury Award and as such is considered "good" children's literature.

(iv)   Although Johnny Tremain may have been read previously by some of the sample population, it seems unlikely that many students will have studied this novel in depth.   Such might be the case if a textbook or novel from the prescribed curriculum were being used as a source.

(v)   Since a single novel is being used, similarity between the samples is expected.

It has been arbitrarily decided to include five paragraphs and five "non-paragraphs" in the instrument.   As mentioned previously, five paragraphs were taken intact from Johnny Tremain.   Five non-paragraphs were then produced, in a systematic manner.

A detailed description of the composition of each sample follows.

## Detailed Description of the Instrument

Sample 1:   First three sentences, last half of paragraph from page 12.

Last five sentences, first half of paragraph from page 240.

8 sentences, 83 words.

Sample 2:   Actual paragraph, page 81.

         5 sentences, 115 words.

Sample 3:   First three sentences, first half of paragraph
         from page 243.

         Last three sentences, second half of paragraph
         from page 4.

         6 sentences, 94 words.

Sample 4:   Actual paragraph, page 116.

         5 sentences, 105 words.

Sample 5:   Actual paragraph, pages 255-256.

         12 sentences, 97 words.

Sample 6:   Actual paragraph, page 148.

         7 sentences, 148 words.

Sample 7:   Actual paragraph, page 252.

         7 sentences, 89 words.

Sample 8:   First sentence from six successive paragraphs,
         pages 86-87.

         6 sentences, 115 words.

Sample 9:   Five sentences taken from five successive
         paragraphs.  The first sentence is from
         paragraph one, second sentence is from
         paragraph two, and so forth, pages 131-132.

         5 sentences, 88 words.

Sample 10:  Last sentence from six successive paragraphs,
         pages 86-87.

         6 sentences, 110 words.

The samples were arranged randomly.  The reader will also notice that none of the samples are indented.  By this means, an attempt has been made to remove one feature that the testee could possibly cue on.  It is hoped that the test format will lead each testee to look at the internal structure of each sample, thus to determine whether or not it is a paragraph.

The particular instrument has been developed because, as was mentioned previously, no test could be found that purported to measure conceptual awareness of paragraph. This instrument has been developed on the assumption that the ability to differentiate between paragraphs and non-paragraphs in an array of units-of-print reflects an awareness of what constitutes a paragraph - in other words, the concept of paragraph.

According to Piagetian theory, concepts fall into two categories: (i) physical concepts and (ii) logical and mathematical concepts (Bolton, 1977, p. 19). The paragraph, in terms of its internal structure and arrangement, would presumably be considered a logical type concept. Polanyi, in discussing linguistic rules and linguistic knowledge, deems this type of knowledge to be unconscious or "subsidiary knowledge". Concepts of this type are categorized by Polanyi as belonging to the "tacit dimension" (Greene, 1969, p. 197). In other words, concepts of this type might not lend them- selves to definition or articulation, but nevertheless, might still be present.

The writer speculates that the conceptual awareness of paragraph might be what Polanyi terms "tacit". This instrument, then, attempts to measure this tacit conceptual- ization by requiring the testee to differentiate between units-of-print which exemplify the concept and units of print which do not. Because of this tacit dimension of conceptualization, it was also decided to exclude any form of definition from the test instrument, since if the concept

of paragraph belongs to this dimension, a full conceptual
awareness is possible though the person might be unable to
articulate a formal definition of it.  It is also possible
that a formal definition could be provided from rote memory,
yet the person providing the definition still might not have
developed conceptual awareness.

## The Sample

The sample for this study is comprised of 331 grade
nine students from four high schools in the province.  For
the purposes of this study these schools are labelled 1, 2,
3, and 4 and may be described as follows:  (i) School 1 is a
small central high school (population 180) from a small town
in north-eastern Newfoundland; (ii) School 2 is a large
regional high school (population 1000+) in St. John's;
(iii) School 3 is a fairly large regional high school
(population 700+) located in the peripheral area of St. John's
but drawing upon a basically rural population; (iv) School 4
is a mid-size regional high school (population 400) located
in one of the larger communities in Labrador.

There are several reasons for selecting these schools.
First of all, the schools are located, respectively, in
(a) an urban environment, (b) a suburban environment, (c) a
relatively isolated community from the island portion of the
province, and (d) a community in Labrador which is relatively
isolated.  From a geographical perspective, it seems that the
sample is drawn from a fairly representative cross-section of

the population.  Secondly, it should also be noted that the
schools range in size from small (population less than 200)
to medium (population 200-600) to large (population 600 and
more).  The third reason for selecting these schools was
the relative ease of accessibility which they provided.  In
the case of schools 2 and 3, the writer was able to contact
the principals, set up an appropriate time, and then
administer the test instrument, all this within a relatively
short time span.  In the case of schools 1 and 4, the writer
had personal contacts within the schools conduct the testing
with a minimum of delay.

Within each of the schools, it was requested that a
class of students of each of low, middle, and high abilities
be made available for testing.  In school 1, this could not
be done, since the school has only two grade nine classes
- a high ability class and a low ability class.  In school 2,
the procedure was modified in that two classes of high
ability students were tested.  In school 3, the procedure was
followed as requested, whereas in school 4, the procedure was
again modified to permit two classes of low ability students
to be tested.  It was decided to use this somewhat modified
procedure since these happened to be the classes available.
It was felt that this would not seriously affect an exploratory
study.  The ability groupings were determined by the schools
mainly on the basis of achievement on teacher made tests.
Table 1 indicates the ability levels of each of the 13 classes

used in the sample, based upon information supplied by school
officials.

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Insert Table 1 Here

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## Limitations of the Study

The following may be considered limitations of the
study:

(1)  The sample, although representative, is not
random.  Therefore, the results may not be
generalizable.

(2)  Reliability and validity have not been
established statistically.  However, face
validity has been established using both
content and learner specialists.

## Table 1

## Classification of Classes by Ability

|  | Low Ability | Medium Ability | High Ability |
|---|---|---|---|
| School 1 | Class A |  | Class B |
| School 2 | Class E | Class C | Class D<br>Class F |
| School 3 | Class I | Class G | Class H |
| School 4 | Class J<br>Class K | Class L | Class M |

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS OF THE STUDY

The data from the test instrument are treated in two
ways in this study.  First of all, item-by-item and class-
by-class results have been enumerated.  In most cases, these
results have been converted into percentages.  Secondly, a
one-way analysis of variance has been done to determine
whether there are significant differences between low, medium,
and high ability students.  Subsequently, a Scheffe procedure
was applied to determine where the differences exist.

## Analysis of Items

As can be seen from Table 2, the percentage of
incorrect responses varies widely from 1.8% on Item 1 to
55.3% on Item 3.  It is interesting to note that both of

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Insert Table 2 Here

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these items are non-paragraph samples.  However, with regard
to the differences between paragraphs and non-paragraphs or
the differences within these groups, no discernible patterns
emerge.  There are 497 incorrect responses on non-paragraph

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Insert Figure 1 Here

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items and 428 incorrect responses on items that are paragraphs.
It would appear that no particular relevance can be attached
to the difference - here, 69.

Table 2

Totals for Study

| Item | Number of Incorrect Responses | Percentage of Incorrect Responses |
|------|------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| * 1  | 6    | 1.8  |
| 2    | 39   | 11.3 |
| * 3  | 183  | 55.3 |
| 4    | 85   | 25.7 |
| 5    | 105  | 31.7 |
| 6    | 126  | 38.1 |
| 7    | 73   | 22.1 |
| * 8  | 81   | 24.5 |
| * 9  | 84   | 25.4 |
| *10  | 143  | 43.2 |
| Total | 925 | 28   |

* Indicates non-paragraphs.

Figure 1



Figure 1
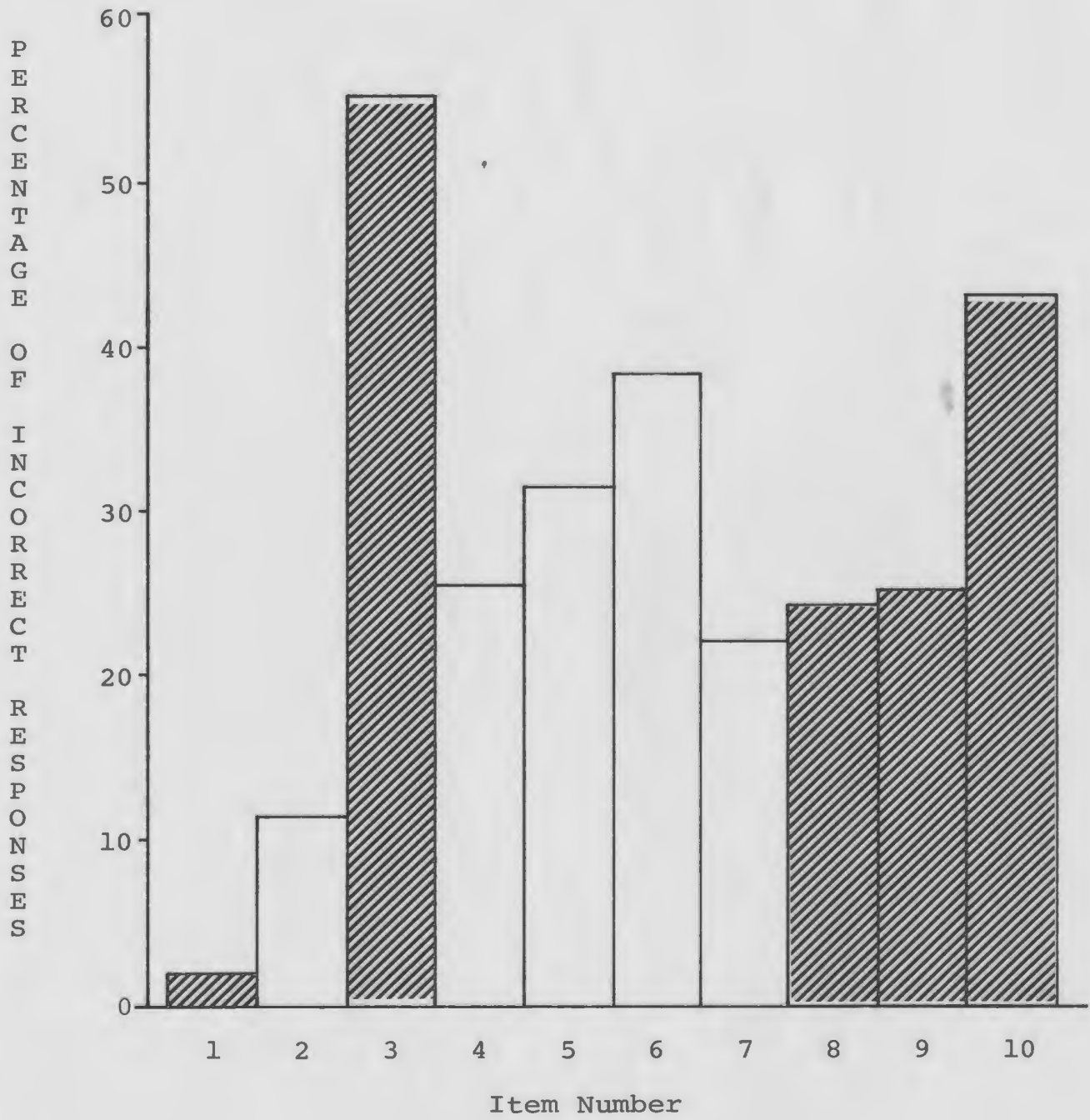
Items which are not paragraphs.

With respect to the apparent differences in the number of incorrect responses when Item 1 and Item 3 are compared, any attempt to provide an explanation would be highly speculative. Both, of course, are non-paragraphs and both are made up of segments of two separate paragraphs. On two occasions while the writer was administering the tests, he was asked by two students what they were expected to do in the case of Item 1, which they said was made up of two paragraphs. This could shed some light on the extremely low percentage of incorrect responses on this item. Perhaps the split in this item is so obvious that the students, cognizant of the concept of unity, noticed that the concept did not apply and consequently decided that the structure did not fit into the category of paragraph. With respect to Item 3, however, this explanation may not apply. It would seem that if students were able to categorize Item 1 with such a high degree of proficiency, they would have been able to respond similarly in the case of Item 3. Why this is not so is inexplicable.

The percentage of incorrect responses on Item 10 is worth noting. Whereas a certain degree of unity could possibly be perceived in Item 3 given the nature of the item, such an explanation does not hold for Item 10. Upon close scrutiny, this item seems obviously not to contain unity or coherence. Yet if students are cognizant of the concept of unity and were able to apply such to Item 1, this writer cannot even speculate why such cognizance has not been applied to Item 10.

There are also discrepancies between scores on the test items that are paragraphs. For example, on Item 2, only 11.3% of the responses are incorrect while on Item 6, 38.1% of the responses are incorrect. Both items are actual paragraphs taken verbatim from Johnny Tremain. Why, then, this discrepancy? (See Table 2)

Again the reasoning is highly speculative. It seems that the students in making the types of incorrect responses were keying on features other than unity, coherence, and arrangement. Because of the nature of this instrument it is impossible to determine what types of features these students were keying on. To speculate again, it seems plausible that students attended to mechanical (i.e., punctuation) or syntactic features or a combination of these. Another possibility of course is that the students were not keying on any features but were merely guessing.

It would appear, then, that the lack of patterns and relationships within the data is inexplicable. Nevertheless, this lack of consistency does, at the least, point to a general inability to distinguish between blocks of print which are paragraphs and blocks of print which are non-paragraphs.

## Differences Between Groups

The percentage of incorrect responses on a class-by-class basis can be seen in Table 3. It can be seen that low ability classes tended to have a greater percentage of errors

on the different items than did medium ability groups, while medium ability groups tended to have a greater percentage of errors item-by-item than did the high ability groups.  In

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Insert Table 3 Here
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other words, the high ability groups generally scored higher than the medium ability groups who in turn tended to score higher than the low ability groups.  An examination of the class averages in Table 4 confirms this.

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Insert Table 4 Here
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A one-way analysis of variance was conducted on the data, and it was found that there are significant differences between groups.  Subsequently, a Scheffé procedure was followed to determine where these significant differences exist.  These differences are accounted for in Table 5.  From the table, it can be seen that Group A differs significantly ($\alpha = .01$) from groups H and M.  As well, Group A differs significantly ($\alpha = .10$) from Group F and Group I differs significantly ($\alpha = .10$) from Groups H and M.  To reiterate,

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Insert Table 5 Here
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Groups A, I, and J are low ability groups; they differ significantly from Groups F, H, and M, which are high ability groups.  It might also be noted that Group L (medium ability) differs significantly ($\alpha = .10$) from Group H (high ability).

Table 3

Percentage of Incorrect Responses

| Item | Class | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| | A | E | I | J | K | C | G | L | B | D | F | H | M |
| 1 | 5.3 | 0 | 14.3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3.1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3.1 | 0 |
| 2 | 15.8 | 4.8 | 14.3 | 4.3 | 16.7 | 4.3 | 9.4 | 10.3 | 0 | 19.4 | 3.0 | 15.6 | 29.6 |
| 3 | 84.2 | 47.6 | 66.7 | 82.6 | 81.3 | 60.8 | 56.3 | 82.8 | 52.9 | 44.4 | 51.5 | 21.9 | 22.2 |
| 4 | 31.6 | 14.3 | 33.3 | 30.4 | 27.8 | 13.0 | 25 | 37.9 | 23.5 | 22.2 | 27.3 | 21.9 | 25.9 |
| 5 | 36.8 | 28.6 | 23.8 | 43.5 | 11.1 | 13.0 | 37.5 | 34.5 | 11.8 | 55.6 | 36.4 | 12.5 | 44.4 |
| 6 | 36.8 | 23.8 | 52.4 | 52.2 | 22.2 | 30.4 | 28.1 | 65.5 | 47.1 | 50 | 27.3 | 34.4 | 22.2 |
| 7 | 26.3 | 19.0 | 19.1 | 30.4 | 44.4 | 17.4 | 18.8 | 37.9 | 17.7 | 15.6 | 15.2 | 18.8 | 18.5 |
| 8 | 68.4 | 23.8 | 28.6 | 39.1 | 33.3 | 47.8 | 18.8 | 31 | 0 | 8.3 | 18.2 | 15.6 | 7.4 |
| 9 | 52.6 | 33.3 | 42.9 | 17.4 | 27.8 | 34.8 | 37.5 | 10.4 | 23.5 | 11 | 18.2 | 28.1 | 11.1 |
| 10 | 42.1 | 90.5 | 61.9 | 39.1 | 77.8 | 56.5 | 40.6 | 41.4 | 47.1 | 22.2 | 33.3 | 28.1 | 22.2 |

Low                Medium              High

Table 4

Class Averages (Correct Responses out of possible 10)

| | Class | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| A   E   I   J   K | C   G   L | B   D   F   H   M |
| 6.0  7.1  6.3  6.6  6.7 | 7.2  7.2  6.5 | 7.6  7.4  7.6  7.9  8.0 |

Low                    Medium                    High

## Table 5

### Differences Between Groups

|   | B | D | F | H | M |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| A | f = 1.19 | f = 1.23 | f = 1.58* | f = 2.33** | f = 2.24** |
| I |   |   |   | f = 1.61* | f = 1.55* |
| J |   |   |   | f = 1.17 | f = 1.13 |
| L |   |   |   | f = 1.59* | f = 1.52 |

\* 90f 12, 318 = 1.55

\*\* 90f 12, 318 = 2.18

It is also shown that Group A differs from Groups B and D, Group J differs from Groups H and M, and Group L differs from Group M, although these differences are not statistically significant. In general, then, high ability groups scored significantly higher than low ability groups. This difference is substantiated by statistical analysis.

It probably should be reiterated here that the grouping of these students has been done for the most part on the basis of teacher-made tests. As was stated previously, one of the components, and probably a major one, evaluated by such tests is ability in composition. Consequently, students who score high on these tests would tend to have better composition abilities. Therefore, it seems that students with superior composition abilities in general show a greater ability to differentiate between units of print, some of which are paragraphs and some of which are non-paragraphs.

## Summary

This study involved 331 students, each making 10 responses for a total of 3310 responses. Of these, 925 or 28% were incorrect. It can be noted from Table 6 that only 17 or 5.17% of the 331 students managed to get all items

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Insert Table 6 Here

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correct. This figure was viewed as particularly relevant, since it seems to indicate a very low percentage of students with sufficient understanding of the concept of paragraph to

Table 6

| | |
|---|---|
| Number of Students | 331 |
| Average score out of 10 | 7.2 |
| Number with 10/10 correct responses | 17 |
| Percentage with 10/10 correct responses | 5.1 |
| Range of correct responses | 2-10 |

be able to differentiate amongst the items with 100% accuracy.
Overall, what seems to emanate from the statistical analysis
is a lack of ability on the part of those students to
differentiate between paragraphs and non-paragraphs, which
finding probably indicates a lack of knowledge of the concept
of paragraph.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

## Discussion

It was proposed previously in this study that in order for a person to be able to write a paragraph he must have an awareness of paragraph. It was further proposed that high school students in general do not have this awareness. The data indicates very strongly that the students who were tested in this study do not have this awareness.

When the particular instrument was being developed here, an effort was made to construct two non-paragraph items such that each would resemble a paragraph as arranged. In Items 3 and 4 then, this was done by combining significant chunks of two separate paragraphs into one item. It was felt that these items would exhibit more strongly the essential characteristics of unity and coherence than the other non-paragraph items. If students were keying on these attributes as distinctive features, many more errors would have been made on these items than on the other non-paragraph item. Indeed, there were a large number of errors in Item 1; on the other hand, Item 1 had fewer errors than any other item. With regard to Item 1, the possibility that students were able to discern the lack of unity has been mentioned before. Again though, the question arises as to why such

discrimination applies to one item and not to the other which is very similar to it.

The remaining non-paragraph items were so constructed that they did <u>not</u> exhibit unity and coherence. It would seem that if the testees were keying on unity and coherence as distinctive features, they would have been aware of the absence of these characteristics in the other non-paragraph items and would have made fewer errors on these items than on Items 1 and 3. The number of errors made on the items which are paragraphs also suggests the testees were <u>not</u> keying on unity and coherence. Therefore, the results seem to suggest two possibilities: (1) that these students are not aware of the concepts of unity and coherence, or (2) that these students do not utilize these concepts in situations where such utilization is called for.

## Conclusions

What seems most likely is that this lack of ability to differentiate between paragraph and non-paragraph items translates into a lack of awareness on the part of the testees of what actually constitutes a paragraph. The point has been made previously that if students do not have a sufficient awareness of what a paragraph <u>is</u>, then almost certainly they cannot produce one. This perception is given additional credence by Hans Jonas:

> Let us merely note from our random remarks
> that there are at least two kinds of abstract
> concepts: those where concrete comes first
> and abstraction follows; and those where the

> concept comes first and the concrete
> instantiation follows - produced from the
> concept by human action and recognized
> through it by human judgement. (Jonas,
> 1974, p. 284).

It is the belief of this writer that the conceptualization
of "paragraph" falls into the second category suggested by
Jonas and that the development of the conceptual framework
is necessary if one is to be capable of producing a paragraph.

The differences in the scores between the low, medium,
and high ability groups seem to support this distinction. As
was stated earlier, students were grouped primarily on the
basis of their achievement on teacher-made tests. These tests
tend to place fairly heavy emphasis on composition skills as a
critical evaluative feature. Thus high ability students in
general would have superior composition ability compared to
medium-ability students who, in turn, would have superior
composition ability compared to low ability students. Thus
these significant differences between high ability and low
ability groups suggest that students with superior composition
ability are better able to differentiate between paragraph and
non-paragraph items. This suggests, in turn, that the
conceptual awareness of paragraph and the ability to write are
positively related. It should be reiterated here that it is
quite possible, indeed even probable, that such conceptual-
ization is tacit and therefore not amenable to an expressive
mode.

That there is evidence to suggest that students in
general tend not to use effective paragraphing has already

been stated in Chapter I.  The point has been made through-
out this report that a conceptual awareness of paragraph
is essential to the writing of paragraphs.  In this study,
we have identified a lack of conceptual awareness of the
paragraph on the part of certain students, to the extent that
our testees are representative of the student population at
large.  Several discoveries would appear to have ramifications
for the composition program in public schools.  Therefore, the
following proposals may be in order.

Recommendations are arranged as follows:  those that
are directed toward curriculum and instruction; those that are
directed toward teacher training; and those that are of a
general nature.

## Recommendations

### Curriculum and Instruction

(1)  There is a need for a comprehensive and systematic
program that entails INSTRUCTION in the art of composition.
This program would most likely begin at the elementary stage
and extend into the high school.  Of course children should be
given opportunities to write long before they enter this
structured program; however, this writer questions the
efficacy of any formal instructional program in this area
before grade five.  Care should also be taken to provide a
transitional period between free writing and systematic
instruction in order that the transition not be too abrupt.

(2)  The paragraph should at first be the focal structure in this instructional program and should remain so until this particular aspect of writing has been mastered.  For many students, this may well extend into the high school years.

(3)  This program should focus on the development of a conceptual awareness of the nature of the paragraph itself.  This would include the abilty to recognize and apply the crucial concepts of unity, coherence, and arrangement.  Many and varied opportunities to apply these concepts in a concrete manner by way of actual writing activities should go hand in hand with this conceptual development.

(4)  In specific terms, this conceptual development could be taught in a manner similar to the following model.

First of all, students would be exposed to many examples of writing.  Included would be examples of writing that are paragraphs and examples of writing that are not paragraphs.  Students would be taught to recognize the attributes that make a piece of writing a paragraph (i.e., unity, coherence, arrangement) and to discern the absence of these attributes in the pieces of writing that are not paragraphs.

Such teaching involves much more than presenting pieces of writing and telling students whether or not each is a paragraph.  It involves analysis and the development of much insight on the part of both teachers and students.

Following are some possible suggestions for teaching (and learning) these concepts.

To expose the concept of unity the teacher would select a paragraph (any appropriate paragraph) and present it to the students. (Sample 4 from Appendix A can be used as an example.) Then the students should be asked to select the topic sentence (which in this case, as in the vast majority of such, is the first sentence). The students would then be asked to restate in their own words the "kernel" or main idea of the topic sentence. Here it would probably be beneficial to key on subject and verb and, where applicable, complement as a means of focusing on kernel. In the given example, the kernel is "minute-men marching". The next step would be to have students examine the subsequent sentences to discover that these sentences describe the "minute-men marching". The aim, of course, is to have students see the interlocking relationships that exist between sentences within the paragraph. When they are able to identify this second-order structure they will have discovered the concept of unity.

While this is being done, the teacher should intermittently present examples of writing which do not demonstrate unity. For discussion purposes, Sample 1 from Appendix A is used here.

Again, the students are asked to read the item. If they are asked to select the topic sentence here, they will have difficulty since there is no sole sentence that covers

all of the items under discussion. Most students will recognize that there are two different "things" under discussion in this item - "pieces of silver" and "boats". When they realize that this item contains information about two separate "things" and not just one, they will have discovered lack of unity. Most students will maintain that this item makes no sense to them. The point will then have been made. In order for writing to "make sense", it must demonstrate unity.

To teach the concept of coherence, the teacher would be well advised to use samples already presented which had been shown to have unity. This should function to show that the concepts of unity and coherence, although related, are two different concepts.

Since Sample 4 from Appendix A was used to demonstrate the concept of unity, it will again be used here to demonstrate the concept of coherence. This time, however, the sample will be rearranged to show the student that whereas the concept of unity requires that a piece of writing be about one major "idea" or "thing", the concept of coherence requires that a piece of writing be organized in a logical and intelligible manner. (The former exercise is meant to provoke concern for the subject-of-discourse; this latter points to the discourse itself - from what is being talked about, to the telling about.) Prior to being presented with the sample in reorganized form, the item would be reread by students in its original form. They would then read the following sample:

A boy no bigger than Dusty Miller put a fife
to his lips and was trying to blow it.  Left,
right, left, right, left....they did not march
too well.  The men marched on past the defaced
gates of the Lytes' country seat, never turning
to look at them or Doctor Warren's chaise with
Cilla and Johnny under the hood.  All down, Old
Country Road, marching through the meager
half-light of the new day, came a company of
Minute Men, up and out early, drilling for
coming battles before it was yet the hour to
get to their chores.  He made awkward little
tootles.

Having scrutinized both the original sample and the

sample in its rearranged format, most students will discover

that whereas the original sample makes sense, the rearranged

material doesn't.  In the original sample, the ideas flow

logically from beginning to end.  In its rearranged format,

this is not the case.  The rearranged version has no meaning;

the paragraph is garbled.  When students realize that ideas

must be presented in a logical order, they will have

discovered the concept of coherence.

This would be an opportune time to contrast unity and

coherence.  In its original form, the sample has both unity

and coherence.  In its reorganized format, the unity is still

present since the ideas are interrelated.  However, because of

the rearrangement the coherence is lost.  Hopefully, this

will enable students to see how these concepts differ from

each other.

There is also the option of using student-produced

writing for the concepts under study.  For example, such

writing could be transcribed verbatim to overhead trans-

parencies.  Again, examples which exhibit the presence (and

absence) of these concepts would be used. The samples of student-produced writing would, of course, remain anonymous. Similar techniques to those just discussed would be used here.

A third phase of this conceptual development would involve working on a one-to-one basis with the students. The teacher would lead the students to recognize the presence or absence of these attributes in the student's own writing and would help the students develop the skills to correct any discrepancies in their writing.

Of course this is not to be construed as an isolated exercise to be taught once only and only in one grade. It would be necessary to provide many opportunities over the years to foster the development of these concepts. The teacher would also have to modify both the material and the methodology to meet the particular needs of the students.

(5) The actual writing aspect of this composition program would receive very heavy emphasis. The teacher's role here is chiefly that of facilitator - by providing time, guidance, and motivation for the students. It is recommended that the teacher ensure that adequate time be made available in class for planning, writing and revising. In terms of guidance, the teacher would make himself available at all times during the writing activity to offer advice and constructive criticism.

Motivation is viewed as a key component of this program. Motivation can be taken care of in a number of ways.

Interesting subjects must be assigned for students to write about. Teachers must be made to realize the necessity of assigning topics that are of interest to the students and within their capability. For example, it would be ludicrous for a teacher to assign a topic such as "The Fire Hall" to students from rural Newfoundland who have never seen a fire hall. No longer is it sufficient (if it ever has been) for teachers to assign the same tired topics from the same text-books year after year. This writer suspects that the "teaching" of composition has involved, to a large extent, the mere assigning of these topics from the textbooks, then to expect the students simply to "complete" the "assignment". Finally, not every piece of writing need be "corrected" or graded, while every piece of writing, as far as is possible, should be read. In the end, students should be made aware of weaknesses in their writing and taught how to overcome them.

(6) Teachers should de-emphasize the idea that a paragraph should have a specific length. Instead, what should be emphasized is the idea that a paragraph is complete when the writer has fully developed his idea.

(7) For some students, this program will be unnecessary, since their linguistic abilities in general and composition abilities in particular will be so advanced that the concepts and skills dealt with in this program may have already been mastered. For those students, the following options are suggested: (1) that opportunities be provided

to write longer units such as essays and research papers, journal, diaries; (2) that at least on occasion, they be required to complete a prescribed assignment such as a paragraph on a specific topic.

(8) Recognizing that a program such as this could become repetitive, the writer recommends that a great many opportunities be given to students to write anything they please (i.e., paragraphs, poetry, letters, plays, stories, journals, diaries). Perhaps the Uninterrupted Sustained Silent Reading model whereby every person in the school is required to be reading for a specific time period each day might be adapted, so that every person in the school is required to write for a specified time period each day.

(9) Periodically, once a week for example, students and teachers might conjointly write a paragraph using the chalkboard or overhead projector. Discussion of the process of writing the paragraph would quite naturally accompany such writing.

(10) Once a reasonable degree of mastery in the art of paragraph writing has been accomplished, students should then receive instruction in writing longer units of writing such as essays and research papers. The teacher should try to ensure that the concepts attained with respect to the paragraph be utilized by the students in those longer composition units.

(11)  Writing needs to be promoted as an enjoyable experience.  This can be done through the selection and assignment of interesting and appropriate topics, the provision of an appropriate atmosphere, and the provision of an appreciative audience (i.e., the teacher).  Of course, this assumes that the student has received the necessary instruction and attained the necessary skills needed to complete the writing.

(12)  All schools should be requested to cease and desist immediately the practice of assigning any form of writing for punitive purposes.  (For example, many schools still require students to write lines as punishment for breaches of rules and regulations.)

(13)  At present, "language across the curriculum" is in vogue.  Therefore, getting teachers of subjects other than English involved in this proposed composition program may not be a problem.  However, at present, many of those who advocate language across the curriculum appear to be concerned with the mechanics of writing, largely to the exclusion of such aspects as paragraphing.  Therefore, it is recommended that through in-service education, an attempt be made to rectify this situation.

## Teacher Training

In order to ensure an effective writing program, there is a need for those teaching the program to have a substantial amount of expertise in this area. Since this is not often the case at present, the following are recommendations which if implemented would help alleviate this problem.

(14) Since an understanding of the writing process and the concepts pertinent to that process are necessary prerequisites for teaching the art of writing, all student teachers in Newfoundland should be required to do a course in writing. This course would be offered, presumably, by the English Department at Memorial. This course would be offered by the English Department as opposed to the Faculty of Education in that it would be designed to develop writing abilities in student teachers rather than to teach student teachers how to teach writing. If this is not feasible, the Faculty of Education might choose to make the creative writing course currently offered by the English Department mandatory for its students.

(15) In conjunction, the Department of Curriculum and Instruction at Memorial should develop a course designed as a methods course in writing. This course, too, should be mandatory for all student teachers. The rationale for making this course mandatory for all education students is the growing trend in Newfoundland schools to expect teachers to

work in a wide variety of subjects outside their specialty. Even mathematics teachers, for instance, are often required to teach the humanities.

(16) Such courses, if developed, should be offered during the Summer Session and at as many off-campus centres as possible. School boards could be enlisted to encourage particular teachers under their jurisdiction to avail themselves of such courses.

(17) The English Department at Memorial should begin to assume responsibility for teaching students how to write. This Department should diversify and become more than a literature department. Additional courses in writing should be offered. Lobbying agents could be the Faculty of Education, Special Interest Councils, the N.T.A., and the several provincial curriculum committees.

## Implications for Further Study

In view of the findings and limitations of this study, the writer feels further research is needed. Therefore, the following specifics are recommended:

Reliability and validity of the particular testing instrument should be established.

The study should be replicated using different samples, thus to enhance generalizability.

Similar studies could be carried out at different grade levels.

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APPENDIX A

Instrument

Appendix A

## Sample 1

Describe to me at least one piece of silver you see used
every Lord's Supper.  If they could not answer that, he
knew they hadn't got silver in their blood.  But how could
he find which boys had nice hands . . .?  Four more boats
were coming in.  Johnny dared move out onto the wharf, but
he still kept well in the shadow.  More wounded.  Could
these be the very men who had started out so confidently?
Bedraggled, dirty, torn uniforms, torn flesh, lost
equipment.

## Sample 2

Mr. Lyte was talking as informally as though he and Mr. Dana
were alone together, sitting at a tavern, cracking walnuts,
drinking Maderia.  He told how his great-grandfather,
Jonathan Lyte, Mayor of Causeway, Kent, England, had six
identical cups made -- one for each of his sons.  Four of
these cups had come to this country and these he himself had
owned until last August.  On the night of the twenty-third,
a thief or thieves had broken a pane out of his dining-room
window.  The space was too small to admit a grown man, so it
was a half-grown boy who had slipped in and taken only one
of the famous cups.

## Sample 3

From the tavern-keeper he learned for the first time what
had happened after the skirmish at Lexington.  Colonel Smith
had indeed marched on to Concord, possessed the town,
destroyed such military stores as had not yet been hidden.
And there had been another skirmish.  Only Dove hated him.
Sometimes he would get Dusty in  a corner, tell him in a
hoarse whisper how he was going to get a pair of scissors
and cut out Johnny Tremain's heart.  But he never dared do
more than trip him -- and then whine out of it.

## Sample 4

Along down Old Country Road, marching through the meager,
halflight of the new day, came a company of Minute Men up
and out early, drilling for coming battles before it was
yet the hour to get to their chores.  Left, right, left,
right, left . . . they did not march too well.  A boy no
bigger than Dusty Miller had put a fife to his lips, was
trying to blow it.  He made awkward little tootles.  Then
men marched on past the defaced gates of the Lyte's country
seat, never turning to look at them or Doctor Warren's
chaise with Cilla and Johnny under the hood.

## Sample 5

Everywhere in the village was silence.  The music, small
as the chirping of a cricket, filled that silence.  Down
the road came twenty or thirty tired and ragged men.  Some
were blood-stained.  No uniforms.  A curious arsenal of
weapons.  The long horizonal light of the sinking sun struck
into their faces and made them seem much alike.  Thin-faced
in the manner of Yankee men.  High cheek-boned.  Unalterably
determined.  The tired men marched unevenly, but Johnny
noticed the swing of the lithe, independent bodies.  The
set of chin and shoulders.  Rab had been like that.


## Sample 6

The Province House was a beautiful building and as Johnny
hung about the front of it he had a chance to admire if for
over an hour.  It stood well back from the rattle and
bustle of Marlborough Street, with its glassy-eyed copper
Indian on top of the cupda and its carved and colored lion
and unicorn of Britain over the door.  Behind the house he
heard orders called and soldiers were hallooing -- but
worst of all they were laughing.  And that was Colonel
Nesbit's boy bringing around the Colonel's charger.  There
was a large group of people still standing in the street.
The hilarity of the British soldiers did not ease their
fears as to the fate of the prisoners.  Johnny could hear
the rattle of the men's muskets as they came to attention,
and then, all together, four drummers let their sticks fall
at once.

## Sample 7

Johnny walked back to the village, his head bent and his
hands in his pockets.  A numbness, half emotional, half
physical, was stealing up through him.  His feet felt like
lead.  His mind seized upon little trivial things, like
that orange tom-cat of Grandshire Silslee's.  He noticed
a jubilant little girl with a grenadier bearskin hat on
her head, half over her face.  He could not help but
notice the regimental number on the cap.  The grenadier
likely dead by now, had been a soldier of the Tenth.

## Sample 8

The wind was howling up from the sea, beating the waves
against the wharves.  He slept in the stable that night
and on the next day did find a sea captain who would -- in
spite of the bad hand -- take him on as a cabin boy.  Having
no safe place now to leave his cup, he had tied the strings
of the flannel bag to his belt.  There were many silversmiths
who would have bought it, but the cup was so old-fashioned
he could not expect from them more than its value in old
silver.  It was the same as before, except 'Cousin Sewal'
was not there.  Mr. Leyte looked up from his papers.

## Sample 9

There had been a good deal of talk about hanging. Certainly all the other members of the Observers, if ever their names were known, would follow, and so would all the Whig printers of Boston. There was the rattle of drums, with the shouts of officers, and off the ships poured a flood, scarlet as a tide of blood. Johnny could deliver the Boston papers in a morning -- instead of taking all day. They came from the fields and farms in the very clothes they used for plowing.

## Sample 10

It was a fine fall, the days crisp and full of sparkle, but the nights, from now on, would be too cold in the open, although warm enough hidden away in the stable, with hay or a horse blanket to cover one and the warm animals giving off heat. Johnny had no money to buy such things. Now he would disobey her again and sell it. So once more he went to the merchant's counting house on Long Wharf. Neither moved as Johnny slipped quietly past them and entered the inner office. Mr. Justice had humiliated him publicly, and the story had gone quickly around the wharves, among his friends.

APPENDIX B

Answer Sheet

Appendix B

Sample 1:  Is a paragraph ___

         Is not a paragraph ___

Sample 2:  Is a paragraph ___

         Is not a paragraph ___ .

Sample 3:  Is a paragraph ___

         Is not a paragraph ___

Sample 4:  Is a paragraph ___

         Is not a paragraph ___

Sample 5:  Is a paragraph ___

         Is not a paragraph ___

Sample 6:  Is a paragraph ___

         Is not a paragraph ___

Sample 7:  Is a paragraph ___

         Is not a paragraph ___

Sample 8:  Is a paragraph ___

         Is not a paragraph ___

Sample 9:  Is a paragraph ___

         Is not a paragraph ___

Sample 10:  Is a paragraph ___

         Is not a paragraph ___

APPENDIX C

Instructions

Appendix C

On the paper you have are ten samples of groups of sentences. Some of these samples are paragraphs and some are not. Read Sample 1 and after you have decided whether or not it is a paragraph, check what you think is the correct answer on the answer sheet. Do the same for Sample 2, Sample 3, and so forth. You will notice that none of the samples are indented. Don't worry about this since this was done on purpose.

You have twenty minutes to complete this exercise. Thank you for your co-operation.

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