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ABSTRACT
                To demonstrate that peer evaluation is an appropriate
means of improving written composition, particularly in terms of
audience and goal orientation, the use of peer evaluation as a
teaching method is discussed and then the connection between peer
evaluation and audience awareness is drawn. Based on observation of
Dutch 17-year-old students, the following reasons for having
students' written work evaluated by the writers' peers were adduced:
(1) students learn more about writing, (2) students are better at
judging audience orientation, (3) students are better at telling each
other what is good and what is bad, (4) students make multiple and
analytical evaluation possible, (5) peer evaluation leads to
increased writing frequency, and (6) peer evaluation means immediate
feedback. Both educational theory and communication theory support
these observations, as does research done in Holland on the effect of
peer evaluation, which has shown that students are as effective as
teachers in evaluating peer writing. Other studies have shown neither
positive nor negative effects of peer evaluation, perhaps because
they measured inappropriate aspects of written composition ability. A
proposed set of experiments examining the influence of peer
evaluation on goal orientation, audience orientation, and news value
will better reflect the benefits of peer evaluation. Because the peer
audience is both immediate and "real," students will be more aware of
their audience and the metacognitive aspects of their writing will be
enhanced. (Appendixes include an evaluation schedule and a chart
summarizing pertinent research. Notes and references are included.)
(SKC)

SCO CAHIER

AUDIENCE-ORIENTED WRITING AND

PEER EVALUATION.

A paper presented at the CCCC
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Audience-Oriented Writing and Peer Evaluation

In this paper I hope to demonstrate that peer evaluation as a method is an appropriate means of improving written composition, particularly as regards audience and goal orientation.
   I shall begin by paying attention to peer evaluation as a teaching method and will then draw the connection between peer evaluation and audience awareness.

Peer evaluation

There are a number of good reasons for letting students evaluate each other's work. In two Dutch articles Rijlaarsdam and Blok (Rijlaarsdam & Blok, 1981; Blok & Rijlaarsdam, 1981) describe a method of working, in use at a school, based on evaluation by students. At the school in question, students aged about 17 write a persuasive article for their school-leaving examination; the purpose is that the audience—made up of the writers' peers—should be convinced of something by the article. The staff, of whom I am one, adduce the following reasons for having these pieces of written work evaluated by the writers' peers.

1. Students learn more about writing

Having written work assessed by students provides the student evaluator with important reading experience which can in principle contribute to an improvement in written composition skills, since evaluating work entails the explicitization of objectives and reflecting on standards. Furthermore, the evaluating task confronts students with both good and bad pieces of work, so that they can benefit from investigating why some pieces are better than others. This reinforces the communicative attitude and encourages reflection on differences in usage and effects on the reader. Good pieces can exert an exemplary influence. Now I am aware that in the United States the reading approach is generally favoured, in contrast to the Netherlands. But even if one uses 'modelling' to teach students how to write, it looks as if the written work produced by their peers provides better models than texts that were not actually written by and for students of 17. The extra instructiveness of peer models probably arises from the fact that they are more involved in the communication process and the classroom situation: students

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see their own work, they know the audience, they are at last able to have a say in judging written work that is aimed *at them*. In short, peer evaluation opens up perspectives for new and possibly fruitful and motivating learning activities.

2. Students are better at judging audience orientation

Attention to such goals as audience and goal orientation is growing in modern written composition teaching. One result of this is that more and more texts are being turned out with a particular audience in mind. To students, the most immediate, concrete audience is their peers, especially as they are in a position to use questionnaires and interviews in the classroom to analyse their audience. Leaving it to the teacher to evaluate compositions can also lead to problems because the teacher is less easily able to place himself in the situation of young people, and it goes without saying that student evaluators have few problems in that regard. In principle, student evaluators are probably able to arrive at a more valid assessment of the audience and goal orientation of written work aimed at their peers.[1]

3. Students are better at telling each other what is good and what is bad

The difference in level between teacher and student may be an obstacle to giving useful hints and tips. A student's usage and range of concepts are closer to those of his peers than are those of a teacher. Teachers' and students' frames of reference can be quite disparate. Communication from the teacher runs a risk of failing to reach the student.[2]

4. Students make multiple and analytical evaluation possible

Involving students in the evaluation multiplies the number of available evaluators. Provided that they are sufficiently able, multiple evaluation increases the quality of the evaluation procedure in several ways. By using more evaluators it is possible to approach more closely a candidate's true score because all sorts of evaluator idiosyncrasies are averaged out. Moreover, increasing the number of evaluators means that more attention can be paid to the evaluation itself. Overall evaluation can make way for an analytical evaluation, which certainly offers more opportunities for diagnosis and feedback.

At this point I wish to make what I consider to be an important observation. If evaluation by a panel is the method preferred, i.e. if use is made of the common variance between a number of judges, there is a danger that only superficial, less interesting aspects of writing will be included in the evaluation. All other aspects—about which opinions will differ much more widely—will then fall within the error variance. If peer evaluation is to be employed it is a good idea not to use averaged panel assessments but to feed the evaluations of all peers back to the writer. This applies particularly where

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peer evaluation is being used for diagnostic assessment before revision takes place.

5. Peer evaluation leads to increased writing frequency

Since the teacher is now released from the labour intensive task of evaluation, it is possible for the number of written compositions produced by each student during the course to be increased. And because writing is a skill that is learned through practice, by writing, more practice (given certain conditions) will lead to improved written composition.[3]

6. Peer evaluation means immediate feedback

Bringing students into the evaluation of written work will mean that writers get their work returned to them faster than when a single evaluator has to submit all the essays to an intensive examination. It would seem likely that rapid feedback works better than delayed feedback. Moreover, feedback will be received more frequently because students will be writing more frequently. The student thus receives more frequent information on his efforts and will be better able to optimize his study strategy (Buis 1978, p. 130).

So much for teachers' common sense. But can the use of peer evaluation be justified from the point of view of educational theory? I think it can. According to Bloom (1976), good instruction is characterized by clear 'cues', i.e. pointers, given to students at the start of and during the learning process, to the content of the learning elements and the purpose; by 'reinforcement', i.e. acknowledgement of the student, important for a sense of acceptance and the student's self-esteem; by 'participation', i.e. the degree of the student's participation and involvement; and finally by 'feedback', i.e. the quality and quantity of the feedback that may lead to correction of the 'cues'. The third of these features, 'participation', is the best indicator of good instruction: according to Bloom 20% of the variance in the performance of individuals is explained by active participation in the classroom situation. Now in the case of peer evaluation it looks as if this 'participation', in particular, is guaranteed. The student is as it were invited to assume a much more responsible and hence also much more active role than is customary in the teaching of written composition in Holland. Moreover, because students also fulfil the role of evaluator it may be that the 'reinforcement' is stronger and that the 'cues' received will be better understood because the receiver simultaneously fulfils the role of transmitter: the meaning of the terms used in the evaluation, e.g. the labels used for categories in an analytical scheme of evaluation, will be far clearer and more concrete.

Support for the use of peer evaluation is provided not only by educational theory but also by communication theory. The fact that the student acts as the reader of his peers' written

work emphasizes the communicative function of writing. We know that even at quite an early age children display audience-oriented behaviour in speaking situations, but that in the writing situation the same sort of behaviour does not appear until later. However, where the readers are actually present and provide rapid feedback the distance between transmitter and receiver is a lot less than in traditional methods of teaching written composition. Writers adapt themselves to their readers, a clearly recognizable group. And because students also act as readers and as such provide feedback to the writer, they are forced to pay much more concentrated attention to the quality of various aspects of the written product. They will have to form a sharper picture in their own minds of all the features that characterize a 'good' piece of writing. In this way the student evaluator builds up, in his memory, models of text structures and techniques of audience-oriented writing.

Research into peer evaluation

I will now turn to two investigations relating to peer evaluation. I shall begin with a discussion of the quality of peer evaluation as practised at a school in Holland, and will then present a review of the relation between peer evaluation and written composition ability.

1. Research in the Netherlands

Briefly, the circumstances are these. Evaluation of the essays was done according to an analytical evaluation schedule on which the evaluators gave 62 ratings for each piece of work. Each rating was expressed on a five point scale whose extremes were defined (1 = agree; 5 = disagree). The schedule consisted of six main categories: goal orientation, audience orientation, structure, accuracy, news value and usage. The students using the schedule were unaware of this division into categories: all they saw was the 62 propositions appearing in the schedule in the handout (Appendix 1). After the analytical evaluation an overall mark was awarded on the ten point scale commonly used in Holland (1 = bad; 10 = excellent). The raters worked independently of one another. Evaluation took place during class, each rater evaluating one essay per teaching hour of 45 minutes. Each essay was evaluated by three students and the teacher. The student rating furthest away from the teacher rating was omitted from the calculations. The work to be evaluated consisted of persuasive articles of up to ten pages in length, written by other members of the class.[4]

Table 2 (Appendix 2) shows the results of the quality of the evaluation procedure. The homogeneity of the scales was estimated using Cronbach's alpha on the basis of the added scores of the three raters. The reliability coefficients are the so-called 'intra-class reliability coefficients', estimated on

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the basis of variance analyses. It will be seen that the relia-bility of a panel of judges consisting of a teacher and two students is, as obtained using our analytical schedule (see Appendix 1), reasonably high, at least when measured against Dutch yardsticks. Recent Dutch research into this has shown that the reliability of scores obtained with a 'professional' panel of 3 teachers evaluating work with an analytical sche-dule can vary from .64 (Zijlmans & Blok 1980) to .75 (Wolowitsj 1976). Other Dutch research, too, shows that students can evaluate work quite reliably. For example, when evaluating discussion skill panels of 6 students working with an analytical schedule (Rijlaarsdam 1982) achieved reliability coefficients of between .74 and .78.

I hope I have been able to demonstrate with the foregoing that students of 17 are well able to evaluate written work. But does peer evaluation also have an effect on written com-position ability? In Holland, in the context of research under the auspices of the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement that was connected with the I.E.A. Written Composition Study, Wesdorp (1982) reviewed a large number of investigations into the effects of instruction variables on written composition ability. One of the instruction vari-ables that proved to affect written composition was peer evalu-ation, along with sentence combining, prewriting activities and obligatory revision. Table 3 (Appendix 3) summarizes 16 investigations in which peer evaluation appears to be the chief experimental variable. The results of these 16 investigations as they relate to peer evaluation may be summarized as follows. One study, by Beach (1979), examined self-evaluation using a questionnaire. The results were disappointing: those students who evaluated their own work achieved worse results than those evaluated by the teacher. Fifteen projects looked at the effect of peer evaluation. Eight of these produced a positive result, i.e. the experimental groups achieved better results, presumably as a consequence of the experimental treatment. However, seven investigations produced indecisive results, i.e. there was no demonstrable difference between groups using peer evaluation and groups whose work was evaluated by the teacher. Wesdorp also included in his table four studies in which peer evaluation was a secondary feature of the teaching method. In these four studies the balance was in favour of the experimental methods (i.e. those in which peer evaluation was an important element).

It will by now be clear, I hope, that peers are capable of evaluating students' work quite reliably and that there are strong indications that peer evaluation has a positive in-fluence on written composition ability.

Audience awareness and peer evaluation
One of the reasons why seven of the fifteen studies failed to establish any difference between experimental and control groups

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may be that the aspects of written composition ability that were measured were not those that would seem to be the most obvious candidates for measurement. In an investigation due to start in Holland in April, we shall be examining the influence of peer evaluation on goal orientation, audience orientation and news value, since these, we believe, are the aspects of written composition that are most likely to benefit from this peer-evaluation-based method of teaching.

In a quasi-experimental design the experimental groups are confronted with a teaching method based on peer evaluation using analytical schedules, like those in the appendix, and on revision: following comments from their peers, students must go back to their work and improve it. Work done by the control group students is commented on by the teacher and these students too must revise their work afterwards. We shall also elicit a number of writing-aloud protocols from students from both experimental and control groups: we expect to find changes taking place in the writing processes of students in the peer evaluation condition. To end with, I shall go into this aspect a little more closely.

From various studies it has emerged that the writing process of good writers can be distinguished from that of less good writers. Good writers work in a more goal-oriented way: their writing process may be characterized as a problem-solving process of the means-end analysis type, whereas the writing process of less good writers is more a process of trial and error (Hayes & Flower 1980). Good writers also differ from less good writers in their revision strategy: good writers go much further in their revisions than less good writers, who are frightened of going much beyond the occasional localized amendment (Sommers 1981; Faigley & White 1981). Other research too, such as that by Applebee (1978), in which questionnaires have been used to establish the characteristics of good writers, shows that good writers pay more attention to revision.

Because the writing situation in the peer evaluation condition is more dialogical, and because the audience is more real, there is a better chance that young writers, for the very reason that they themselves act as readers as much as for any other reason, will develop an 'internal reader'. The process will then become less writer-oriented and more reader-oriented. Bearing in mind the model of the writing process developed by Linda Flower and John Hayes (Appendix 4), which is gradually becoming better known in Holland and Belgium, we think that students in the peer evaluation condition will increasingly tend to think of their audiences, will have more models available to them, will produce more goal-oriented writing, and during the writing process will revise their work more intensively with their audience as the checkpoint. It seems to us to be extremely worth while involving students in the process of evaluation, so that the observer within the writing student grows; or, to use the jargon, metacognition is enhanced.

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Notes

1. Naturally there are also negative aspects; it is important that we acknowledge the disadvantages and dangers. For example, it might be said that students have less reading experience and are therefore less competent to give consistent performance in evaluating the written composition of others. This is something that ought to be investigated. However, we believe that *in principle* students are capable of more valid evaluation of certain aspects of written work: whether in practice they are sufficiently equipped and skilled enough to carry out such tasks is another matter.

2. Here it may be objected that students may also be prevented by a lack of concepts from communicating with one another on quality. This seems to me a valid objection: students must be able, as it were, to draw on a 'metalanguage'. I also believe that the use of an analytical schedule in itself does much to help students develop a concept apparatus.

3. It must be remembered that practice *alone* is not a successful instructional method. In Wesdorp (1982) there is a comparison of 10 quasi-experiments in which frequency of practice was the variable. Eight of the ten studies produced indecisive results.

4. Ten pages of text is not the usual length of the papers written by students for their examination. Normally students are required to write about two pages at a three-hour sitting.

APPENDIX 1: Rijlaarsdam evaluation schedule

ESSAY RATING FORM

rater...

author...

essay title........... ....

evaluation date..

Instructions:
Read each proposition carefully and decide how far you agree with it. On the five point scale, circle the number that best reflects how you feel.
Remember that there are both positive and negative propositions.

	agree				disagree
	1	2	3	4	5
1. The information in the text all leads to the stated goal	1	2	3	4	5
2. There is just the right amount of information	1	2	3	4	5
3. The reasoning by which the goal is reached is correct	1	2	3	4	5
4. The conclusions are very acceptable	1	2	3	4	5
5. The writer evokes feelings and experiences that make the reader more receptive	1	2	3	4	5
6. There is too much information	1	2	3	4	5
7. The reader is encouraged to act	1	2	3	4	5
8. I am not really convinced	1	2	3	4	5
9. What the reader is encouraged to do is feasible	1	2	3	4	5
10. I am not quite sure what I am supposed to think	1	2	3	4	5
11. The reader is encouraged to further reading in the introduction	1	2	3	4	5
12. You don't really feel you're involved with the subject	1	2	3	4	5
13. The text addresses the reader directly	1	2	3	4	5
14. The examples used by the writer are all in my sphere of interest	1	2	3	4	5
15. The text is easy to read for the audience aimed at	1	2	3	4	5
16. The writer explains everything very clearly	1	2	3	4	5

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	agree				disagree
17. The introduction fails to appeal to me	1	2	3	4	5
18. The choice of words is not appropriate to the audience aimed at	1	2	3	4	5
19. The title appeals to me	1	2	3	4	5
20. The sloppy handwriting makes the text difficult to read	1	2	3	4	5
21. If you leaf through the text it is easy to see how it is constructe·	1	2	3	4	5
22. The author has a tendency to ramble	1	2	3	4	5
23. The table of contents is so clear that you can read the train of thought of the text in it	1	2	3	4	5
24. The conclusion gives a clear summing up of the information in the text	1	2	3	4	5
25. The transition from one sub-theme to the next is clearly indicated	1	2	3	4	5
26. From time to time the information is summarized	1	2	3	4	5
27. The title does not cover the contents	1	2	3	4	5
28. There is a clear division into paragraphs	1	2	3	4	5
29. The broad construction (introduction, middle, conclusion) is all right	1	2	3	4	5
30. The author has not worked well with headings and subheadings	1	2	3	4	5
31. The information appears to be accurate	1	2	3	4	5
32. The information (e.g. the quotations) tends to be taken out of context	1	2	3	4	5
33. The information is verifiable	1	2	3	4	5
34. There are clear references to the sources which do not interfere with one's reading	1	2	3	4	5
35. The information is rather one-sided	1	2	3	4	5
36. Sources are clearly identified	1	2	3	4	5
37. The author explains why he has used the sources he has used and not others	1	2	3	4	5
38. The quotations are easily identified in the text by the punctuation	1	2	3	4	5
39. There are some factual mistakes	1	2	3	4	5
40. Assertions are supported by good arguments	1	2	3	4	5

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	agree				disagree
41. Facts and comment are kept sharply distinct	1	2	3	4	5
42. The author's opinion is rather too obvious and does not come over all that credibly	1	2	3	4	5
43. The subject appeals to me	1	2	3	4	5
44. There's not much information	1	2	3	4	5
45. I knew it all before	1	2	3	4	5
46. The author has a surprisingly fresh approach to the facts	1	2	3	4	5
47. It seems to me worth reading	1	2	3	4	5
48. The author suggests solutions to the problem that I didn't think were possible	1	2	3	4	5
49. The whole thing is exceedingly boring	1	2	3	4	5
50. Reading this essay you look at the subject in a completely new light	1	2	3	4	5
51. This text is highly relevant for the audience aimed at	1	2	3	4	5
52. Useless text, nothing in it	1	2	3	4	5
53. The usage is well adapted to the audience	1	2	3	4	5
54. There are rather a lot of irritating spelling mistakes	1	2	3	4	5
55. The sentence construction varies and the text reads well	1	2	3	4	5
56. At times one has the strong impression that bits have been copied down from somewhere else	1	2	3	4	5
57. The style is monotonous and holds few surprises	1	2	3	4	5
58. I had to read some bits more than once to understand them	1	2	3	4	5
59. Sometimes it made me laugh	1	2	3	4	5
60. The illustrations contribute to a proper understanding of the text	1	2	3	4	5
61. The whole thing is very well presented	1	2	3	4	5
62. The punctuation does its job very well	1	2	3	4	5

What sort of mark would you give?
Give your general impression below in about 100 words.

APPENDIX 2

Summarizing table

score	number of propositions	homogen-eity	relia-bility	standard error
goal orientation	10	.90	.70	12
audience orientation	10	.84	.67	11
structure	10	.80	.69	9
reliability	12	.79	.72	11
news value	10	.84	.57	10
usage	10	.76	.68	9
overall	–	–	.62	1.5
analytical total	62	–	.75	44

APPENDIX 3: Wesdorp's table

## The effects on written composition ability of peer evaluation

Study	Experimental method	Grade	N	Duration	Result
Maize 1952	eval. & corr. in class by students assisted by teacher	13	150	26 essays in exp. group, 14 in control	The difference in the progress made by the two groups was significant (in favour of experimental group)
Ward 1959	Evaluation by small g. oups & by individual studen·s, followed by discussion & revision	College	120 approx	1 quarter	No significant difference in essays
Pierson 1967	Correction by peers using special forms, individually & in small groups	9	150 approx.	?	There was no significant difference between the two groups; conclusion: no difference between the two methods of correction (control= trad. = teacher)
Effingham School District 1972	Evaluation by students, frequent practice (plus other features)	pre-College	?	?	The students who had taken the course got better marks for English during their first year at College
Ford 1973	Editing/evaluation by peers	13	50	18 weeks, 7 essays	The experimental group made better progress in general written composition ability
Sager 1973	Students used analytical schedule with 4 categories for their own work & that of peers	6	83	8 weeks, 5 lessons per week	In every respect measured the experimental group made better progress than the control group
Bouton & Tutty 1975	Peer evaluation	14	56	3 months, 5 hours per week	The experimental group made better progress than the control group
Lyons 1976	Response from teacher & peers	10	100 approx.	8 weeks	No significant differences could be found
Steinacker 1976	Comments by peers as editorial prior to revision	College	19	?	Development of written composition ability was influenced by (1) student's own choice of topic, (2) involvement in pre-writing activity and revision, and (3) editing of work by peers
Beach 1979	Revision of rough version using a self-evaluation form	10-12	103	3 weeks, writing every day	Self-evaluation resulted in lower scores for certain composition aspects than those given by teacher

Wesdorp table ctd.

Study	Experimental method	Grade	N	Duration	Result
Benson 1979	Student evaluation using structured schedule compared with a reinforcement-oriented schedule and revision under teacher guidance	9-10	270 approx.	10 weeks, in which 5 essays	The results show statistical support for the effects of feedback from peers
Myers 1979	Peer evaluation	7-8	168	2 weeks instruction + 3 essays	No significant difference in effectiveness between teacher and student evaluation
Burt 1980	Peer evaluation in a 'progressive', individualized method and in a traditional method compared with evaluation by the teacher	11	?	?	No significant effects arising from peer evaluation
Copland 1980	Peer evaluation	8	80 approx.	12 weeks	No significant differences between experimental and control groups
Oelaney 1980	Peer evaluation	College	?	?	No significant pre-post differences in the style and construction of written work
Karegianes, Pascarella & Pflaum 1980	Highly structured evaluation by peers using questionnaires	10	49	10 weeks, 2-3 hours per week	The experimental group had significantly higher post-scores for written composition
Lagana 1972	Group work, in which topic was chosen with peers, goals were formulated and evaluation took place	10	60	15 weeks	Significantly better results for the experimental group
Wright 1975	Preparation through role-playing + self-evaluation using a check-list	13	80 approx.	?	No significant progress in experimental group
Farrell 1977	Peer evaluation compared with tutors compared with teacher	9-10	130 approx.	12 weeks	Both peer evaluation and tutor evaluation in a group context produced better results than teacher evaluation
Clifford 1981	Prior discussion, group work, peer evaluation	13	92	14 weeks, 2½ hours per week	The experimental group made greater progress in written composition

The Hayes & Flower model
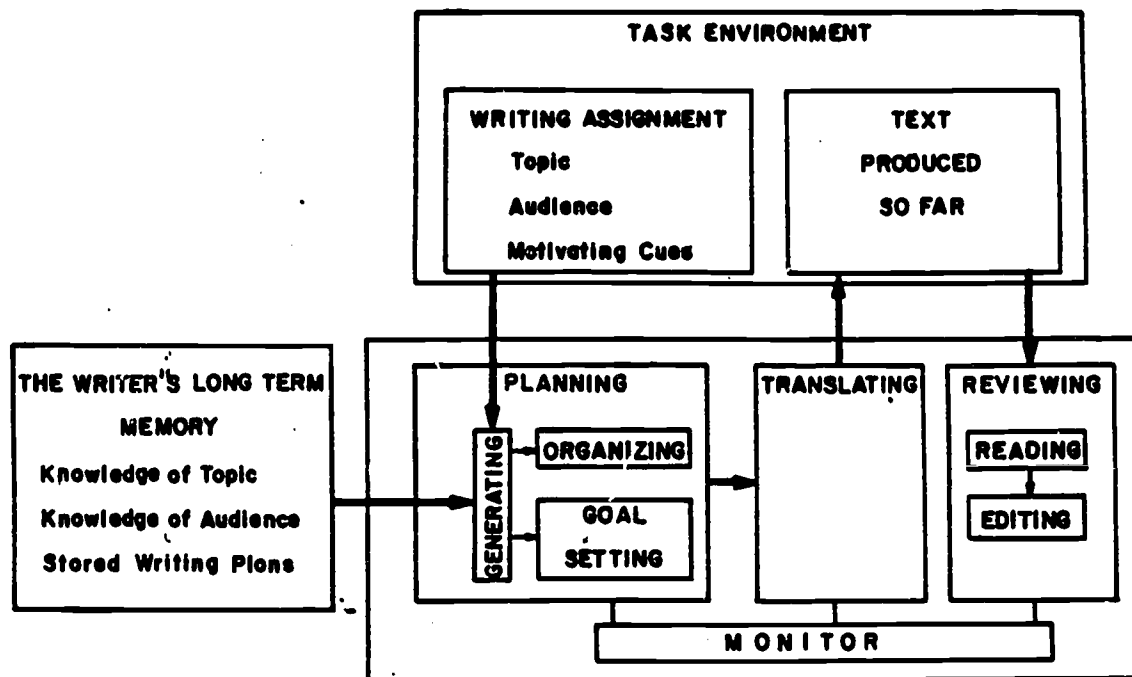
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