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ABSTRACT

A program was developed and implemented for use with college freshmen at a community college in southeast Florida whose entrance examination scores fell below the acceptable range for admission into a regular English classroom. These students lacked an adequate background in basic English language skills, had an insufficient understanding of the writing process, and demonstrated meager self confidence in their writing ability. The goal of the program was to implement a modified writing workshop, using visual stimulus to encourage topic development, drafting, revision, and proofreading as part of the writing process. Objectives were for 80% of the 16 students to increase their scores (1) by 3 points on topic and paragraph coherency tests; (2) by 6 points on drafting and revision tests; (3) by 6 points on proofreading tests; and (4) to increase their writing scores by 2 points (as measured by a scoring rubric); and (5) to show a more positive attitude toward writing. The target group was required to participate in a visually enhanced writing workshop and to produce five completed papers in addition to the course requirements. Objectives 1, 2, and 5 were met with 80% of the target group demonstrating significant improvement; objective 3 resulted in 56% of the group showing improvement, while objective 4 effected a 62.5% increase. In all four English objectives, all students displayed substantial progress. (Contains 7 tables, 6 figures, and 27 references. Appendixes include an instructors' survey and results, review of scores from final papers of 20 students, a scoring rubric, a student attitude survey, a teacher-constructed handout of essay topic suggestions based on the visuals, and a teacher-made drawing.) (Author/NKA)

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CS

ED 406 695

UTILIZING VISUAL LITERACY TECHNIQUES IN A MODIFIED WRITING WORKSHOP

by

Eileen Greenberg

A Final Report submitted to the Faculty of the Fischler Center for the Advancement of Education of Nova Southeastern University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science

An abstract of this report may be placed in the University database system for reference

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Abstract

Utilizing Visual Literacy Techniques in a Modified Writing Workshop
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Descriptors: Visual Literacy/Community College/ Writing Workshop/ Topic Development/ Vocabulary Development/ Drafting/ Revision/ Writing Process/ Remedial Training/ Picture Books/ Cooperative Grouping/ Mini-Lessons/ Portfolio Evaluation/ Peer Conferences/ Peer Editing

This program was developed and implemented for use with college freshmen whose entrance examination scores fell below the acceptable range for admission into a regular English classroom. These students lacked an adequate background in basic English language skills, had an insufficient understanding of the writing process, and demonstrated meager self-confidence in writing ability. The goal of the process was to implement a modified writing workshop, using visual stimulus, to encourage topic development, drafting, revision, and proofreading as part of the writing process. The objectives were for 80% of the students to increase their scores by three points on topic and paragraph coherency tests; to increase their scores by six points on drafting and revision tests; to increase their scores by six points on proofreading tests; to increase their writing scores by two points (as measured by a scoring rubric); and to show a more positive attitude toward writing. The target group was required to participate in a visually enhanced writing workshop and to produce five completed papers in addition to the course requirements. Objectives one, two, and five were met with 80% of the target group demonstrating significant improvement; objective three resulted in 56% of the target group showing improvement instead of the projected 80%; objective four effected a 62.5% increase instead of 80%. In all four English objectives, all students displayed substantial progress. Appendices include an Instructors' Survey, results of the Instructors' Survey, review of scores from final papers of twenty previous Prep English students, a scoring rubric, a Student Attitudinal Survey, a teacher-constructed hand-out, and a teacher-made drawing.

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Student's name Eileen Greenberg Completion date March 22, 1997

Project site Palm Beach Community College, Boca Raton, Florida

Mentor's name Lourdes Rey
print *signature*

Mentor's position at the site CPI Coordinator Phone # (561) 367-4552

Comment on impact of the project (handwritten):

This project was innovative and met the needs of the students. It was well received by the students, and we expect to implement it into other classes.

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CHAPTER I

Purpose

Background

The setting for this project was a community college in Southeast Florida, one of four main campuses located throughout the county. Although the site began functioning more than twenty-five years ago, it was not designated as an official campus until recently. The classroom buildings, gymnasium, student services building, and bookstore were all newly constructed.

Students attending the community college were drawn from many sectors and represented a variety of needs. They came from local area high schools and out-of-state high schools; they were returning older high school graduates and individuals holding General Education Development (GED) diplomas; they were adults seeking business, medical, and professional certificates; they were students in pursuit of continuing studies, including career preparation, career enhancement, and personal development; and they were foreign students. During the 1995-96 academic year, there were over 200 foreign students participating in the programs, representing 54 different countries. The college was pre-approved for veteran training and military credit

and hosted dual high school /college enrollment, Advanced Placement, and CLEP students. Aside from the continuing education and licensing programs, the community college offered over 100 majors in the associate of arts degree and two year associate of science degree.

In 1994-95 there were 5,114 full-time students and 11,565 part-time students enrolled on all four campuses, with 1,215 full-time and 2,720 part-time students enrolled at the designated site. The school was ethnically diversified on all campuses. In 1994-95, the combined enrollment was 12,838 white, 1831 black, 1279 Hispanic, 428 Asian, and 55 Native American students. The designated site hosted 3,100 white, 335 Black, 275 Hispanic, 128 Asian, and 17 Native Americans. The college was accredited by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools as well as by professional organizations for specific programs leading to certification or career advancement.

There were eight clubs and organizations active on campus, including counseling services, disabled students services, a school newspaper, health services, intramural, and recreational activities. The campus also provided testing programs for national and state exams, such as CLEP, ACT, SAT, CPT, COPA, CLAST, and CELT.

This project involved those students who had attained a score below the designated cut-off score on an entrance exam, such as the ACT, SAT, or CPT.

To address this problem, the Florida Legislature, in 1979, enacted CS/HB 1689, a bill that provides students who do not attain an acceptable score on entrance tests, the means of acquiring college-level skills in both English and mathematics through college preparatory courses offered at the community college level. These courses are graded as pass or fail and require a student's commitment to both lecture and lab hours. On the designated campus, the courses known as Preparatory (Prep) courses, were overseen by the Center For Personalized Instruction (CPI). The lecture half of the course consisted of two and one half hours of class time weekly for 16 weeks. The lab half permitted students to individualize instructional hours to assure personal attention. There were two full-time, and approximately fifteen part-time, CPI staff members for the language arts portion of the program who served the lab from 8:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. Monday through Thursday and 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Friday.

The writer of this project conducted the practicum during the lecture portion of the Prep English course; however, due to the nature of the program, students had access to the researcher and other specialists during open lab hours. The students in the project were not classified with exceptionalities, but occasionally, some students did require special attention, such as longer testing times or assistance with lecture notes.

The writer holds a B.A. in psychology, is Florida State certified in science, English, and psychology, and has been involved with various aspects of

teaching since 1967. The writer has taught in the Florida school system since 1986, and has for the last four years, taught community college preparatory courses in English and reading as well as CLAST review and preparation classes.

The role of the writer was to introduce a modified concept of a writing workshop into the lecture portion of the Prep English class. The writer used visual stimulus in the development of vocabulary, topic selection, composition (drafting), and revision, as part of the writing process. The class was also instructed in peer editing, cooperative grouping, and peer conferences. A portfolio of finished products was maintained to assist in assessment of the results of the practicum.

The Prep English class was scheduled to meet three days per week, on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, for fifty minutes each day. The writer implemented in-class writing time, and in order to further coordinate the community college curriculum with the practicum, the writer provided mini-lessons for approximately ten minutes each day. This organization provided substantial writing time, teacher conference time, peer conference time, and instructional lectures. It encouraged in-class drafting and revision with the assistance of teacher and peers and legitimized writing during class time. The writer employed the use of innovative visual stimulus during each weekly lesson to induce topic development and to cultivate and crystallize writing technique.

Problem Statement

Students enrolled in Prep English classes had not succeeded in attaining the necessary college-level writing skills. College Preparatory Tests, an Instructors' Survey (Appendix A, pp. 98-99), interviews with administrators, and examples of student writing scores (Appendix C, p. 101) revealed that incoming Prep students lacked an adequate background in basic English language skills, had an insufficient understanding of the writing process, and demonstrated meager self-confidence. In other words, in order to produce proficient writers, it was necessary to cultivate and enrich students' innate abilities while encouraging them to approach and develop meaning-making strategies that would engage their cognitive aptitudes.

The author reviewed the 1994 and 1995 CPT (College Preparatory Test) scores of first-time-in-college applicants, for English proficiency, on the designated campus (Table 1). The English sub-test score cut-off was 77; however, for the 1996-97 term, the proposed cut-off score will be 83. In an effort to establish statewide standards for incoming freshmen students, the Florida Legislature recently passed a law, effective August, 1996, that mandated an increase in the scores acceptable for first-year college-level placement. The writer's review reflects both the proposed scores and the current scores for the designated campus. In 1994, out of 993 students tested, 35.3 % failed the

English sub-test based on current testing levels; 44.6% would have failed based on the proposed levels. In 1995, out of 1165 students tested, 38% failed based on current levels, and 50.2% would have failed based on proposed levels. It was alarming to note the increase in failure rates at both current and proposed levels. These statistics indicated a serious shortcoming in the writing skills of incoming freshman as was reflected in the 1995 tests scores which, measured against proposed standards, revealed that more than fifty percent of the students did not attain a sufficiently high score to place them in a regular English class.

Table 1

A Comparison of Current and Proposed CPT
English Sub-Test Scores for 1994 and 1995
on Designated College Campus

	YEAR	FAILED	PASSED
CURRENT SCORES	94	35.3%	64.7%
PROPOSED SCORES	94	44.6%	55.4%
CURRENT SCORES	95	38.0%	62.0%
PROPOSED SCORES	95	50.2%	49.8%

After twelve years of schooling, these students had not succeeded in becoming capable writers. It was evident that a different strategy was needed if they were to advance to college-level work. Visual stimulus, in a workshop environment, provided a critical advantage.

The writer distributed an Instructors' Survey (Appendix A, pp. 98-99) to eight community college instructors of Prep English courses. The results of the survey supported the premise that incoming students lacked basic English grammar skills, were poor writers, and required remedial language arts training (Appendix B, p. 100). The survey supplied the following data: In Part A, participants were asked to evaluate English language skills, such as grammar, punctuation, mechanics, verb agreement, and so forth, of incoming prep students. All participants either *strongly agreed* or *agreed* that these students required additional training in all fields in question. In Part B, participants were asked to evaluate students' abilities in writing skills, such as topic development, paragraph development, word choice, clear thesis statement, sentence variety, and organization. Six of eight participants either *strongly disagreed* or *disagreed* with the fact that students demonstrated an ability in those areas. One participant felt that students demonstrated ability only in topic development, paragraph development, and word choice, and one participant was undecided about topic development, sentence variety, and word choice. In Part C of the survey, the participants were asked to respond freely to the questions posed. Seven of those surveyed considered student writing skills unacceptable; one said the skills were barely acceptable; and one stated that student writing reminded her of an *untidy apartment*, containing the right parts but totally disorganized. Four participants stated that the most serious problem students faced was their

lack of organizational skill; one suggested that they lacked the necessary vocabulary to express their ideas; and three felt that students lacked the basic foundation to tackle essay writing.

The writer interviewed several administrators on the designated campus. Those interviewed were directly involved with student affairs and were knowledgeable about the status of incoming students. The results of the interviews corroborated the data gathered by the writer and further substantiated the deficiency levels of the students involved in this practicum. The interviewees unanimously agreed with the standardization of the CPT test scores and understood and appreciated the validity of increasing the cut-off scores.

The writer evaluated twenty Prep English compositions from 1994 through 1996 (Appendix C, p. 101). The samples indicated the following: a lack of topic sentence development and paragraph coherency; a lack of drafting and revision skills; a lack of proofreading skills, with emphasis on grammar and punctuation; and a general confusion about the structure of an essay. The papers revealed that students required comprehensive and innovative training in order to produce clear, meaningful, and focused writing. The essays examined were previously scored by English teachers in the CPI laboratory.

The target group for this practicum consisted of sixteen incoming freshmen students who had not attained an adequate score on college entrance examinations to place them into a regular English classroom. The writer

selected the target group based upon the results of a writing pre-test administered during the first week of classes. The target students ranged in age from eighteen to twenty-four years; fourteen were high school graduates, and two held GED diplomas; approximately thirty-eight percent (six students) were born in the United States, thirty-one percent (five students) were Haitian, nineteen percent (three students) were Spanish, and twelve percent were "other" (two students, one from the Middle East and one from Hungary). The writing pre-test was scored on a one to six basis, according to a scoring rubric (Appendix D, pp. 102-103), and was evaluated in terms of specific areas of deficiencies for each student in the target group (Table 2, Figure 1) The writer selected six students with a score of one, five students with a score of two, and five students with a score of three. No one in the class scored higher than a 3.2 on the pre-test. At the end of the semester, using the same rubric, the writer evaluated and scored five completed essays and arrived at an average score. Data is presented correlating the developmental progress of each student in the target group, detailing scores from the writing pre-test and the finished papers. Alterations in student achievement was analyzed and a number increase and percent change is presented (Table 6, Figure 5). In addition to the compositions, the writer administered and evaluated pre-tests and post-tests in topic development and paragraph coherency (Table 3, Figure 2), pre-tests and post-

tests on drafting and revision (Table 4, Figure 3), and pre-tests and post-tests on proofreading skills (Table 5, Figure 4).

Successful college students must be able to communicate their ideas; they must rely on prior knowledge to organize their thoughts both verbally and in writing. Entering college students are capable of attaining college-level English language skills when they are involved in a program designed to complement their abilities and induce participation in learning. They can be invited to discover personal meaning and understanding and to unlearn negative behaviors.

Based on the statistics cited and personal experience with college preparatory classes, it was evident that the incoming students who comprised the target group, were deficient in elementary English skills and writing proficiency. They required a guided instructional program that would meet their needs and enhance their capabilities to achieve college-level work. The writer outlined the use of a modified writer's workshop, using visual stimulus, to facilitate the process of advancing these students into an acceptable range of competence.

Discrepancy Statement

The target group of entering college students were failing to attain a passing score on the English sub-test of college entrance examinations as documented by CPT test scores. The writing ability of the target group of

entering college students fell below expectations for college-level writers as documented by writing samples from 1994 through 1996. The lack of ability and need for remedial training was corroborated by a survey of college preparatory instructors. The current English sub-test cut-off score for CPT tests is 77; however, for the 1997 term, the cut-off score will be raised to 83. Incoming college freshmen should be achieving at levels commensurate with college-level skills in order to secure placement into a regular college English classroom; they should be attaining scores higher than 83.

The proposed objectives were:

1. Over a fifteen week period, eighty percent of the students in the target group will increase their scores by three points as measured by combined Tests A and C, Unit 2, in the Evergreen Test Package which will be used as a pre-test and a post-test to determine ability to identify topic sentences and paragraph coherency.

2. Over a fifteen week period, eighty percent of the students in the target group will increase their scores by six points as measured by Test A, Unit 4, in the Evergreen Test Package which will be used as a pre-test and a post-test to assess composition skills, with focus on drafting and revision as part of the writing process.

3. Over a fifteen week period, eighty percent of students in the target group will increase their scores by six points as measured by Test A, Unit 6, in the Evergreen Test Package which will be used as a pre-test and a post-test to assess proofreading skills, with emphasis on grammar and punctuation.

4. Over a fifteen week period, eighty percent of the students in the target group will increase their writing scores by 2 points, based upon a scoring rubric (Appendix D, pp. 102-103), as measured by teacher evaluation of a writing pre-test and five completed compositions from students' portfolios.

5. Over a fifteen week period, eighty percent of the target group will show a more positive attitude toward writing compositions, using visually enhanced writing process, as measured by a student pre-and post-attitudinal survey (Appendix E, pp. 104-105, Table 7, Figure 6).

CHAPTER II

RESEARCH

The writing process, a subject that elicits ongoing controversy, was defined by Aristotle more than twenty-four hundred years ago; however, not until 1980 were the stages of the process reintroduced by textbook publishers for use as "structural elements in school rhetoric texts" (Simmons and Deluzain, 1989, 168). The process itself is generally defined as a three phase method including prewriting, drafting, and revising; some educators add a fourth component, publishing, because they believe that publishing validates a student's work.

Unfortunately, simply implementing the writing process does not insure success in writing. Writing requires communication, self-discovery, and perseverance, and while teachers attempt throughout the elementary and high school grades to instruct students in the techniques of writing, not all students become capable writers. According to King (1995, p. 188), "...progress is not automatic, and we need to be aware of the kinds of problems that arise in our applications" of process writing. King suggested that even though a teacher may implement the writing process into a classroom, s/he may still not reach many students. He offered the example of teachers who insisted on completion of a

prewriting exercise even as the child was conscientiously involved in drafting a piece. This insistence disturbed the natural evolution of the writer's mind and created a disabling atmosphere. King pointed out that this was due to the fact that many traditional, authoritarian teachers who became involved with writing workshops tended to turn their classrooms into a drab regularity because they forgot to recognize that voice and topics should be emanating from the students. King cited Graves when he warned teachers not to put "students on writer's welfare by taking over their writing"(King, 1995, p.190).

For these reasons and others, many students exit from grade schools without the comfort of writing skills. Establishing a functional writing workshop is certainly a good first step in overcoming the obstacles faced by students, but according to Mayo (1990), it is not the solution. Students also "need to unlearn traditional, hierarchical concepts of knowledge..." (Mayo, 1990, p.3). In his study, Mayo questioned the issues of self, society, and authority in student writing. He attempted to uncover the productive aspects of writing workshops that fostered the student's ownership of his or her writing. Mayo stated that a writing workshop was most effective for students to "publish, share, and polish their work, but not to create or shape it... (and that)... it should not be the only strategy" (Mayo, 1990, p.8).

In its purest state, writing workshop could be defined as a setting where students pursue their own ideas and decide upon and seek the kind of help they

need; it is a setting where they are given abundant time and the proper environment in which to write; and it is a setting organized for the convenience of writers who will smoothly evolve through the process writing stages and emerge as competent writers. Considering the parameters of personalities and systems embracing the writing workshop, it is not difficult to understand why some students can encounter the workshop method and still be incapable writers.

There were many useful suggestions for physically structuring a writing workshop, such as desk arrangement, room arrangement, establishment of a predictable writing time, and a supply of pens, paper, and markers (Bunce-Crim, 1991), however, of greater importance, was a dedication to the student-oriented approach to classroom activities. Within the workshop atmosphere, teachers must meet the needs not only of a variety of writing abilities, but also of a variety of personalities. It was often suggested that certain meaningful guidelines be set down to avoid chaos and to reward progress.

Avery (1993) believed that it was important to establish rules within each individual classroom and not to carry over the guidelines from former experiences into new classes. She offered that children should be encouraged to establish the rules themselves, since the act of establishing the rules, gives them ownership of the standards of classroom behavior. She also cautioned that rules need to evolve as the year progresses to encompass new situations, and she

believed that the "result is a workshop with high expectations that children understand and that supports their growth as writers" (Avery, 1993, p. 14).

Another aspect of the workshop approach was grouping. Brooke, Mirtz and Evans (1994) advocated the use of small group participation, claiming that small groups provide the four elements of time, ownership, response and exposure, elements they considered crucial for developing writers. "Taken together, these four elements surround developing writers ...with some of the tempos, issues, and discourses that make up writers' lives throughout our cultures" (Brooke, Mirtz & Evans, 1994, p. 29). They stressed, however, that teachers are responsible to create an atmosphere uniquely structured to the specific needs of each classroom, and that they are responsible to expose their student writers to both consistent writing and to the work of other writers.

According to Proett and Gill (1986), grouping students had several more advantages beyond those observed by Brooke, Mirtz, and Evans. Proett and Gill stated that when students were arranged into peer editing groups, they formed a sense of ownership of the groups themselves, and they established a mutual trust. When students wrote for an audience of their peers, they were, at the same time, a writer of work and an editor of a fellow student's work. The interchangeable roles permitted a deeper understanding of what it takes to improve writing skills. Proett and Gill went on to say that peer editing groups "improve the leaning environment of a classroom (by) creating an atmosphere

of sharing and trust that infuses other aspects of classroom life"(Proett & Gill, 1986, p.22).

According to Harris (1992), students who learned to accept scrutiny from group evaluation became more serious about their work. Harris found that students gave "remarkably penetrating, insightful, sensitive, and sometimes blunt" (Harris, 1992, p. 52) comments about the work of their fellow students, and those comments mold the class into a "community of writers"(Harris, 1992, p.53). Through her research, she found that when group evaluation was implemented, students' writing improved without question, and that they appreciated knowing that they were becoming better writers. Harris advised the use of the workshop early in the semester because teachers could get to "enjoy the improved writing skills that the workshop guarantees" (Harris, 1992, p. 53).

The workshop arrangement, as promoted by Atwell (1987), focused on a student-centered environment that released the students into creativity. But how should that creativity be evaluated? The responsibility for evaluation still remains with the teacher. Atwell used conference techniques to guide her students to that stage, and she evaluated only the finished products her students selected for their completed portfolios. She suggested that her students conference with other students, with themselves, and with the teacher; she scheduled mini-conferences on a daily basis, and other conferences as needed;

and she attempted to address each student's needs to ascertain the progress being made.

The conference writing program is exemplified in Clayton High School in suburban St. Louis where teachers experience one-on-one response to their students' writing as a rule. Puhr and Workman (1992) explained how Clayton High School incorporated individual conferences into the language arts curriculum. The program began in 1962 and has been progressively refined ever since. Even though the school has a relatively small population of 650 students, it employs twelve full-time English teachers who teach sixty to seventy students in three classes during an eight period day. Conferences last twenty to twenty-five minutes as scheduled by the students, and students seek additional mini-conferences if they have further questions. Teachers keep track of individual progress and have greater understanding of the abilities of each student. There are also peer response groups in action during the semester, and often the peer evaluators attend the conferences of students whose papers they had discussed.

In addition to conferences, Puhr and Workman (1992) addressed evaluation. They cited Murray who warned that the grade is a "terminal response" and should be put off for as long as possible. They experimented with portfolios assessment in which they gave grades for the entire quarter instead of for each paper. Puhr and Workman believed that the success of the program

was found in the testimony of the graduates who "feel confident about their writing, know how to discuss it perceptively, and serve as writing coaches for their friends, and enter college or the job market with above-average writing skills" (Puhr & Workman, 1992, p.50).

The writing process, inherent in the writing workshop, begins with prewriting. Prewriting involves the selection of an interesting topic that can engender growth, both as a student writer and as an individual. Atwell (1987) advocated peer questioning to encourage writers to choose and develop a topic of interest; she also suggested whole group topic sessions, listing of old topics and potential topics, and securing topics from literature sources. She did not however, concentrate heavily on prewriting exercises to foster the development of students' topics.

Proett and Gill (1986), on the other hand, listed nearly twenty exercises they considered stimulating that would "develop the content and ...explore the possibilities in the writing task so fully in the writer's mind...that the paper will virtually write itself" (Proett & Gill, 1986, p.5).

In establishing a workshop ideal, teachers need to incorporate as much innovation as possible. Bishop (1990) cited several educators who believe that the traditional writing workshop has the potential to become a static and unyielding environment because some teachers give more attention to the *process* than to the student writer's needs. Bishop suggested that workshops

"include analysis and discussion of students as *writers*" (Bishop, 1990, p.14). She advocated transactional writing workshops that allow the students to develop texts based on models of the work of other writers. She stated that "writers imitat(e) the more successful writer's work and ...(give) themselves assignments that challenge their own skills and abilities" (Bishop, 1990, p. 69). These invention techniques, using metacognition, assisted students in the development of topics which Bishop believes produced the necessary quality of ownership in writing. Bishop also advocated peer critiquing, and her research showed that students found peer conferences difficult, but very rewarding. Bishop contended that any innovative technique for topic development should be sought out and applied in order to keep the workshop productive.

Topic development is the catalyst promoting ownership of a finished piece of writing, and as with any technique, researchers differ in their approaches to topic exploration. According to Wilson (1987), in an attempt to construct meaning from their environment, students need to create both a visual language and a verbal language. She believes that language arts curriculum has always embodied the ideals of literacy, that is, reading and writing, and that the holistic model of instruction, or whole language, which includes reading, writing, speaking, and listening, has always been considered the element of basic communication. However, in today's society "that model is no longer sufficient to produce students that can be competent communicators and

effective participants in a rapidly-changing world" (Wilson, 1987, p. 99.). Wilson cited Sinatra saying that present day society is a "visually-oriented one in which language usage and thought processes are tied to immediate visual images"(Wilson, 1987, p.99). Wilson strongly urged that educators attempt to understand the far-reaching dimensions of this concept.

Since children begin as infants to focus on visual stimulus, they tend to develop ideas in the form of images rather than in words; however, simply asking students in an English class to illustrate a work they have written or to arrange pictures of a work in a special order, does not address the nature of visual literacy. Wilson offered the following definition: "Visual literacy could be defined as possessing the ability to *read*--discriminate, decode, and comprehend visual actions, objects, and symbols; and the ability to *write*--encode and create visual actions, messages, and symbols to facilitate the development of communicative competency" (Wilson, 1987, p. 99). Citing Fransecky and Debes, Wilson proposed that a visually literate individual has the ability, and often the eloquent ability, to switch from verbal to written communication and vice versa. And citing Sinatra, Wilson added that classrooms that utilize visual stimulus assist students with their abilities to create written discourse that is both unified and coherent.

Using visuals in the classroom, according to Wilson, allowed students to become active members in the group. It provided a vehicle for individuals to

participate in discussions that stimulated prior knowledge because they listened to the reports of other students and generalized about experiences, and in doing so, began to understand the nature of organizing, fictionalizing, and theorizing. "Visuals offer pupils a fascinating way to share experience, and, at the same time, provide a meaning-centered, language-sharing technique (Wilson, 1987, p. 100). Wilson cited Henderson who believes that picture perception is a precursor to representing speech in language development; therefore, establishing experiences with picture books is a prerequisite for written language acquisition.

According to Storey (1994), college students who were exposed to children's picture books began to understand the connection between literature and art. Working within a group, they refined their personal perceptions and began to understand the nature of visual literacy. Storey cited Kingman: "In other words, illustrations can perform that originally unsophisticated achievement of allowing heightened perception and information to coexist in a work of art" (Storey, 1994, p.5). Storey introduced the use of picture books to her college students and discovered that as their observational skills increased, they were drawn into the world of the picture. They began to add characterization, setting, mood, and action to the pictures. Storey noted that the students developed deeper understandings of the pictures when they discussed them with their classmates; each person reacted according to his or her own

experience and therefore interpreted the pictures differently. Storey stated that her students eventually came to believe that shared responses were very important. She added that "while literacy is an important part of anyone's education, it should be noted that visual literacy, being able to view, interpret and react to visuals, is just as important for today's population"(Storey, 1994, p. 16).

Kiefer (1988) noted that picture books can also provide a vehicle for students to understand, more profoundly, literary and aesthetic responses and that picture books can broaden the students' understanding of the social and cultural worlds. Kiefer cited Gombrich, pointing out that language offers the listener expression, arousal, and description, while visual stimulus, which encompasses all three aspects, is more powerful in its ability to arouse. Kiefer offered that pictures enhance the ability of students to write, since pictures and text together "provide an aesthetic experience which is more than the sum of the parts"(Kiefer, 1988, p. 261). She also stated that class discussion, viewing, and writing, in combination, allowed students the "opportunities for comparing, analyzing, synthesizing, and evaluating these multisensory experiences and provided the time for ideas and feedback to incubate and deepen"(Kiefer, 1988, p.267). Citing Levin and Schallert, Kiefer stated that pictures indeed extended the meaning of the written word, and this facilitated learning.

Eisner (1993) agreed. In fact, he drew such a profound interconnection of mind and body sensory qualities that he believed they could not be separated. He reflected upon the fact that teachers have always used examples to describe certain behaviors, such as tying one's shoes, because to write out the instructions would be tedious at best. He argued that examples, carried by language, fostered visual learning, and he noted that in English language usage, writers used metaphors to "disclose the power of visualization as a source of human understanding" (Eisner, 1993, p.82). He pointed out the fact that in speech, phrases, such as "I see what you are saying" are used to identify understanding, and he suggested that individuals in their intuitive environment of self, pictured the ideas being verbalized to them. Even abstraction, which is the most obtuse aspect of language use, Eisner believed is "inherent in the act of perception itself and always present in any act of symbolic representation" (Eisner, 1993, p. 83). Artists, he contended, produce work that is more than real; they intensify color, they enhance features of landscapes and portraits, and they create a more vivid environment. Writers do the same. Eisner pointed out that Steinbeck's *Grapes of Wrath* is an example of Steinbeck's intensification of the experiences of his characters in order to present a more distilled exposure to a situation that otherwise may have produced a commonplace response.

Eisner encouraged attention to visual literacy in American education, stating that "serious attention to the cultivation of visual literacy would

represent a fundamental expansion of our educational agenda" (Eisner, 1993, p.85).

Another advocate of visual stimulation in the classroom, namely in the form of picture books, was Lechner (1993), who advised the use of picture books because of their practical nature. She conceded that trying to bring an art gallery into a classroom would be impossible, and unless teachers had a stockpile of art works to share with their students, some other method would need to be incorporated. She suggested picture books as an excellent source for older students because more mature students could explore analytical approaches to the pictures while they experienced a vocabulary that expressed what they were seeing.

McCoubrey (1993) also used picture books in an attempt to team art and writing. She stated that visualization, which is the act of forming pictures in one's mind and is an essential skill for many activities, was a necessary prerequisite for the production of both art and writing. She believed that incorporating visual and verbal skills extended development in both areas. Videos and movies are visual stimuli, but the images are fast moving. In order for students to have time to reflect and critically examine the images, she considered it imperative to allow them to view pictures for a sustained period. Students can use words to direct a viewer's interest to something occurring in a picture as can the picture influence the viewer's words. McCoubrey continued

her analysis by extending the idea of combining the verbal and visual into the creation of a book, an activity that permitted her students to form a continuity between text and picture.

Writing and art need not remain an invention solely of the English classroom. Ernst (1994), an English teacher, combined writing and art in her art workshop to encourage her students to make meaning, calling the process "writing pictures and painting words." She demonstrated the interplay between the writing and the art, claiming that writing in the art workshop is essential to students' metacognitive behavior, essentially their thinking about how they were thinking. "Writing helped students express their thinking, show meaning in their pictures, use picture making as an interrelated process, assess and revise their work, describe their process, plan ahead, and reflect on their learning and thinking" (Ernst, 1994, p. 45). Ernst concluded that when students wrote about their work, they wrote with expression and poetic grace, and they showed a uniqueness of creative and expressive thought. This writing expanded their capacity to say what they meant.

Ersnt also discovered that students used writing to revise their artistic creations, stating that they linked the processes in a most important way. Citing Maxine Greene, Ernst concluded that "involvement in the arts and humanities has the potential for provoking precisely this sort of reflectiveness; we need to devise ways of integrating them into what we teach at all levels of the

educational enterprise" (Ernst, 1994, p. 51). Ernst discovered a beneficial, yet unplanned development, when the combination of art and writing provided her students with a system of pre-planning for their future pictures and projects. Summarizing her study, she concluded that literacy needs to be expanded to include the visual.

In a follow-up report, Ernst (1995) expanded her previous study by focusing on several important issues. She offered that writing assisted her students in the art workshop with the ability to be "authentic learners" and "revealed the thinking, planning, and discovering that occurred in their picture making"(Ernst, 1995, p.50). She went on to say that writing expanded the students' ability to examine in detail the meaning behind their pictures and assisted them with the development of future topics. If her students had not included writing in their art workshop, she believes, they would not have focused on meaning, but instead would have depended upon the simple appearance of the pictures and her directions and interpretations.

Ernst worked with grade school students to achieve her results. Curtiss (1988) conducted research with college age students and discovered similar results. Curtiss believed that students could improve their abilities in both verbal and visual skills when both modes were used interactively. In a college teaching experience, Curtiss demonstrated that using visual stimulation unblocked students' minds and provided structure for writing. With each

visually oriented assignment, Curtiss discovered that her students' writing improved and grew in both substance and quantity. In a last assignment, she incorporated written, visual, and diagrammatic conditions, and she stated that the feedback from her students was expressive, communicative and "vociferous."

Curtiss shared additional approaches to visual literacy citing work by Pearl Rosenberg, who, through the use of drawings, coordinated the visual and sensory faculties of her students. As participants in the writing process, Rosenberg's students displayed a free-flowing creativity which engaged their imagination and profoundly affected their writing abilities. Another educator using visual stimulus, Irene Maksymjuk, cited by Curtiss, found that her students were less fearful and more creative when she drew parallels between compositions in art and compositions in writing.

Curtiss concluded by saying that it would be "suicidal" not to combine the thinking, communicating, and learning modes of the verbal and visual worlds. She stated that as more educators realize the benefits of combining the two, they would understand and appreciate the value of the interaction. She suggested that teachers propose topics that could be both visually and verbally stimulating to reinforce this interaction. Curtiss stated that the combination would produce articulate and perceptive writers who were "well-equipped to

face a world in which word and image together dominate the dissemination of information and experience" (Curtiss, 1988, p. 493). .

Another researcher, Davis (1993), used visual art in his college-level creative writing workshop. As a poet, Davis was impressed with imagery, and he believed that in order for students to write vividly, they must first understand how to communicate the "subtleties of feeling and perception" through the use of imagery. He stressed that there is an interplay between the imagery in poetry and the imagery in art, and that apprentice writers must assimilate the visual imagery in order to later produce linguistic imagery. In his study, he discovered that students had the ability to translate imagination into words when they encountered visual arts. Davis found that using reproductions of artistic pieces triggered his writing lessons. He stated that "apprentice writers feel more capable of expressing their interior life through a personalized imagery" (Davis, 1993, p. 327) and reflected that, as an undergraduate, he learned more about writing poetry from visual arts than from reading poetry itself. He credited Francis Bacon with summoning his creative consciousness into action because he believes that Bacon's paintings helped him "see something in the world that needed articulation" (Davis, 1993, p. 330). He also pointed out that he and his students utilized the imagery in a painting while composing a work of poetry without feeling as though they were "stealing or imitating." Davis indicated that using visual stimulus in the writing workshop freed student from inhibitions

and allowed their imaginations to take control. Even if students had little background knowledge, were poor readers, or had read very little, they could "emotionally connect language with creative play," and elicit, with the combination of art and writing, "the private, interior imagination"(Davis, 1993, p. 330).

In a classroom of students where there is a problem associated with lack of background knowledge and lower levels of reading abilities, visual stimulus can provide the needed impetus. In a study by Sinatra, Beaudry, Guastello and Stahl-Gemake, it was demonstrated that students involved with photo essays showed an greater competence in their abilities with different writing styles when they utilized the storyboard method of planning and photographing as compared to those students who simply wrote essays on assigned topics. They cited Murray who suggested that viewing pictures offered a legitimate and justifiable technique during the prewriting stage of the writing process. In the study, the researchers found that photographs assisted the students with perceptions about their environment, "nonverbal connections for language" and provided a "previsionary and conceptual framework for the writing experience"(Sinatra et al., 1988, p. 407).

In a later study, Sinatra, Beaudry, Stahl-Gemake, and Guastello (1990) measured the outcome of combining visual literacy with culturally diverse students. They found that visual approaches reinforced and reshaped the verbal

abilities of the students, and that combining the verbal and visual resulted in the building of background knowledge and in the ability to organize thoughts into writing. They advanced that visual literacy contributed to the concept of whole language acquisition and provided a concrete basis for whole language to progress and flourish. The researches devised a method to incorporate photographs of the local environments of their students into a process writing workshop; they believed the photos would stimulate a common base for communication. They stated that students who viewed the photographs had the ability to process the intrinsic meaning of the photo even if they were not capable of creating meaningful language. They storyboarded the photographs, and employing process writing techniques, such as brainstorming, asked the students to write about the experiences. The researchers found that there was a general increase in writing scores which they attributed to the topic selection and vocabulary prompted by the photos. They also believed that the entire procedure, from the planning stage of taking the photographs to the writing stage, was a benefit to the students because it emphasized and demonstrated the need to organize.

Another approach taken by these same researches was the use of slides for whole class viewing. The found that among a culturally diverse student population, the slides provided an enriched language and writing capacity. The study promoted the knowledge that "visual input can both inspire and be

inspired by the language used to describe the visual experience" (Sinatra et al., 1990, p. 617).

Feinstein and Hagerty (1993) took the idea of visual stimulus to another dimension. They utilized visual images as a prewriting experience, such as clustering. They believed that clustering itself provided a visual stimulus to the writer by virtue of its patterns and that many exercises could be developed that would include visual stimulus in topic development. Feinstein and Hagerty also used art reproductions to create "a verbal metaphor." They began with a chart entitled, "The Principals and Elements of Visual Organization," and asked students to interpret a painting using principals, such as unity and theme, and elements, such as color and texture. After the interpretive phase, the students were asked to cluster, through the use of a graphic organizer, the combination of principals and elements with their basic feelings, thereby producing a verbal metaphor from a visual one. The study was conducted in small groups and then shared with the class. The effect of this exercise was an affirmation of the connection of visual stimulus with writing ability. Feinstein and Hagerty believe that "to be an educated person requires being visually literate" (Feinstein & Hagerty, 1993, p.212).

As Wilson (1988) proposed, it might be time to update the adage that "every teacher is a reading teacher" to "every teacher is a multi-literacy teacher" (Wilson, 1988, p. 100). She pointed out that researchers have found that visual

literacy training has a profound effect on "extending and enriching oral and written language facility, on developing self-concept, and on heightening environmental awareness" (Wilson, 1988, p.100). Teachers have traditionally used audio-visual aids to assist students in their acquisition of knowledge. Now, as Wilson pointed out, citing Cochran, it is time to put the visual tools into the hands of the students. Wilson strongly advised that creativity is stifled without the prior knowledge to support it; she stated that it is imperative to supply experiences from which students can draw conclusions, increase their base of experiences, and become more perceptive. She suggested that pictures can serve as vicarious adventures for some students and as an extension of previous experiences for others. Children first learn by listening and looking. It is prudent then to stimulate the basic abilities in order to achieve success in a more advanced form of communication.

Wilson proposed several advantages of using visual stimulus. Citing Sinatra, she indicated that students who learned to order visually would be better prepared to order verbally. This activity translated into better organization of written material. Visual experiences, such as pictures, were more tangible than auditory exposure and presented a more stable involvement. Visuals could be viewed either as a whole entity or as part of an entity, and visuals allow for a response appropriate to the symbols they represent.

Wilson cited studies conducted by Donald Graves and Frank Smith who stated that handing children a blank sheet of paper and expecting them to produce a finished product is at best scary, and it is therefore the job of the instructor to provide a vehicle for topic selection. Activities using any number of visual literacy techniques can be used in the prewriting stage of the writing process to help students select topics of their own to reflect upon and ultimately compose a written piece.

Wilson believed that "a classroom experience using visual literacy activities will take the teacher and student away from the familiar terrain of the textbook and chalkboard and into a new and exciting world of communication filled with creativity" (Wilson, 1988, p. 101).

Shuman and Wolfe (1990) promoted the concept that teaching English through the arts was not only preferable and appealing, but also inspiring and stimulating. The believed that combining these activities would motivate students to develop interest in the processes of English language skills. The researchers compiled twenty-nine instructional strategies to acquaint teachers with methods to incorporate art into the English classroom. They suggested, for example, sketching word origins, writing pictographic exercises, making visual poems, and using pictures books, such as *The Mysteries of Harris Burdick* by Chris Van Allsburg. Shuman and Wolfe stated that writing is the most complex of the language arts and is therefore the most intimidating skill for students to

acquire. They stressed the importance of prewriting exercises so that students could explore the resources of their minds, and they suggested that visual stimulus could enhance the ability of students during the prewriting stages. Artwork could be an art reproduction, a piece of sculpture, a photograph, or any other artistic endeavor. Using these stimuli, students were encouraged to engage their imaginations, draw inferences, and invent a story line. Student writers learned to analyze the artwork itself, and by doing so, gained a deeper understanding of the nature of revision and evaluation. Shuman and Wolfe suggested that using arts in an English classroom encouraged students to "increase their confidence as learners, to sharpen their sensibilities, and to improve their critical and creative thinking" (Shuman & Wolfe, 1990, p. viii).

Planned Solution Strategy

Many first-time-in-college-students face a serious lack of writing skills; this deficit is reflected not only in their English classrooms but also in their lack of ability to communicate ideas in other courses. Often, what results, is a struggle to merely remain afloat throughout their college careers.

Communication is a universal need and traverses the curriculum. Students who cannot write well also have problems in most other fields of endeavor. And this is, above all, a communication-based society. To assist these students in improving their writing skills, the author proposed that it was

necessary to include a stimulus that appealed to a visually-based population. Television, movies, and videos are an established way of life, and students depend upon these visual sources for much of their information and knowledge. In a classroom setting, a visual stimulus would not be perceived as an alien intervention. Soliciting this type of stimulus would not be automatically disregarded. Visual stimulus was used to promote topic selection, coordinate prior knowledge, develop vocabulary, and encourage drafting and revision. The CPT statistics alone, clearly indicated the lack of student writing skills and supported the writer's proposal to implement research-based strategies into a modified writing workshop, incorporating visual stimulus to address these inadequacies.

In order to cultivate the writing abilities of these students, it is mandatory that teachers invoke creative methods that will both prepare and inspire the students. The author implemented a version of Atwell's (1987) writing workshop that included cooperative grouping, teacher and peer conferences, and portfolio evaluation. In addition, the author integrated the innovations of visual literacy to encourage entering college students to become motivated and more capable writers.

Brooke, Mirtz, and Evans (1994) reported that grouping students was a positive invention since it permitted students to attain the four elements of a writer's life, namely time, ownership, response and exposure, elements they

stressed should be structured into every classroom. They elicited comments from their students at the end of the semester and recorded unconditional acceptance of the group experience and satisfaction with the group results.

Harris (1992) reported that when students engaged in peer evaluation, they began to realize the importance of their own work. She offered that students wrote comments that were "often remarkably penetrating, insightful, sensitive, and sometimes blunt," and that the experience developed the classroom into a "community of writers" (Harris, 1992, pp. 52-53).

Puhr and Workman (1992) added that peer conferences were an effective means of communicating learning experiences to their students. They strongly advocated one-on-one conferences as the main objective of the workshop method and recommended the use of portfolio evaluation as a positive step for reviewing student work.

Along with the modified writing workshop, the author maintains that it was prudent and crucial to add visual stimulus to the curriculum. Storey (1994), Kiefer (1988), Lechner (1993), and McCoubrey (1993) advocated the use of picture books in the classroom to enhance the development of the writer's prior knowledge and experiences. Eisner(1993) believed that the addition of any form of visual stimulus in the classroom intensified the writer's experiences. Curtiss (1988) used pictures from magazines, art reproductions, photographs, and other artistic media with college age students and concluded that students

achieved a high level of fluency and expressiveness, and their modes of thinking became interactive and mutually beneficial.

Wilson (1988) stressed that visual literacy was the most important addition to the educational curriculum since it developed an understanding of self, enhanced written and oral skills, and encouraged the understanding of one's surroundings.

Shuman and Wolfe (1990) offered several techniques for combining art and language in the classroom. They suggested postcards, art reproductions, and assorted visual stimuli to encourage students to make connections that would be meaningful and therefore retained.

Since the curriculum demanded remedial instruction, the author utilized a modified writing workshop and incorporated visual literacy techniques to stimulate participation in and comprehension of basic English grammar skills and acceptable writing competence. The author implemented mini-lessons, small group cooperative learning, class discussions, teacher and peer conferences, peer evaluation, and portfolio evaluation; the writer appended the workshop with the introduction of visual stimuli. Strategies and techniques suggested by the following researchers were included: Atwell (1987), Avery (1993), Bishop (1990), Brooke, Mirtz and Evans (1994), Christenbury and Kelly (1983), Harris (1992), Puhr and Workman (1992), Storey (1994), Kiefer (1988),

Lechner (1993), McCoubrey (1993), Eisner (1993), Curtiss (1988), Wilson (1988), and Shuman and Wolfe (1990).

It was anticipated that the combination of workshop technique and visuals would result in increased self-awareness, in functionality and effectiveness in communication, in the ability to create an imaginative piece of work, and most importantly, in the improvement of student self-esteem. The results of the practicum suggest that this technique, though not fully refined, does indeed enhance students' writing, communicative, and language skills and creatively empowers and motivates many fragile, withdrawn, detached, and inhibited students while actively engaging eager students.

CHAPTER III

METHOD

Introduction

Students involved in this practicum placed in a preparatory English class because they did not attain a satisfactory score on college entrance examinations. The average English ability was generally consistent with low high school level achievement. The researcher's target group of sixteen incoming students were between the ages of eighteen and twenty-four years; all but two, who had GED diplomas, were high schools graduates. The target group was comprised of six students born in the United States (38%), five born in Haiti (31%), three Spanish speaking students from South American (19%), one student from the Middle East, and one student from Hungary (12%). The target group was selected on the basis of a writing pre-test scored according to a scoring rubric (Appendix D, pp. 102-103). The writer chose six students who scored one, four students who scored two, and six students who scored three; no student scored higher than a 3.2 on the writing pre-test. The writer implemented an innovative plan structured within a modified writing workshop that incorporated visual stimulus to enhance the writing abilities of the target group.

In order to encourage understanding and cooperation, the writer previewed the projected course construction for the practicum with the entire class and explained all relative concepts. Since during the course of this practicum students were expected to meet the requirements of the community college curriculum, the writer clearly explained the course syllabus along with the practicum interventions. Departmental tests on various aspects of English language usage were scheduled on specific dates. In order to satisfy this demand, the writer coordinated mini-lessons to fit the specified test material. The mini-lessons followed exercises from the textbook, Evergreen With Readings, and included visual aids, student cooperative learning (grouping), and peer conferencing. In addition, students were required to attend an English laboratory where the writer and/or other English specialists assisted them with grammar, usage, mechanics, and other basic elements of the English curriculum. Several of the mini-lessons focused on the needs of the writer's workshop as the occasion arose. Portfolio evaluation and grading of student writing, using the rubric, occurred only once, at the end of the practicum, and included student-selected, completed works; however, the writer conducted ongoing conferences to ascertain and modify individual patterns of errors. The students participating in this practicum, as well as the remainder of the class, attended three, fifty minute sessions each week, on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays.

WEEK ONE

MONDAY:

The writer (sometimes herein referred to as teacher) reviewed the community college syllabus and discussed the co-requisite laboratory requirements for the preparatory English course with the class. The writer gave a general description of a writing workshop, and along with the students, examined the textbooks in relation to the instruction they were to receive during the semester. A Student Attitudinal Survey (Appendix E, pp.104-105) was distributed to discover the students' attitudes about writing in general, writing as a personal issue, and writing as a classroom directive. (This survey was re-administered at the end of the practicum.) The writer related a short personal biography then distributed index cards to the students requesting general information, such as name, date of birth, social security number, as well as short answer responses about long- and short-term goals, jobs, and specific comments. There was a cursory discussion of the writing process.

WEDNESDAY:

The writer requested a short essay on one of two topics*: Whether high school attendance should be mandatory* or *How attending high school impacted their lives.* In addition, the teacher informed the students that they could choose to write about any other topic of interest. Most students wrote about high school, but the essays were generally very short and mostly unfocused. These essays,

which the students completed in less than fifteen minutes, comprised the writing pre-test. The writer then reviewed the writing process, naming the prewriting, drafting, revising, and publishing stages and gave brief definitions and verbal examples of each. There was a campus-wide journal to which students from any campus submitted original pieces of work for publication consideration. Due to the sizes and distances of the many campuses, the writer believed that it was prudent to establish a publication on the designated campus which would address the needs of the local students; therefore, the writer, along with a colleague, was and currently is involved in working toward that goal. The writer advised the students about both efforts. The writer addressed the topics of cooperative group learning, peer conferences, peer editing, and teacher conferences, and explained the concept of mini-lessons to assure students that their basic grammar and usage questions would be met. And finally, the writer discussed evaluation and portfolio usage. The students were instructed to write their names on two folders, one representing their work in progress, and one representing work completed. Five papers were required by the end of the practicum, with one additional paper necessary for community college use by the end of the term. Students were told that they would be responsible to choose which papers they wanted to submit for their evaluation portfolios. The writer briefly touched upon the concept of visual literacy.

FRIDAY:

The writer administered pre-test A and C, Unit 2 from the Evergreen Test Package to determine skills in topic development and paragraph coherency. The writer then reviewed visual literacy and directed the application to topic selection. The writer arranged the class into groups of four. To introduce the students to topic development based on visual stimulus, the writer distributed a child's picture book to each group and asked the group to discuss the picture among themselves. The groups were directed to generate vocabulary about the picture, with each of the four student in the group providing two nouns, two verbs and two adjectives. Students discussed their selected vocabulary to be certain that each member of the group knew the meanings of all the words. Disputed or confusing words were looked up in dictionaries the writer provided. Two students had electronic dictionaries that became a topic of discussion, and group five incorporated the electronic dictionary into the futuristic fairy tale they ultimately wove.

WEEK TWO

WEDNESDAY:

Monday was a National holiday. Students continued to work on their group stories. The story did not become part of the students' portfolios; its function was to acquaint the class with each other, to introduce cooperative group participation and peer conferences, to encourage reading aloud, and to

share the joy of writing. As the groups completed their stories, a spokesperson (selected by the group) showed the picture to the class and orally listed the vocabulary words the group generated. The words were discussed to ascertain whether there were any the class wanted explained; there were several, and definitions or explanations were provided by the group making the presentation. Then a reader (selected by the group) read the group story aloud to the class. The class discussed how the group's story related to the actual drawing. Three groups were able to complete their presentations.

FRIDAY:

The writer administered Pre-Test A, Unit 4 from the Evergreen Test Package to assess drafting and revision skills. When testing was completed, the writer resumed the introductory lesson with the remaining groups. The format provided active class participation, an understanding of the elements of a workshop approach, and the concepts of cooperative learning. The writer attempted to establish a student-oriented, non-threatening, learning atmosphere.

WEEK THREE

MONDAY:

Mini-lesson: The simple sentence. Mini-lessons were scheduled to take approximately ten minutes; however, since this was the first mini-lesson, the

writer entertained questions for a longer time until the students were comfortable with the agenda. The lesson took twenty-five minutes. The writer's purpose was to assure the students that they would begin to comprehend the elements of writing by the act of writing and that focus on grammatical exercises would be in the form of mini-lessons, laboratory assignments, and essay writing.

Students were again grouped. When the mini-lesson was completed, the writer distributed one art reproduction to each group. They were asked to discuss the picture in as many terms as possible, for example, lighting, mood, theme, color choice, and so on. The writer asked them to compare and contrast it with the child's picture book picture they viewed previously. They again developed vocabulary based on the picture, supplying two nouns, two verbs and two adjectives. Since the students reacted positively to the introductory lesson, the writer also encouraged vocabulary development in this lesson. Some students were unfamiliar with word classification, especially adjectives, so this part of the lesson played a large part in comprehension and re-enforcement of grammatical identification. When vocabulary generation and group discussions were completed, there was time for only one group to share its art reproduction and vocabulary with the class. The group offered an interpretation of the painting and a parallel they had developed to the child's picture book picture. Class discussion was lively because several students disagreed with the group

meaning of the picture. The writer took great pleasure in this aspect of the lesson since it exemplified the importance of each person's prior knowledge in the process of interpretation.

WEDNESDAY:

Mini-lesson: Coordination and subordination.

The class continued sharing art interpretations until all groups had participated. Once completed, each student began, in class, to write a composition discussing the personal meaning the painting evoked. The composition was an individual effort, so students had the opportunity to use it as one of the required essays. Art reproductions remained in the classroom for student review until the end of the semester.

FRIDAY:

Mini-lesson: Sentence fragments.

At the completion of the mini-lesson, students continued work on their compositions. The teacher circulated throughout the room, and using a class list, determined the progress each student was making and offered motivation and instruction to those having difficulties. The class was reminded to use peer conferences to seek assistance with revisions of their compositions or simply to ask for comments about their progress. Ten minutes before the end of class, the teacher surveyed students about their favorite television shows available for viewing between Friday night and Sunday night. The students chose *Family*

Matters. The show was assigned for homework, and the teacher watched and taped it. The teacher presented a five minute state-of-the-class report at the end of the period.

WEEK FOUR

MONDAY:

Mini-lesson: Prewriting.

This lesson focused on clustering, mapping, listing, and other prewriting exercises available as a trigger for construction and organization. The writer administered Pre-Test A, Unit 6 from the Evergreen Test Package to determine student awareness of proofreading skills, with emphasis on punctuation and grammar. Students continued in-class writing. Teacher circulated for five minute mini-conferences and determined state-of-the-class for later class report Students were encouraged to use peer conferences and self-conferences to determine strengths and weaknesses of their papers. Ten minutes before the end of class, there was a brief discussion of *Family Matters*. A more complete presentation was scheduled for the following class.

WEDNESDAY:

Mini-lesson: The Comma and Sentence errors.

Since several students were unable to view *Family Matters*, the teacher secured a VCR and presented the show without commercials. It took approximately fifteen minutes. Class discussion focused on the show in general, the characters, settings, and appeal. Students were given the option of writing an essay on any aspect they found intriguing. For example, they could compare/contrast characters; they could compare/contrast different settings used during the show; they could evaluate audience appeal, atmosphere, or dialogue. A departmental test was scheduled for the following class, so the teacher reviewed the grammar material previously covered. Students were encouraged to continue their laboratory work and to take the practice tests available in their free time. Students continued to write and revise their papers.

FRIDAY:

Mini-lesson: Departmental Test 1 was administered.

Since more than half of the class completed the test before the end of the period, students continued to work on their essays. The teacher conducted individual conferences with students who requested assistance.

WEEK FIVE

WEDNESDAY:

Mini-lesson: Present Tense.

Monday was a holiday. To make-up the lost day, the teacher suggested that students meet in the lab at their convenience to review the test results. That saved considerable class time and allowed for the next activity. Before beginning the day's activity, the teacher distributed a handout (Appendix F, pp. 106-108) entitled "Essay Topic Suggestions Based on Visuals." In the paper, the teacher defined the eight essay classifications and gave a brief description of each essay type using the visual stimulus presented during the first month. The teacher referred to the paper briefly and requested that the students read it for homework. Next, to accentuate the importance of details in an essay, the writer adapted an activity suggested by Christenbury and Kelly (1983). The students sat in rows. The first student in each row received a simple teacher drawing (Appendix G, p.109) and studied the details in the picture. The teacher collected the pictures from the students after they memorized the details. Each student then turned to the student behind him or her and described the picture. The student receiving the information asked for details of the picture, and when the receiving student had a clear picture in mind, he or she turned to the next student in the row and described the picture. When the last student in the row received the information, he or she drew the picture. The teacher displayed the

original pictures and the class completed pictures, and the row whose drawing most nearly matched the original picture was declared the winner. The class ran six minutes overtime, but the students enthusiastically embraced the activity and left the room complaining about the students ahead of them. It seemed a genuine learning experience. The teacher distributed large candy bars to the winning row, and miniature bars to the rest of the class. There is a possibility that the reward helped focus attention on the project.

FRIDAY:

Mini-lesson: Past Tense.

The originally scheduled lesson was to be a postcard technique found in Shuman and Wolfe for demonstrating the importance of details. However, the writer felt that the previous lesson exemplified the need for adequate details within an essay and decided instead to incorporate an invention called a picture book in order to address topic development. Concurrent with the practicum, the writer was taking a course in TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) and discovered varied uses for picture books. Since the writer's class consisted of so many foreign-born students, the writer intended to examine the value of the picture book in a writing workshop designed with emphasis on visual stimulation. The writer constructed a picture book containing three sections: Sports, Leisure Activities, and Places and Faces From Around the World. The book contained eighty pages of action photos held together in a

three-ring binder. The writer exhibited the book to the class and advised the students that the pictures could serve as inducements for new essays. Students were permitted to borrow the pictures, and by the end of the semester, all pictures were returned.

WEEK SIX

MONDAY:

Mini-lesson: Past participle.

Students viewed a Charlie Chaplin silent film entitled *The Pawn Shop* and discussed the methods the actors used to communicate ideas without words. The discussion included how the pace of the action affected the film and how facial expressions and body language added to viewer understanding. It was the writer's intention that the film inspire discussion of any number of topics concerned with meaning-making and that the class would begin to identify the necessity to incorporate details and coherence in order to more fully communicate ideas. No one in the class had ever watched a silent film although three students had seen short clips in association with other films. The film and the discussion required the rest of the period, and the students began to compare, without teacher assistance, the effects of such films on present day situation comedies. Several of the students likened the mannerisms of Charlie Chaplin to those of the character "Steve Erkel" in *Family Matters*.

WEDNESDAY:

Mini-lesson: Coherence

Students used this class period to complete essays, to begin new essays, to peer tutor, and to revise already finished essays. The teacher conducted mini-conferences with nearly all the students and evaluated each student's status. This week marked the mid point in the semester. At the end of the period, the teacher gave a five minute state-of-the-class report.

FRIDAY:

Mini-lesson: Tense agreement.

The teacher presented several videotaped commercials from television. The commercials were chosen for age appeal, product appeal, and persuasive technique. There were, for example, two car ads, one advertising a 4x4 sports-utility vehicle and one a sporty luxury convertible. There was a computer software ad, a cold remedy ad, an airline ad, a fast food ad, an endorsed sneaker ad, and so on. Since commercials are persuasive essays in a multimedia format, the teacher addressed the issue of persuasion in relation to the commercials. The teacher scaffolded open-ended questions, such as *what methods are the advertisers using to get their message across to the public; do commercials tell the whole truth; what is important in making an effective commercial; how closely related are persuasion and propaganda,* and so on. This discussion generated considerable interest. Students selected three of the "best"

commercials for review during the next class. They chose the 4x4 ad, the sneaker ad, and the cold remedy ad.

WEEK SEVEN

MONDAY:

Mini-lesson: Persuasive essay.

Students reviewed the "top three" commercials. They assembled into groups of four and discussed their ideas about persuasion and the particular persuasive techniques of the commercials in question. Groups were then asked to write a commercial utilizing the talents of all four group members. That is, each member had to play an active role in the commercial. They could select to write about an existing product, such as a laundry detergent, or they could devise a product or service. They could use props. The students were instructed that they would present the completed version of the commercial to the class. As students brainstormed in their groups, the teacher observed each group, listened to the discussions, and monitored student questions and progress.

WEDNESDAY:

Mini-lesson: Review of verb tenses for Departmental Test 2.

Students continued to work on commercials as the teacher circulated through the room, observed, and recorded. The last five minutes of class was dedicated to a state-of-the-class report.

WEEK EIGHT

MONDAY:

Friday was a holiday. Departmental Test 2 was administered.

Students who completed their tests early, continued to work on their commercials. All students were finished with fifteen minutes left in the period. One group had completed work on the commercial, so there was time for a presentation. The class, as audience, evaluated the effectiveness of the presentations. They offered suggestions to the actors on ways to improve the dialogue, plot, or any other aspect of the skit. The teacher explained the guidelines for conducting a critique as the class began to work. First, the class listed the best points of the performance. The teacher wrote the points on the chalkboard. Then the class outlined what specific behaviors could use extra work. In this commercial, one complaint was quality of voice. One of the actors spoke so softly, the class could not understand the words. Then the class detailed what part of the commercial was ineffective, inappropriate, or unprofessional. The class suggested that this group redefine the product they were selling because the class wasn't sure what it was. The group performing the commercial asked the class for specific feedback on position of their props and content of the ad. The class gave replies in a mannerly and genuinely helpful way. The first group decided to revise their commercial taking the class evaluations as a guide.

WEDNESDAY:

Mini-lesson: Test review.

Test review was conducted in the lab on a one-to-one basis. Three more groups presented their commercials, and the class evaluated and offered suggestions for improving effectiveness. For the final ten minutes of class, the students continued to work on refining and revising their presentations or on other essays they had in progress. Ten minutes was not sufficient time to evaluate the final group.

FRIDAY:

Mini-lesson: Consistency and parallelism.

The final group presented the commercial, and the class evaluated. By this time, the students were well equipped to suggest possible solutions to technical problems. They detailed effective points of the commercials as well as the shortcomings; they offered suggestions for improvements and evidence for their opinions. During the last fifteen minutes of the class, the students refined the commercials to prepare for taping.

WEEK NINE

MONDAY:

Mini-lesson: Revising for sentence variety.

Teacher began taping student commercials. The class was instructed to remain as quiet as possible during filming and not to distract the actors. One student was posted at the door to prevent unnecessary interruptions. The teacher used a tripod and a full-size VHS video camera from the school media center to film the sequences. The commercials were from three to four minutes long. Group One did three takes before final filming. At the beginning of Take One, several students attempted to direct the actors while they were performing. During Take Two, a student sneezed, and the class responded by telling the student to go out into the hall. During Take Three, one of the actors forgot his lines and started to laugh. However, for a first experience, the writer thought that only having to redo the first group four times was actually quite good. Take Four went off perfectly and to the satisfaction of the actors and the class. The writer signaled when the filming was over, and the class clapped and offered moral support and congratulations to the cast. The teacher decided to halt filming for that period because there was not sufficient time left to allow for a comfort zone. The students continued writing their essays, working on their commercials, and assisting other students with work. The writer suggested that

students could choose any facet of the commercial-making experience to use as one the required essays. The writer discovered afterwards that many of the students were excited about the experience. Several of them wrote about it in detail describing the emotions, especially the nervousness they had experienced, but also adding that there was an overwhelming feeling of accomplishment when they had successfully completed the filming. Several other students chose to compare and contrast the effectiveness of one commercial over another. One student decided to point out the frailties of each of the commercials; however, the student drew conclusions and made suggestions about ways to improve the dialogue, or the set, or other aspects of the scenes.

WEDNESDAY:

Mini-lesson: Revising for language awareness.

Teacher continued filming the commercials. Groups Two and Four were filmed successfully. Group Three had a disagreement and decided they couldn't work together; they chose to work in a group of three and present the redesigned commercial the following class. The single student wanted to write and present a personally written commercial. The teacher allowed for the dramatic nature of the actors.

FRIDAY

Mini-Lesson: Spelling

Teacher continued filming remaining groups. Group Three A, the singular student, did about fifteen takes before maximum satisfaction; however, a fine performance was ultimately delivered.

WEEK TEN

MONDAY:

Mini-Lesson: Look and sound alike words

Teacher showed the class the completed commercials. They asked to see the tape three times, and each group commented on its own performance. The class requested that the best commercial be given a special award. The writer offered no input except to agree to bring in the reward. They selected the winner based upon class views of professionalism and effort.

WEDNESDAY:

Mini-lesson: Test review

Teacher showed a thirty minute film on the life and poetry of E.E. Cummings. The film was narrated by the poet himself and presented both photos and original drawings from his childhood as well as poetry readings.

With five minutes of class time remaining, the teacher asked the students to consider for the next class the type of visual stimulus they believe would be the most conducive to writing poetry and what kind of stimulus E.E. Cummings might have had.

FRIDAY:

Mini-lesson: Departmental Test 3 was administered.

With ten minutes remaining, the teacher asked for replies to the questions posed the previous class. Students volunteered the following responses: Being outdoors, for example in a park or on a hike, was selected as the most conducive stimulus for writing poetry; music videos were the second choice; and pictures of rural landscapes were the third choice.

WEEK ELEVEN

MONDAY:

Mini-lesson: Review of test results in lab.

Teacher distributed copies of the following poems: "Provide, Provide" by Robert Frost, "Telephone Poles" by John Updike, "To Midnight Nan At Leroy's" by Langston Hughes, "Harlem" by Langston Hughes, "nobody loses all the time" by e.e. cummings, and "Dreams" by Nikki Giovanni. Before referring to the sheets, the teacher opened the discussion with general attitude questions about poetry. Several students offered that they wrote poetry when they felt sad

or lonely; others confided that they wrote love poems to their mates; one young man said that poetry was something girls like and that once, he had written a love poem to a girlfriend, and it "worked." The class, in general, had some knowledge of poets. They offered names such as Maya Angelou, Robert Frost, and William Shakespeare. Renewed discussion occurred when Maya Angelou's name was mentioned, and several students suggested that she gave African-American people a strong role model as well as enlightening poetry. The teacher asked at what special event Maya Angelou had read some of her work. A student answered that it was the Clinton inauguration. The class was then asked to look over the poems on the sheets. The teacher pointed out that one of the cited poets was also asked to read at an inauguration. The teacher referred the students to Robert Frost and explained that he was present at the Kennedy inauguration. The class thus began the lesson with the Frost poem "Provide, Provide." Students assembled into groups and were given two highlighter pens, one yellow and one of another color. Teacher asked the students to read the Frost poem silently, after which the teacher read the poem aloud. A class discussion of the poem followed. Students were asked to verbally compare the style of E.E. Cummings with that of Robert Frost. The lesson was scaffolded to allow students to develop a personal meaning of the Frost poem.

After the discussion, the students used the yellow highlighter pens to select words in the poem they found confusing or difficult. (One Biblical

reference was explained). Groups discussed the highlighted vocabulary in context and looked up the dictionary meanings of the words. Group One shared its words with the class. Using an overhead projector, the teacher illuminated a copy of the poem. As the class isolated the words, the teacher also highlighted. Once the class was comfortable with the vocabulary, students were asked to highlight the descriptive phrases in the poem using the alternate colored highlighter pen. A discussion of the phrases followed. Each student then drew a graphic organizer in the shape of a spider (round body with six arms extending outward) following the model provided by the teacher. Students used the organizer to write the highlighted phrases on each of the arms of the spider.

Using the completed graphic organizers, students discussed the reasons for their choices of the descriptive phrases and their personal reactions to the meaning of the poem. The teacher reminded the students about the many different poetic styles, invoking specific descriptive references to the works of Cummings and Frost. Class time ran out before students could begin composing poems of their own design.

WEDNESDAY:

Mini-lesson: Nouns and pronouns.

Class continued with poetry readings. To mitigate fear of reading aloud, the teacher read "Harlem" by Langston Hughes. After the teacher read,

volunteers were sought to reread the poem. Several young men volunteered, and the teacher encouraged each one of them to read the poem. Another student wanted to read the second Hughes poem. Other students then decided that they could put better emphasis on certain lines and reread with enthusiasm. The reading were repeated until the class was satisfied that the poems were given the best representation by the readers. The process continued until all poems were read and discussed. There was a sense of excitement in the classroom that permitted the students to feel free to express their feeling and opinions. The class fully participated and completed all of poems provided.

FRIDAY:

Mini-Lesson: Prepositions.

Teacher conducted a short lesson on writing poetry. Students were asked to suggest three topics of interest, and teacher wrote the topics on the board. From the choices offered, students selected "The Beach" as the one they felt they could write about most easily. Using the poem "To Midnight Nan At Leroy's" as a template, the teacher led the students into constructing a collective poem. The class became enthusiastic about the finished product because all students contributed at least a word or phrase to the poem. With ten minutes remaining in class, students began working on poems of their own or completing

papers they began earlier. They held peer conferences and asked for assistance from the teacher on specific projects.

WEEK TWELVE

MONDAY:

Mini-lesson: Adjectives and adverbs.

The teacher had originally scheduled a panel discussion that was to be videotaped and used as a visual lesson. Judging from the time needed to complete the sequence involving commercials, the teacher determined that fully carrying out the panel project would not have provided the highest quality of classroom interaction. Entering the twelfth week, students had several papers in progress and few completed. The writer determined that time would be better spent if students were given more class time to write their papers so that the teacher and other students could contribute valuable advise to revision needs. It was the writer's opinion that in-class writing time validated the act of writing. The writer determined that additional visual stimulus would be introduced and assimilated into the combined storehouse of classroom knowledge but that the stimulus would remain somewhat more simplistic. The teacher introduced "Magic Eye Illusions." ("Magic Eye Illusions" are distributed by *Universal Press Syndicate* and appear in the comic section of the *Sun-Sentinel* newspaper every Sunday and in book form). The illusions are three-dimensional images

that slowly begin to appear on the page as one peers deeply into the picture. They required intense concentration for those students who had never tried to solve the image. In fact, only one student was familiar with the images, and became the self-appointed guru for the rest of the students. The teacher had nearly one hundred pictures, approximately 6x14 inches each, which were separately mounted on construction paper to keep them sturdy. The pictures were distributed, and students began to explore. As the students began to solve the illusion, they engaged in discussions about the manifested images and pictures. Several students who had difficulty with the images requested permission to take a few home and work with them. The teacher invited the students to utilize any of the classroom assets including the art reprints, picture book pictures, children's book pictures and so on. All visuals remained in the classroom for the duration of the class.

WEDNESDAY:

Mini-lesson: Apostrophe.

Students continued in-class writing projects. Many students returned to class with the ability to unveil the "Magic Eye Illusion." One enthusiastic student purchased a book filled with the three-dimensional images. The remaining twenty-five minutes was devoted to essay writing. The teacher circulated through the room and held mini-conferences with five students. The

teacher selected the students based upon a portfolio evaluation of completed work.

FRIDAY:

Mini-lesson: Mechanics

Students wrote for thirty-five minutes. Teacher continued the mini-conferences and answered questions related to specific problems. To continue addressing topic development, the teacher suggested that students bring pictures to class from family albums or scrapbooks that they believed would be interesting to discuss with another student or the entire class.

WEEK THIRTEEN

MONDAY:

Mini-lesson: Punctuation and Plurals.

Students shared several very amusing photos, mostly childhood pictures, of themselves or younger siblings. Several students, upon seeing the pictures, remembered events that they chose to share with the class. The photos stimulated topic development for several students; one student, for example, wrote about surviving the ordeal of changing a baby's diaper. Teacher was able to complete all but two mini-conferences to gather the necessary information for a state-of-the-class report.

WEDNESDAY:

Mini-lesson: Review for Departmental Test 4.

The students spent the remainder of the class revising essays for the evaluation portfolios. Teacher completed mini-conferences and prepared the state-of-the-class report. Five minutes before the end of class, teacher presented the data to the students. Each students was aware of his or her individual status, but the teacher wanted to allow students to measure their progress in relation to the rest of the class.

FRIDAY:

Departmental Test 4 was administered.

After students completed their departmental test, they continued to work on the essays. Since several students took the entire class period to complete the test, in the interest of silence, there were no student or teacher conferences

WEEK FOURTEEN

MONDAY:

Mini-lesson: Review of test results.

Teacher administered post-tests A and C, Unit 2, from the Evergreen Test Package which tested identification of topic sentences and paragraph coherency. Students continued working on essays.

WEDNESDAY:

Mini-lesson: Review for Final Exam

Teacher administered Test A, Unit 4, from the Evergreen Test Package which covered revision and rewriting. The remainder of the class period was spent revising work and participating in peer conferences. Teacher continued mini-conferences with students who requested special assistance or direction.

FRIDAY:

Mini-lesson: Review for Final Exam

Teacher administered Test D, Unit 6, from the Evergreen Test Package which covered proofreading for grammar and punctuation. Students continued work on essays.

WEEKS FIFTEEN AND SIXTEEN

Teacher continued to review the contents of the English Prep course with the class. Writing pieces were refined and the researcher began evaluation of the finished essays. The final Departmental exam was administered during the sixteenth week, finals week. The teacher re-administered the Student Attitudinal Survey during week fifteen.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Introduction

The writer used prepared tests from the Evergreen Test Package as pre-tests to measure topic development and paragraph coherency, drafting and revision, and proofreading for grammar and punctuation, in order to establish a base line for the target group; the same tests, from the same package, were used as post-tests to measure progress at the end of the semester. A writing sample was administered the first week of class; this served as the writing pre-test for the researcher to select a target group and to establish the writing ability of each student in the target group. Ongoing evaluation of the progress of each student was accomplished by teacher conferences; students were encouraged to participate in peer conferences and self-conferences during the course of the practicum to isolate and attempt to modify recurring errors and as a means of improving writing skills and gaining self-confidence. Scoring and evaluation of the finished writing pieces were measured by a rubric (Appendix D, pp. 102-103). The proposed objectives will be individually reviewed by the writer.

The following table depicts the pre-test writing scores attained by the target group. The scores are based on a scoring rubric (Appendix D, pp. 102-103). The rubric scores on a one to six basis with six being the highest score. Each item scored is represented in the table, and the average score is shown.

Table 2

Pre-Test Writing Samples For Target Group
Scored With Rubric

Student	Topic	Details	Org.	Word Choice	Sentence Variety	Mech. Errors	Average
A	6	2	3	2	2	1	2.6
B	3	5	3	3	3	1	3
C	3	3	3	3	3	2	2.8
D	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
E	3	3	3	3	1	3	2.6
F	4	5	3	3	2	1	3
G	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
H	2	3	3	3	3	1	2.5
I	3	3	3	3	3	1	2.7
J	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
K	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
L	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
M	3	4	3	3	3	3	3.2
N	1	1	1	3	1	1	1.3
O	5	4	3	3	3	1	3.2
P	3	4	2	3	3	3	3

The researcher selected the sixteen students for the target group based upon the writing pre-test. Six students with an average score of from one to two, five with an average score of from two to three, and five with an average score of three or above were chosen. No student in the class scored above a 3.2. Below is a histogram more clearly depicting the data.

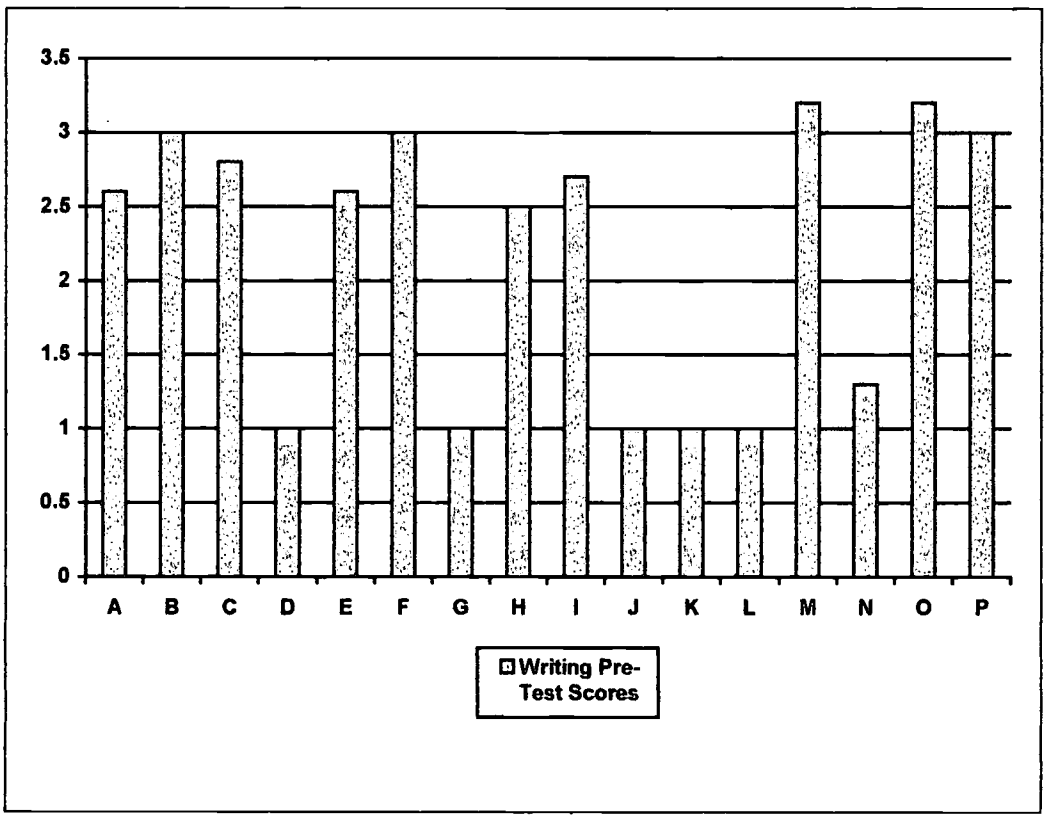

Figure 1

Writing Pre-Test Scores
For Target Group

Objective One stated that if eighty percent of the students in the target group increased their scores by three points as measured by combined Tests A and C, Unit 2, in the Evergreen Test Package, as pre-test and post-test, in their ability to identify topic sentences and develop paragraph coherency, then objective one will have been met. The following table details the information.

Table 3

Target Group Scores For
Topic Development and
Paragraph Coherency

STUDENT	PRE-TEST	POST-TEST	PTS INCREASE
A	9	19	10
B	15	18	3
C	14	25	11
D	14	17	3
E	15	16	1
F	8	15	7
G	8	13	5
H	13	19	6
I	10	20	10
J	9	20	11
K	12	19	7
L	11	12	1
M	20	21	1
N	13	16	3
O	6	21	15
P	13	22	9

All sixteen students in the target group showed an increase in scores from the pre-test to the post-test. Thirteen of the sixteen succeeded in increasing at least three points from the pre-test to the post-test which is equivalent to 81.25%. This percentage meets objective one. Below is a histogram further clarifying the comparison data.

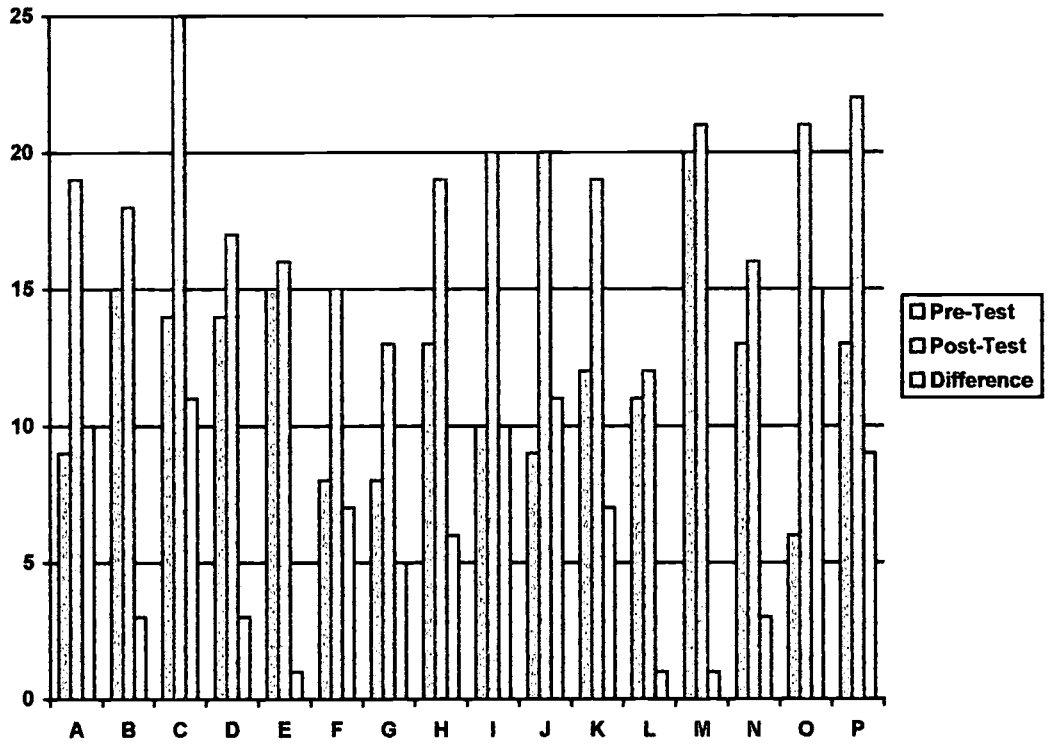

Figure 2

Analysis of Target Group Scores
For Topic Development and
Paragraph Coherency

Of the maximum twenty-six points possible, student C scored a nearly perfect score of twenty-five on the post-test, an eleven point gain from the pre-test score. Student N increased only one point in the post-test; however, the pre-test score of twenty was the highest in the group. Five students increased their scores in excess of ten points on the post-test. The fact that many students were able to increase their scores by significant amounts, indicates to the researcher that utilizing visual stimulus in the areas of topic development and paragraph coherency enabled many students to grasp concepts that at first eluded them. From overall classroom activities, the researcher determined that many students had trouble identifying what a topic was. They began writing essays, focusing initially on one aspect of a selected topic, then often lost focus and moved to another area. Many students were unable to interpret the concept of *staying on topic*. The researcher encouraged class discussions, small group discussions, and one-on-one discussions of visual stimulus to encourage students to evaluate the stimulus at hand, to precisely define the selected topic, and to supply sufficient details to support their topic. Many students discovered that simply because a topic seemed like a good choice, it was not necessarily the right one for them; often they concluded that their data was so sparse they could barely provide enough support for one paragraph. Discussions of the visual stimuli promoted topic identification, prompted realistic evaluations of prior knowledge, and enhanced students' focus on selected topics.

Objective Two stated that if eighty percent of the students in the target group increased their scores by six points as measured by Test A, Unit 4, as pre- and post-tests, in the Evergreen Test Package in composition skills with focus on drafting and revision, then objective two will have been met. The following table details the data collected.

Table 4

Target Group Scores For
Drafting And Revision

STUDENT	PRE-TEST	POST-TEST	PTS INCREASE
A	7	11	4
B	3	12	9
C	8	15	7
D	2	13	11
E	5	14	9
F	7	13	6
G	3	9	6
H	9	15	6
I	5	16	11
J	5	15	10
K	4	6	2
L	3	16	13
M	9	18	9
N	1	17	16
O	4	7	3
P	2	16	14

All sixteen students in the target group showed an increase in scores from the pre-test to the post-test. Thirteen of the sixteen succeeded in increasing their scores by at least six points from the pre-test to the post-test which is equivalent to 81.25%. This meets objective two. Below is a histogram further clarifying the comparison data.

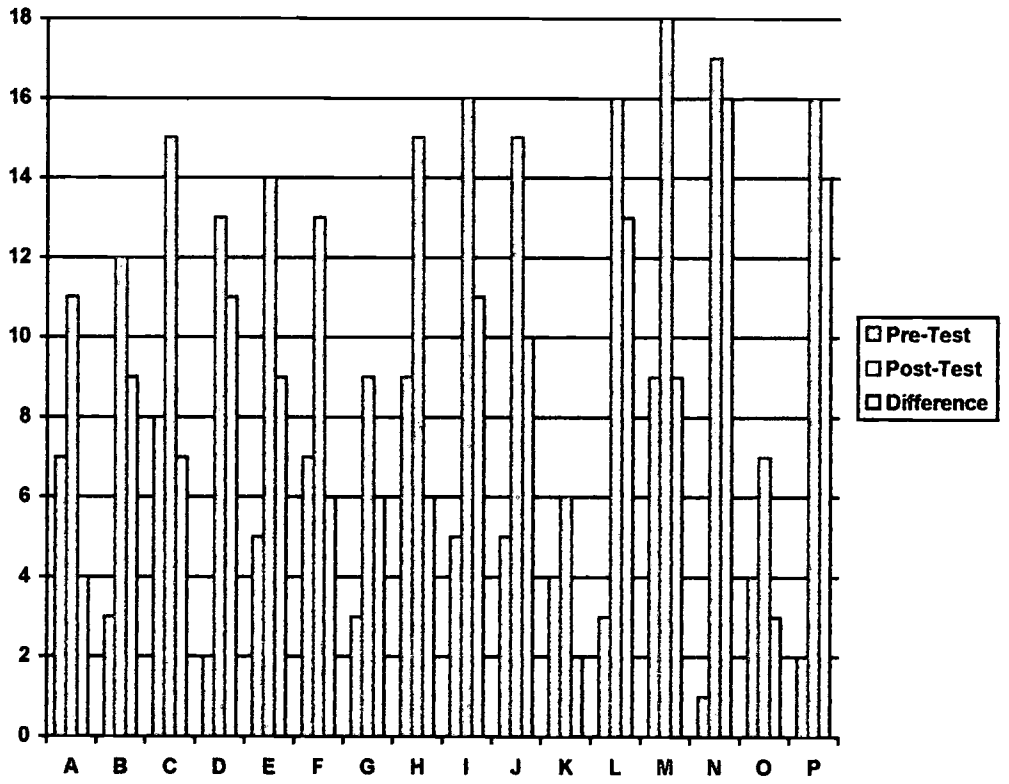

Figure 3

Analysis of Target Group Scores
For Drafting and Revision

The pre-test scores showed that all students scored less than ten points, out of a possible twenty-one points, which was equivalent to less than 45% correct; eleven students, nearly 70% of the target group, scored a five or below, equivalent to 23% correct. The researcher quickly ascertained that these were areas of extreme deficiency, and throughout the practicum, attempted to isolate specific shortcomings. The researcher alerted the class to the need for increased emphasis in the areas of drafting and revision. Many students voiced the opinion that after having written the first draft, the only thing necessary was to rewrite for neatness; they saw no real need for revision. During the course of the practicum, the researcher continued to emphasize the need to refine essays in order to achieve the maximum benefits from writing. Throughout the semester, the researcher noted a willingness by many students to rewrite previously "finished" essays when new techniques were introduced into the curriculum. The researcher noted that visual stimulus enabled many students to concentrate efforts on specific types of essays. For example, some students chose to write a compare and/or contrast essay about certain television characters after having watched the T.V. segment in the classroom. Before that time, many offered that they never understood how to develop material for use in these types of essays. Using the semantic web, another form of visual aid, in conjunction with details from the television segment, the researcher was able to simplify and clarify an instructional method for drafting a compare/contrast essay.

Objective three stated that if eighty percent of the students in the target group increased their scores by six points as measured by Test A, Unit 6, as pre- and post-tests, in the Evergreen Test Package, in proofreading, with emphasis on grammar and punctuation, then objective three will have been met. The following table details the data collected.

Table 5

Target Group Scores For
Proofreading Skills

STUDENT	PRE-TEST	POST-TEST	PTS INCREASE
A	5	9	4
B	12	14	2
C	7	11	4
D	1	16	15
E	2	8	6
F	12	14	2
G	9	10	1
H	18	21	3
I	4	17	13
J	1	9	8
K	7	14	7
L	4	8	4
M	14	20	6
N	0	9	9
O	2	9	7
P	10	16	6

All sixteen students in the target group showed an increase in scores from the pre-test to the post-test. Nine out of sixteen succeeded in increasing their scores by six points from the pre-test to the post-test which is equivalent to 56%. This does not meet the 80% goal of objective three. Below is a histogram to further clarify the comparison data.

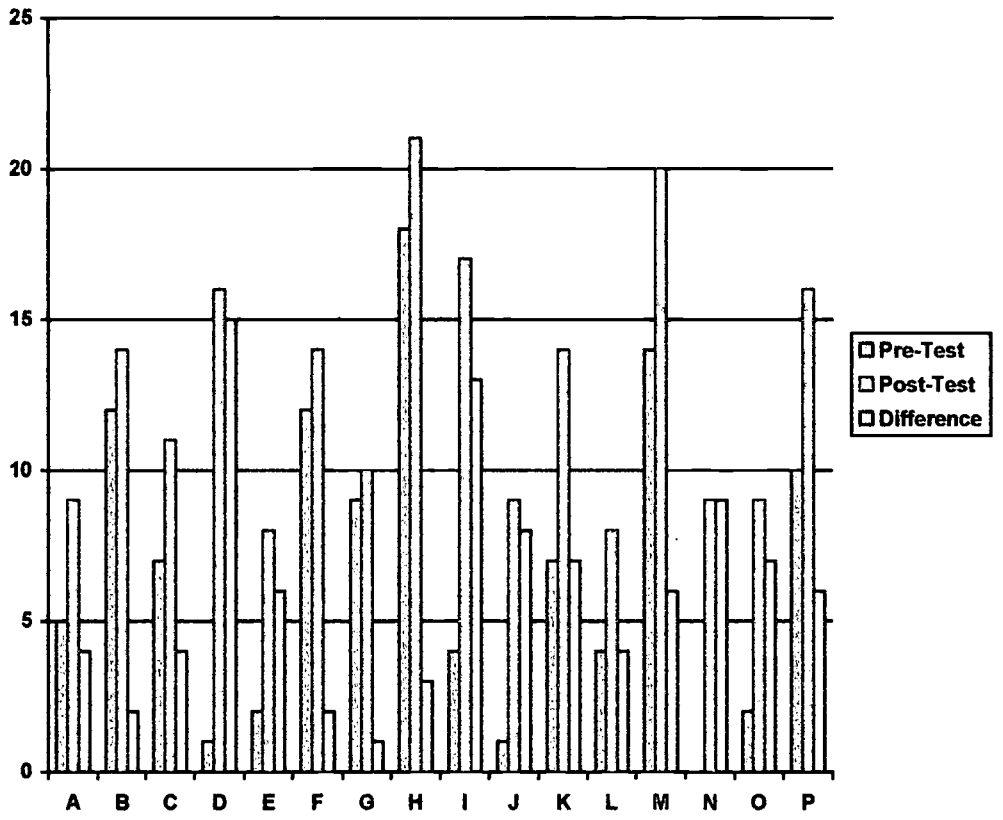

Figure 4

Analysis of Target Group Scores
For Proofreading Skills

The researcher noted from the very low scores on the pre-test that students required extensive work in proofreading. Student N scored no points on the pre-test but managed to improve by nine points on the post-test. Students D and J scored one point each and students E and O scored two points each on the pre-test, and all four met or exceeded the six point improvement goal on the post-test. However, the researcher believes that the language barrier experienced by more than half the students in the target group impeded a more substantial showing. All of the foreign speaking students expressed confusion about many of the expected responses on the proofreading test. Students from other countries had difficulty selecting prepositions that most accurately fit the meaning of a phrase. For example, in the following sentence, "...tattoos can protect on sickness and misfortune...," it was expected that students would replace the word *on* with the word *against*. However, only one student gave the correct response. Another area of ambiguity was the result of improper pronunciation. For instance, the word *this* was often confused with the word *these* and when asked to choose the correct response, students did not realize there was a difference. Finally, the last area of concern was subject-verb agreement and maintaining tense consistency. In essays of longer than one page, students shifted both tense and voice and very often overlooked whether there was agreement with the subject. Test A, Unit 6 appears to have been difficult for many students, but the data reflects the accomplishments of several

students who showed a substantial point gain from the pre-test to the post-test. For example, Student D, a Creole-speaking student, went from a one on the pre-test to a 16 on the post-test. This fifteen point improvement implies that in spite of the language difficulties, the exposure to writing and visual stimuli helped improve the student's writing ability and language awareness. Student I, an American-born student, went from a four on the pre-test to a 17 on the post-test. With no language barrier to overcome, this student appears to have benefited from the procedural application of visual stimuli and writing practice and was able to improve performance and achieve a passing grade. Although all students improved their performances, the test demanded overall awareness of grammar rules and punctuation. It is the researcher's belief that given the diversity of students in this project and the complexity of material to be covered, it would have been advantageous to extend instruction for at least one further semester in order to achieve better results.

Objective four stated that if eighty percent of the students in the target group increased their scores by two points, based upon a scoring rubric (Appendix D, pp. 102-103), as measured by teacher evaluation of a writing pre-test and five completed compositions from students' portfolios, then objective four will have been met. The following table details the data collected.

Table 6

Target Group Scores
For Compositions

Pupil	Pre-Test	Paper #1	Paper #2	Paper #3	Paper #4	Paper #5	Ave. Score	Point Diff.
A	2.6	2.8	3.2	3.3	3.5	4	3.4	1.4
B	3	3.3	3.3	4	4	5	3.9	2
C	2.8	3	3.2	3.5	3.7	4.5	3.6	1.7
D	1	1.3	2.3	2.8	3.3	4	2.7	3
E	2.6	3.3	3.5	3.8	4	4.1	3.7	1.5
F	3	2.5	2.5	3	4	3	3	1
G	1	2.5	2.5	3.3	4	3.6	3.2	3
H	2.5	4	3.8	4	4.5	5	4.3	2.5
I	2.3	3.5	4	3.6	3.3	4.5	3.8	2.2
J	1	1.6	1.3	1.6	1.3	2	1.6	1
K	1	2.5	2.7	2.8	2.5	3.2	2.7	2.2
L	1	2.5	3	4.5	4	4.3	3.7	3.5
M	3	3.3	3.6	4	5	4	4	2
N	1.3	1.3	1.8	2.5	4	3	2.5	2.7
O	2.6	2.3	2.8	2.3	4	3.2	2.9	1.4
P	2.6	4	3.8	3.7	3.7	4.8	4	1.4

All sixteen students in the target group showed an increase in scores from the writing pre-test. Ten of the sixteen students succeeded in increasing their scores by two points from the pre-test to the *best paper* score which is 62.5% of the students. This does not meet the eighty percent goal of objective four. Below is a histogram to further clarify the data.

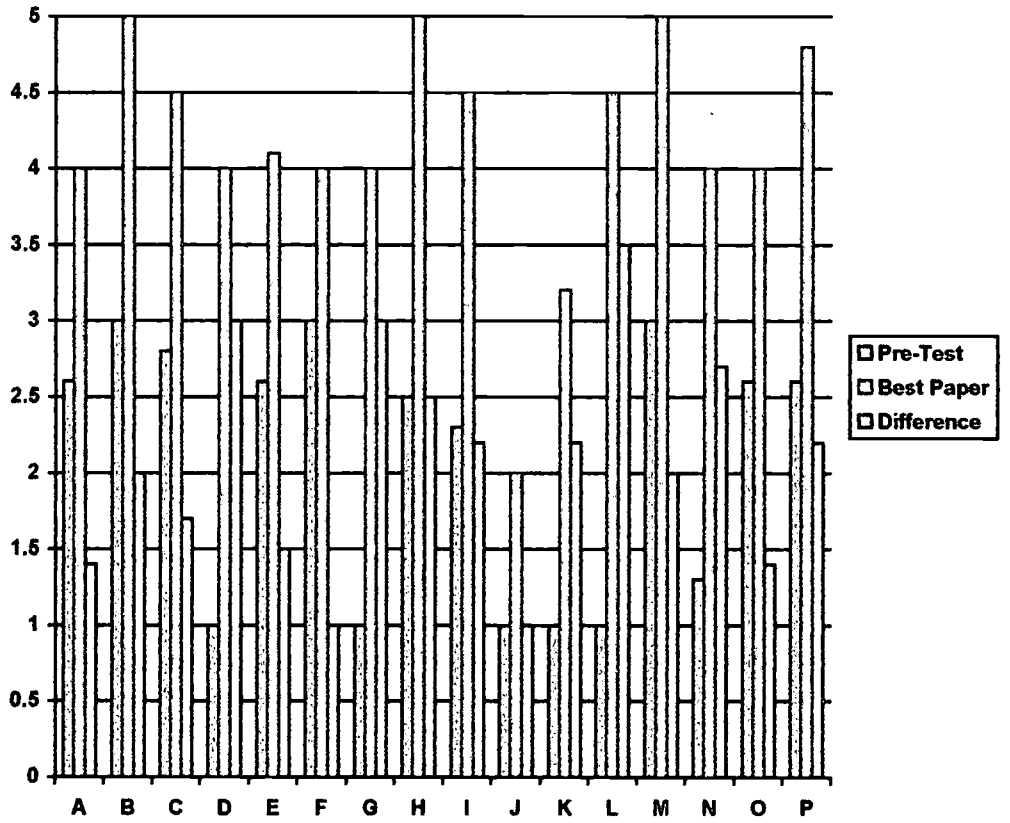

Figure 5

Analysis of Target Group Writing Scores
For Pre-Test and Best Paper

The scoring rubric (Appendix D, pp. 102-103) ranges from one to six, with six as the best possible score and three as a passing score. Each paper was rated for the following: clear, focused topic, relevant and ample supporting details, logical organizational pattern, polished word choice, effective sentence variety, and lack of convention errors. If a student's paper showed the highest quality of work, then the paper received a six. If the paper showed less than the highest quality, it was rated in accordance with the level it displayed. The six individual elements were scored and averaged, and the grade was recorded as one score per paper. For example, a student might score a 6 on topic development, a 4 on details, a 3 on organizational plan, a 4 on word choice, a 3 on sentence variety, and a 1 on convention errors. The total score would be 21. There are six elements; thus, 21 divided by 6 equals 3.5. Therefore the resultant score for the paper would be a 3.5. No student scored a perfect paper during the course of the practicum; however, several students were able to garner a score of five on their later papers. Of the six students who scored 1.3 or less on the pre-writing exercise, four increased their scores by two points, meeting objective four. Student L, for example, scored a 1 on the pre-test and advanced to a 4.5 on one of the subsequent papers and had a resultant average score of 3.7, a significant advance from the pre-test score. In reviewing the specific papers, the researcher concluded that topic development, and supporting details were the strong points while organizational plan, sentence variety, and

convention errors remained the problem areas. The researcher noted that word choice improved greatly over the course of the practicum; this improvement may be attributable to the daily discussions about the visual stimuli in the classroom that served to challenge the students' vocabulary. Students were encouraged to write their ideas to other students, to openly discuss the stimuli, to read aloud, and to become active members of their groups. This increased verbal activity translated into vocabulary acquisition that resulted in better word choices in the essays.

The researcher noted that convention errors remained the most stubborn stumbling block. The errors were the same confusing problems that existed in the proofreading exercises. The foreign-speaking students had considerable difficulty identifying and removing trite language, identifying commonly mispronounced, and therefore misspelled words, understanding subject-verb agreement, and choosing appropriate prepositions. In addition to convention errors, the target group often used an indecisive organizational pattern and generally exhibited pedestrian sentence variety.

The most outstanding successes were in topic development, in vocabulary acquisition, and in understanding the need for ample supporting detail. Every lesson plan included visual stimuli that generated topic discussions and prompted topic development; the classroom atmosphere encouraged full student participation in all activities. Throughout the term, the researcher

emphasized the importance of details by introducing games and activities that awakened the base of knowledge and reinforced newly added concepts.

In reviewing the data, the researcher noted that only five of the sixteen students did not receive a three or higher as an average score by the end of the term, and three of those five succeeded in scoring a four on at least one paper during the course of the term. As with the proofreading exercises, scores in the writing fell below the researcher expectations. However, given the diversity of the student population and the dimensions of course requirements, the researcher believes that the target group showed substantial improvement and dedication.

Objective five stated that if eighty percent of the students in the target group showed a more positive attitude toward writing compositions, using the visually enhanced writing process, as measured by a Student Attitudinal Survey, then objective five will have been met (Appendix E, pp. 104-105).

The researcher rated the questions as five points each for each positive response given by the students. There were twenty questions totally one hundred points. Below is a table depicting the data.

Table 7

Target Group Scores From
Student Attitudinal Survey

STUDENT	PRE-SURVEY	POST-SURVEY	% DIFFERENCE
A	63	70	+11
B	62	67	+8
C	63	68	+8
D	66	76	+15
E	60	61	+1
F	77	88	+14
G	59	72	+22
H	58	71	+22
I	56	66	+18
J	78	48	-38
K	68	70	+3
L	62	50	-19
M	67	72	+7
N	70	72	+2
O	71	66	-7
P	52	60	+15

Thirteen of the sixteen members in the target group showed an increase in scores from the first attitudinal survey to the second attitudinal survey. The results demonstrate that 81.25% of the students displayed a more positive attitude toward writing at the end of the practicum than they displayed at the beginning. This percentage meets the eighty percent goal of objective five. Below is a histogram clarifying the results.

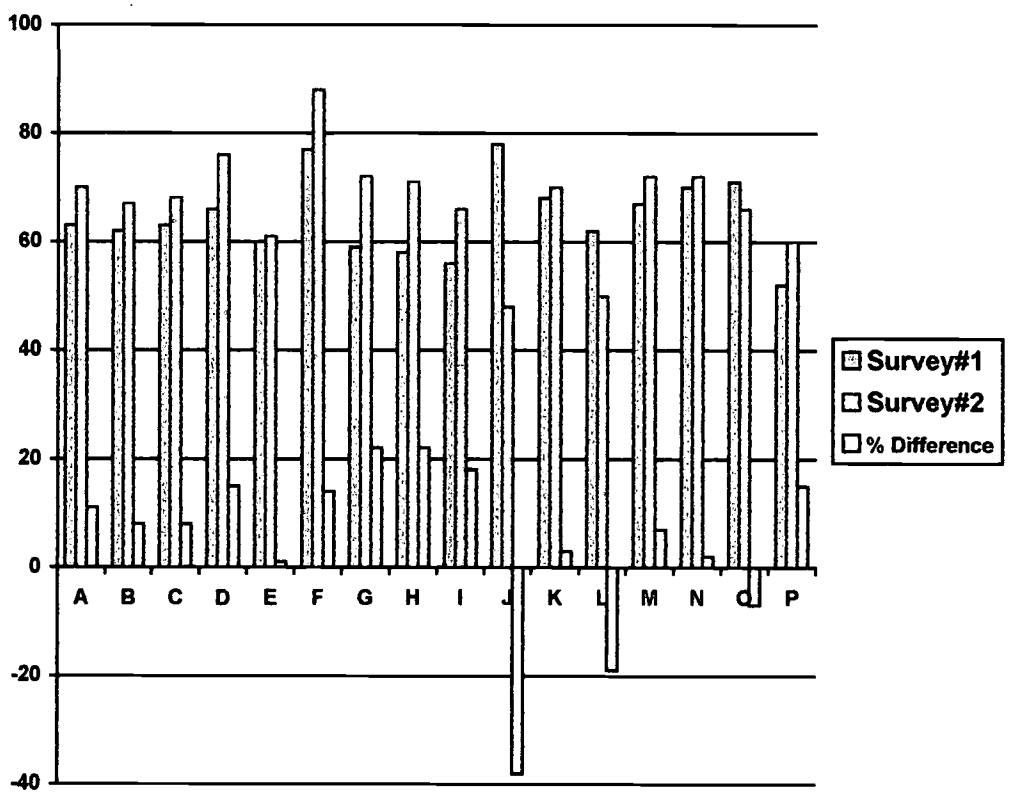

Figure 6

Analysis of Target Group
Attitudinal Survey

The results of the survey indicated that the students felt more comfortable with writing after having participated in the visually enhanced writing workshop. Many of the questions in the survey focused on their enjoyment of writing and their desire to improve their writing. The responses from the first survey generally exhibited a fear of writing and a concern about ability; the second survey on the other hand, demonstrated that the initial feelings of apprehension and inadequacy were replaced with the desire to write well and with a feeling of satisfaction about their competence and talent. On the last page of the survey, the researcher left several blank spaces for comments. The following are abridged versions of five students' remarks: "I think writing is a form of expressing feelings and ideas...;" "I like to write now when I know a lot about the topic...;" "I feel this class has made me capable of writing...My confidence has gone up tremendously as well as the coordination of my papers...I hope to continue to write and only get better...;" "Writing is a way for me to be at peace with myself and express what I really feel...;" "I really don't enjoy writing so much but after taking this class, I feel more confident in writing now." Throughout the semester, as students became familiar with the workshop atmosphere and the group approach, they were able to openly discuss their interests and concerns with each other as well as with the instructor. It became increasingly apparent to the researcher that one of the most important aspects of teaching writing is to maintain an atmosphere of cooperation and

shared experiences, where students assist each other and at the same time help themselves. Discussions of the visual stimuli generated a camaraderie that extended to all phases of work, culminating in the writing, directing, coordination, and production of the videotaped commercial.

Chapter V

Recommendations

The success of the practicum has provided substantial encouragement for the researcher to re-implement the program of utilizing visual stimulus in a writing workshop. This semester, the researcher is again teaching a Prep English class and is employing the same lesson plans with some augmentations. The student body composition is nearly the same as the previous class, containing approximately the same number of foreign-speaking students, with the additional of students from several different countries.

The lesson plan format remains essentially the same except that the researcher is omitting the commercial filming sequence in favor of concentration on specific essays types. Cooperative grouping still plays an intricate part in the classroom work and has shown to be a distinct advantage for nearly all students. The researcher is again using the scoring rubric, and it has been overwhelmingly accepted. Several students remarked that using the rubric allows them, for the first time, to clearly understand their specific problems. Many of them explained to the researcher that when teachers corrected errors on past compositions, the corrections usually did not show more than corrections of

grammatical mistakes, and when they did try to improve their grammar, they still did not receive an acceptable grade. They noted that the rubric provides them with clearly worded, understandable goals, and allows them to concentrate their efforts on specific problem areas, for example, sentence variety.

This semester the researcher is grading papers as the term progresses instead of waiting until the students submit them to the completed portfolio files. During the course of the practicum, suggesting that students only submit those papers that they felt were no longer in need of revising, fostered a term-end pile-up, and waiting to grade papers until the end of the semester, did not provide sufficient and thorough feedback. This semester, rubric-scored papers are being returned, and students are encouraged to revise them and hand them back. Once revised , the researcher uses the rubric to re-correct the papers and returns them to the students. Several students have done this three times with one paper and have advanced scores from a two on the first paper to a five on the third. This method appears to be more beneficial to the students. In reviewing current research, the writer has read several reports indicating that paper grading should be a final thing and signals the end of the revision process; however, this researcher believes that when approached using the rubric, grading becomes an advantage to the students by providing a guideline for improvement. Many students ask for additional assistance with their rubric-graded papers because instead of correcting errors, the researcher simply

indicates the areas where there are shortcomings. If a student wishes to know exactly how to improve syntax or how to make a more interesting word choice, the researcher and the student together review the paper thoroughly. In this way, the researcher believes that students benefit from personal attention as well as the satisfaction of seeing personal growth. The researcher has seen dramatic improvement in the quality of work of many of the students. The researcher is very enthusiastic about the implementation and refinement of this method and believes that it will provide a serious consideration for writing teachers.

A colleague of the researcher, who observed the researcher during the implementation of the practicum, has begun to utilize the researcher's methods into her English Prep class. She has been teaching for thirty years and reports that she finds significant changes in the atmosphere of the classroom as well as in the quality of her students' work. The colleague has used the picture book, the art reproductions, the *Magic Eye*, several activities, and the scoring rubric. Another colleague is now observing to determine whether to implement the method into a more advanced English composition course.

The researcher utilized the data from previously cited researchers; however, several specific findings proved timely and pertinent. Harris (1992) indicated that students who learned to accept scrutiny from peer groups became more serious about their work. It was the writer's experience that this was indeed the case. Once students began working together, they focused more

deeply on peer comments, specifically remarks about content and reader interest, and they tended only to favor the instructor for acceptance of syntax and grammar. Proett and Gill (1986) stated that grouping students improved the learning atmosphere in the classroom. After the first two weeks, the researcher's classroom began to assume a workshop atmosphere. This appears not only to have nurtured and strengthened academically conventional students but also to have enabled many quiet students to seek out assistance and to become active participants in all levels of classroom activities. Davis (1993) reported that through the use of visual arts, his students communicated feelings through imagery and translated imagination into words. This proved genuine in the poetry segment of the practicum. And Curtiss (1988) stressed that when visual arts are combined with other dimensions, "vociferous" writing results. This observation proved indisputable.

The researcher believes that computer graphics will be the newest focus of the administration and is therefore currently preparing a computer-assisted program to coordinate art and writing with computer designed visual aids for use next semester.

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Appendices

Appendix A

INSTRUCTORS' SURVEY

The following questions are designed to be answered by community college instructors of Preparatory English classes. Teachers, when making evaluations, please attempt to rate the class in general, not specific students. Please feel free to supply additional information at the end of the survey.

Kindly respond to the following ten questions by circling the number that best represents your feelings about the statements.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
5	4	3	2	1

A. Incoming Prep English students require English language skills training in

1. elements of the simple sentence.	5 4 3 2 1
2. noun identification.	5 4 3 2 1
3. pronoun identification.	5 4 3 2 1
4. verb tenses.	5 4 3 2 1
5. verb agreement.	5 4 3 2 1
6. use of prepositions.	5 4 3 2 1
7. coordination and subordination.	5 4 3 2 1
8. various uses of the comma.	5 4 3 2 1
9. syntax.	5 4 3 2 1
10. the rules of mechanics.	5 4 3 2 1

Kindly respond to the following questions by circling the number that best represents your feelings about the statements

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
5	4	3	2	1

B. Relating to writing skills, incoming Prep English students show ability in

1. topic development. 5 4 3 2 1
2. presenting a clear thesis statement. 5 4 3 2 1
3. paragraph development. 5 4 3 2 1
4. consistency and parallelism. 5 4 3 2 1
5. sentence variety. 5 4 3 2 1
6. word choice. 5 4 3 2 1
7. the organization of material within essay. 5 4 3 2 1

C. Please freely respond to the following questions.

1. How would you rank the writing ability of most of the incoming students?
   Acceptable____ Unacceptable____ Comment?_____
2. Do you feel that students understand your revision directions?
   Yes___ No_____Comment?_____
3. When they do revise, what areas do students revise most often?
   Grammar__ Style___SentenceVariety___Mechanics___Other_____
4. Are you satisfied with the number of times students revise the same paper ?
   Yes____ No_____Comment?_____
5. In your opinion, what is the most serious shortcoming in student writing skills?_____

Appendix B

RESULTS OF INSTRUCTORS' SURVEY

Part A: Prep English students require training in?

	Str. Agree	Agree	Ind.	Disagree	Str. Agree
1. elements of simple sentence	3	5			
2. noun identification	1	7			
3. pronoun identification	2	6			
4. verb tenses	7	1			
5. verb agreement	7	1			
6. use of prepositions	2	6			
7. coordination and subordination	7	1			
8. comma uses	7	1			
9. syntax	6	2			
10. mechanics (conventions)	4	4			

Part B: Prep English students show ability in?

	Str. Agree	Agree	Ind.	Disagree	Str. Agree
1. topic development		1	1	5	1
2. presenting clear thesis				6	2
3. paragraph development		1	1	5	1
4. consistency and parallelism				5	3
5. sentence variety			1	6	1
6. word choice		2	1	5	
7. organization				7	1

Part C: Free Response

1. Writing ability	Acceptable - 2	Unacceptable - 6
2. Understand revision directions	Yes - 7	No - 1
3. Areas students revise most often	Grammar - 2 Mechanics-2	Grammar/style - 1 Grammar/mechanics - 3
4. Satisfied with number revisions	Yes - 4	No - 4

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Appendix C

Review of Twenty Random Final
Essays of Previous Prep English
Students From 1994-1996

STUDENT	Topic	Details	Org.	Word Choice	Sentence Variety	Mech. Errors	Average
A	4	4	3	3	4	3	3.5
B	4	3	3	3	3	3	3.2
C	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
D	3	2	2	3	3	3	2.7
E	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
F	3	2	3	3	3	2	2.7
G	4	3	3	3	3	2	3
H	5	4	4	4	3	2	3.7
I	4	3	3	3	3	3	3.2
J	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
K	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
L	4	3	4	3	3	3	3.3
M	2	2	2	3	2	1	2
N	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
O	3	3	3	3	3	2	2.8
P	2	2	2	2	2	1	1.8
Q	5	3	3	4	4	3	3.7
R	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
S	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
T	2	2	1	2	2	1	1.7

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Appendix D

RUBRIC FOR EVALUATION OF STUDENT PAPERS

SCORES	OBJECTIVES
6	establishes a clear, focused topic provides relevant and ample supporting details exhibits a logical organizational pattern demonstrates polished word choice displays effective sentence variety exhibits few, if any, convention errors
5	exhibits and loosely maintains topic provides relevant and adequate supporting details exhibits a logical, but casual, organizational pattern demonstrates appropriate word use displays generally effective sentence variety exhibits few convention errors
4	establishes a topic, but loses focus occasionally provides adequate, but underdeveloped, supporting details exhibits inexact organizational pattern demonstrates acceptable word choice displays reasonable sentence variety exhibits some convention errors
3	establishes a topic, but shifts focus provides unclear supporting details exhibits indecisive organizational pattern demonstrates passable word choice displays pedestrian sentence variety exhibits frequent convention errors

SCORES	OBJECTIVES
2	establishes ambiguous topic provides minimal or sketchy supporting details exhibits inadequate organizational pattern demonstrates faulty word choice displays disjointed sentence variety exhibits frequent and confusing convention errors
1	demonstrates confusion about topic development supplies rambling or vague supporting details exhibits no organizational pattern demonstrates inappropriate word choice displays no sentence variety exhibits recurring and persistent convention errors

Appendix E

STUDENT ATTITUDINAL SURVEY ON WRITING

NAME _____ **DATE** _____

Directions: *The following statements are about your attitude toward writing. Please answer as honestly as you can. There are no right or wrong answers. Circle the number that best represents your feelings.*

Strongly Agree	**Agree**	**Undecided**	**Disagree**	**Strongly Disagree**
5	**4**	**3**	**2**	**1**

1. I enjoy writing.	5 4 3 2 1
2. I feel confident in my ability to write.	5 4 3 2 1
3. I write for pleasure.	5 4 3 2 1
4. Writing makes me feel comfortable.	5 4 3 2 1
5. I like to write to my friends.	5 4 3 2 1
6. I write better when I work with others.	5 4 3 2 1
7. I like to discuss my writing with friends.	5 4 3 2 1
8. I like to have others evaluate my writing.	5 4 3 2 1
9. I like to write in-class assignments.	5 4 3 2 1
10. I sometimes write poetry.	5 4 3 2 1
11. I spend a lot of time on writing I think is important.	5 4 3 2 1
12. I feel good about myself when I write.	5 4 3 2 1

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
5	4	3	2	1

13. I seldom feel like I have writer's block.	5	4	3	2	1
14. I rarely have trouble starting an assignment.	5	4	3	2	1
15. I use prewriting to help me organize my writing.	5	4	3	2	1
16. I spend most of my time rewriting my papers.	5	4	3	2	1
17. I want to write better.	5	4	3	2	1
18. I think people learn to write by writing.	5	4	3	2	1
19. I usually need to revise my papers.	5	4	3	2	1
20. I speak and write equally well.	5	4	3	2	1

On the following lines, please freely express your feelings toward writing, writing classes, or any aspect of writing that was not addressed in this survey.

Appendix F

ESSAY TOPIC SUGGESTIONS BASED ON THE VISUALS

In general, one can define eight types of essays. Below is a brief definition of each type and a suggestion for use within the context of our classroom work.

NARRATIVE ESSAY:

We often use narrative essays in college writing. A narrative essay tells a story. You can retell something that happened to you; you can retell an incident from history; you can retell a story about a meaningful incident; you can retell something you saw that made you laugh or cry or feel upset. In our classroom, we viewed the sitcom, *Family Matters*. We watched as Steve Erkel invented a cloning machine, produced his double, and then had to figure a way out of the problems his double created. The story could have been written as a narrative essay instead of a TV show. For your essay, you could make Steve Erkel your main character and write a story for him based on something that happened to you, or to someone you know; or perhaps, you could write a story that you imagine could happen to Steve. You would tell the plot of the story in essay form, not in play form.

You also could choose to write a narrative essay about the paintings we used or the picture illustrations from the children's books. You could describe your reaction to the paintings or the illustrations or even create a story based on the pictures. Chapter 6, pages 78-85, has more about the narrative essay.

DESCRIPTIVE ESSAY:

A descriptive essay, as its name implies, describes something. It could describe a product you like to use, a stereo that has the *perfect* sound, or a car that makes you wish you'd win the lottery. Many times, travel writers use descriptive essays when they write about special places; many times, we use descriptive essays when we write letters to our friends and family. For our class, you could use the art reproductions, the picture book illustrations, or the segment from *Family Matters* to write a descriptive essay. For example, if you choose to write a descriptive essay about *Family Matters*, you could describe the set, the clothing, the household environment, and many other things. If you'd like to write about pictures as a basis for your descriptive essay, you could describe the environment or the surroundings depicted in the pictures. Chapter 7, pages 86-97, has more about descriptive essays.

Mrs. Greenberg
English 0020

COMPARE/CONTRAST ESSAY:

When we compare things, we look for similarities and then ask ourselves *in what ways are these things similar;* likewise, when we contrast things, we look for differences and ask ourselves *in what ways do these things differ.* Many times, we will find that the thing we are focusing upon is similar in some ways and different in other ways. Before you begin writing a compare/ contrast essay, it is a good idea to write down all the things that are the same and all the things that are different. A graphic organizer, like the ones we've worked with, is good for this purpose.

In our classroom, we watched the *nerdy* Steve Erkel become the suave Steve Erkel by actually produces a living alter ego. You could compare and contrast the two characters. You might want to focus on the stereotypical personality of the nerd as Steve portrays him-- a clever, intellectual, scientific, young man who is clumsy, has a squeaky voice, wears large glasses, and walks with a pronounced gait. This characterization would be very different, a distinct contrast to the suave Steve Erkel. If you would like to compare or contrast some of the pictures or paintings you've seen, you could select two pictures and explain, for example, why one picture elicits a certain emotion and the other elicits a different emotion. Chapter 10, pages 120-137, has more about compare/contrast essays

ILLUSTRATIVE ESSAY:

This type of essay is very often used in college courses. An illustrative essay asks you to develop a topic and support your point of view with examples. For example, if you wanted to write an illustrative essay on *Family Matters*, you could question whether the stereotypical personality of the *nerdy* Steve Erkel is shown in a positive or negative light. It is important that you focus on at least three areas about which you could give examples. You could also choose to address the reasons you believe the actor portrays *nerdy* Steve as a bad dresser and perhaps address the question of whether clothes make a difference in the way others perceive us.

You could also use any of the paintings or pictures you've seen so far to develop an idea for a topic, a theme, and give examples to support your view. Chapter 5, pages 68 - 77, has more about illustrative essays.

PERSUASIVE ESSAY:

A persuasive essay asks you to defend a position and persuade others to accept your point of view. We will be dealing further with persuasion essays when we begin our segment on commercials; commercials are persuasive essays in visual format. You can use a persuasive essay to take a stand about an issue

raised in one of the pictures you've seen. For example, there are several paintings dealing with the living conditions of peasants and farm workers. If you chose to use one of them, you could make a case for or against immigration laws in the United States. If you decide to raise an issue from *Family Matters*, you could try to persuade your readers that all young men who look suave get the prettiest girls for dates. Chapter 12, pages 147-161, has more about persuasive essays.

CLASSIFICATION ESSAY:

The key to a classification essay is to find a topic you can classify, for example, *people who use public transportation.* You must then devise a basis for classification, such as those people who travel to and from work on public transportation, those who use it because they have no other means of transportation, those who use it as a leisurely afternoon outing to see the sights of the city, and so on. Once you have chosen the basis for classification, you write a paragraph on each type of person and show a logical order of sequence. You could write a classification essay on *Family Matters* by focusing on the value of the contributions of various members of the acting cast or the production team. Chapter 11, pages 138-146, has more about classification essays.

PROCESS ESSAY:

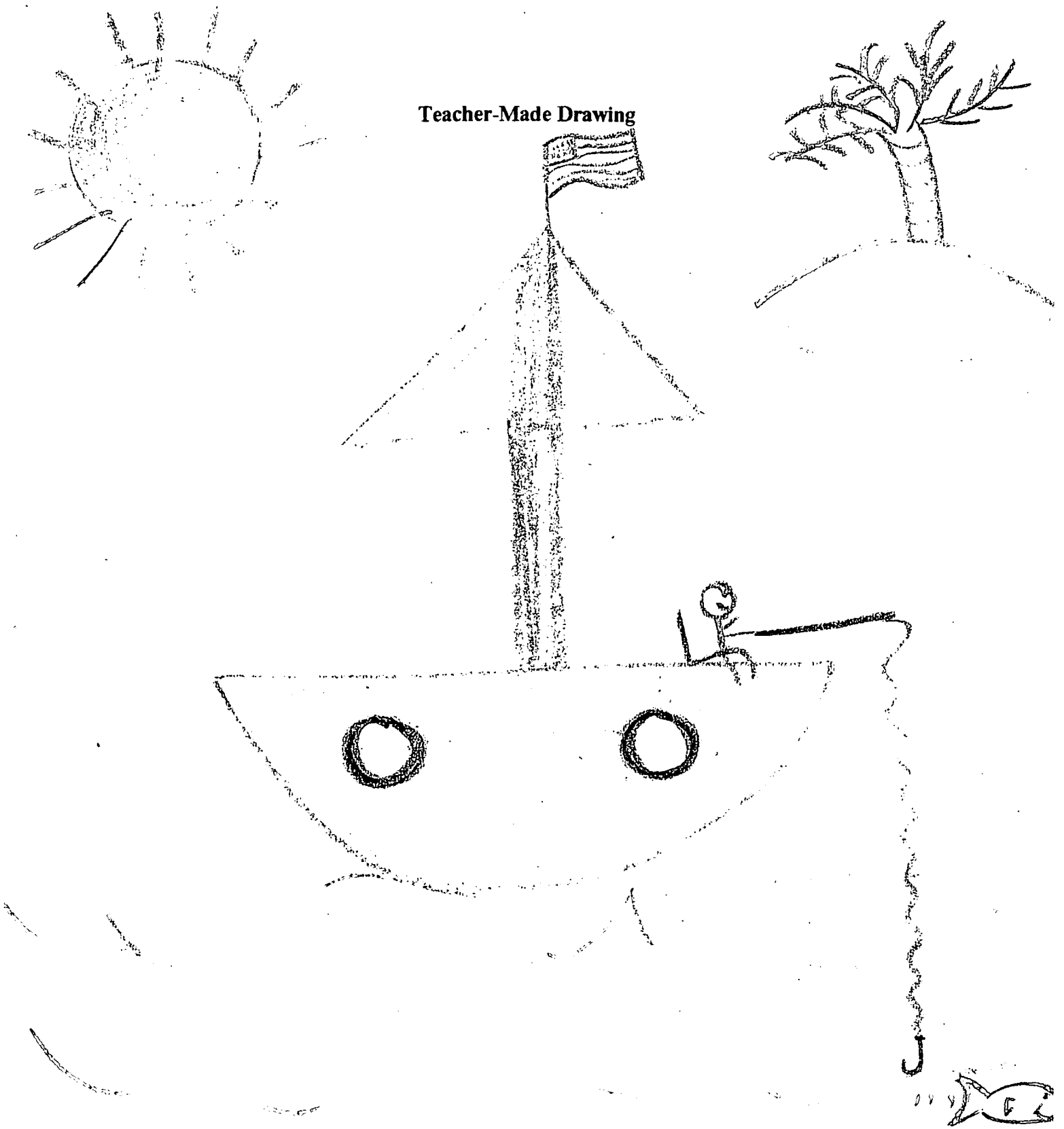
The process essay is also called the *How To* essay because the writer outlines the stages or steps involved in carrying out a procedure, such as baking a cake. Many times you will see the essay divided into paragraphs using the words, *first*, you do such and such, *next* you do this, *third* you do this, and so on. You could write a process essay on *Family Matters* by telling your readers how the director leads the actors through a scene in the show, or how the set designer prepares the set so that it is perfect for the scene the actors will play. Chapter 8, pages 98-107, has more about process essays.

DEFINITION ESSAY:

The definition essay explains the meaning of something, such as the definition of a word, a phrase, or a procedure. The writer must strive to explain the chosen topic with at least three examples. It's a good idea to brainstorm and use graphic organizers for this type of essay. You would write a definition essay by focusing on a word or phrase from any of the visual stimulus and developing an essay which explains the item you've chosen. Chapter 9, pages 108-120, has more about the definition essay

Appendix G

Teacher-Made Drawing



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