



1975

A multimodal program of identification and remediation for intermediate students with learning disabilities in the area of written expression

Alma Alene McDonald
University of the Pacific

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarlycommons.pacific.edu/uop_etds

Recommended Citation

McDonald, Alma Alene. (1975). *A multimodal program of identification and remediation for intermediate students with learning disabilities in the area of written expression*. University of the Pacific, Thesis. https://scholarlycommons.pacific.edu/uop_etds/1862

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Graduate School at Scholarly Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in University of the Pacific Theses and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of Scholarly Commons. For more information, please contact mgibney@pacific.edu.

A MULTIMODAL PROGRAM OF IDENTIFICATION AND
REMEDICATION FOR INTERMEDIATE STUDENTS WITH
LEARNING DISABILITIES IN THE AREA OF
WRITTEN EXPRESSION

A Thesis
Presented to
the Faculty of the Graduate School
University of the Pacific

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts

by
Alma Alene McDonald

August 1973

This thesis, written and submitted by

Alma Alene McDonald

is approved for recommendation to the Committee
on Graduate Studies, University of the Pacific.

Department Chairman or Dean:

J. Marc Jantzen

Thesis Committee:

Mae Line Kunning Chairman

R. Preston Gleason

Frank W. Lowry

Dated August 13, 1973

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	iv
LIST OF TABLES	vi
LIST OF FIGURES	vii

Chapter

1. INTRODUCTION	1
THE PROBLEM	4
The Purpose of the Study	4
Statement of the Problem	4
Significance of the Study	4
Hypotheses	4
Assumptions	5
Limitations	6
Definition of Terms	6
SUMMARY	7
2. REVIEW OF SELECTED LITERATURE	9
DEVELOPMENTAL ASPECTS OF LEARNING	12
LEARNING MODALITIES	13
DEVELOPMENT AND REMEDIATION OF COMMUNICATION SKILLS	14
Listening	16
Speech	17
Reading	18
Written Expression	20

Chapter	Page
Summary	24
LEARNING DISABILITIES	24
TEACHING WITH TAPES	27
MEASUREMENT OF WRITTEN EXPRESSION	30
SUMMARY	34
3. POPULATION SOURCE AND SAMPLING PROCEDURES .	37
POPULATION SOURCE AND SAMPLING PROCEDURES	37
Population Sample	37
Method of Sampling	38
THE SCREENING INSTRUMENT	39
Purpose of the Screening Instrument . .	39
Description of the Screening Instrument	40
Scoring the Screening Test	41
Validity of the Instrument	41
PRE AND POST TESTS	42
EVALUATION OF THE DATA	43
Choice of Judges	43
Judging of the Data	44
RESEARCH PROCEDURES	45
The Experimental Treatment	46
Methods Used to Train the Experimental Group	47
The Unplanned Zeigarnik Effect	48
SUMMARY	49
4. PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS	50
INTER-RATER RELIABILITY	51
RESULTS OF THE PRE AND POST TESTS	52

Chapter	Page
5. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS .	57
CONCLUSIONS	58
RECOMMENDATIONS	59
BIBLIOGRAPHY	61
APPENDIXES	66

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The author wishes to express her appreciation to those people who made this investigation possible. The efforts of several members of the administrative and teaching staff of the Antioch Unified School District were of assistance. The cooperation and assistance of Robert Kennedy, Superintendent, Frank Burk, Assistant Superintendent and Doyle Hawkins, Principal, made it possible to conduct the investigation. Ms. Betty Atkinson and Ms. Florence Catlett taught the control groups and assisted with testing. Their work and comments were valuable contributions to the author's work. Ms. Mary Smith generously gave of her time and knowledge by previewing the test and lessons, collecting data, and making invaluable comments.

The author is greatly indebted to the members of her committee, Dr. Madeline Bunning, Chairman, Dr. Heath Lowry, and Dr. Preston Gleason. Their advice, encouragement and enthusiasm are sincerely appreciated.

The assistance of the judges: Ms. Pat Roberts, Ms. Ora Mae Crane, Ms. Ann Dave and Mr. Herb Allen, is gratefully acknowledged. All willingly gave of their time and considerable professional competency to make possible the statistical comparison.

Last, the author would like to acknowledge the contributions of two young men who trusted her enough to let her know their feelings:

to Stan whose struggle with written language compelled the author to begin the search for a way to help,

and to Kris whose struggle with written language provided the author with motivation to continue the investigation.

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
1. Methods of Teaching Specific Skills Needed in Written Expression as Shown by Greatest and Fewest Number of Pages Devoted to Each Skill in Selected Reference Sources	22
2. A Comparison Between the Experimental and Control Groups as To Total Score, Mean Score and Relationship to Chance	54
3. Distribution of Scores	55
4. Relationship of Scores to Chance	56
5. Sample of Working Tables for Comparison of Ratings by Judges	88
6. Analysis of Variance to Determine Inter- Rater Reliability of Judges	89
7. Estimate of Reliability of Ratings Made on Each Story	89

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure		Page
1	Sample Card Marked By Each Judge for Each Subject	45

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Children who regularly do not finish their written work are often considered to be "lazy, immature", or "irresponsible". They are nagged, scolded and sometimes failed by their teachers, their parents, and their peers. Would it be more realistic to consider them to be disabled learners? Written expression is the result of a complex series of tasks involving most of the skills of oral language and reading. It also involves a memory of symbology, the sequencing of symbols, and specifically the translation of those memories necessary for spelling into the specialized motor tasks of writing.¹ Children who have problems learning the symbology of reading are often considered to have learning disabilities.² Children who have problems with written expression may also have learning disabilities.³

¹Doris Johnson and Helmer R. Myklebust, Learning Disabilities: Educational Principles and Practices (New York: Grune and Stratton, 1967), p. 193.

²E. Gillet Ketchumn, "Neurological and Psychological Trends in Reading Diagnosis," The Reading Teacher, 17:589, May, 1964.

³Samuel A. Kirk and James J. McCarthy "Learning Disabilities," The Encyclopedia of Education, V, ed. Lee C. Deighton (The Macmillan Company and the Free Press, 1971), p. 443.

Many of the students who have reading difficulties can be taught to read. Special techniques of diagnosis and instruction have been developed in order to teach these children.⁴ It is possible that similar techniques of diagnosis and instruction can be developed in order to teach the child who appears to have a disability in the area of written expression. This study was an investigation of the viability of one method of diagnosis and instruction for improvement of the skills of written expression.

The diagnosis of a disability in written expression is complex since there may be more than one etiology of the disability. As may be expected when there are multiple causes, there are multiple behavioral symptoms manifested by children with this problem.⁵ Many of these symptoms are also indications of other learning disabilities, particularly those of other language skills.⁶ Because this study was not concerned with diagnosing causal factors, children with certain learning problems were not included in the population being studied.

The study was not concerned with those students who have severe problems of aphasia, agnosia, apraxia, or alexia.

⁴Thomas C. Lovitt, "Assessment of Children with Learning Disabilities," Exceptional Children, 34:4, December, 1967, 234-36.

⁵Johnson, op. cit., Chapter 6.

⁶Helmer R. Myklebust, Development and Disorders of Written Language: Volume I, Picture Story Language Test (New York: Grune and Stratton, 1965), p. 3.

It was not concerned with the "non-reader" or the child diagnosed as dyslexic.

The focus of the study was on those students who exhibited the following behaviors:

1. those who can read although not necessarily at "grade level" or at a level considered to be "normal",
2. those who cannot copy correctly,
3. those who do not finish their written work,
4. those who make correct verbal responses but incorrect written responses,
5. those who have established a delaying routine of sharpening pencils, losing materials, or making trips to the wastebasket,
6. those who work while the teacher is beside them and stop working when the teacher goes away from them.

The treatment method for the study involved a series of taped lessons designed to reteach the skills of written expression in a systematic, sequential manner. The program of lessons is called a "System for the Multimodal Sequential Reteaching of Skills of Written Expression by the Use of Taped Instruction."⁷ The RSWE program will be described in detail in Chapter 3.

Since no satisfactory instrument was found either for diagnosis of disabilities with skills of written expression or for the measurement of progress, a screening test was devised. The test, which has not been standardized,

⁷The program of lessons will be referred to as the RSWE program for the remainder of the study.

is described in detail in Chapter 3.

THE PROBLEM

The Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine whether some students who can read but do unsatisfactory written work can be taught to be more successful in written work by reteaching them the skills of written expression.

Statement of the Problem

After having eliminated certain designated students by use of a specially designed test, can those intermediate students who meet the test criteria be taught to be more successful by reteaching them the skills of written expression?

Significance of the Study

No one knows how many students fit some part or all of the description given in the introduction. Informal questioning of intermediate teachers by the researcher indicated that there may be from three to six of these students in many intermediate classrooms. Many of these children are failures in the system and they are failures in their own eyes. So little research has been done on this problem that anything learned by this study may be of significance.

Hypotheses

The hypotheses to be tested are:

1. Students who have difficulty with written assignments, and have capability for learning, can be identified with a test designed for this purpose.
2. Intermediate grade students who can read but do unsatisfactory written work can be taught to be more successful by reteaching them the skills of written expression in sequence of difficulty of these skills.

Assumptions

The study was based on the following assumptions:

1. Most children would like to be successful in school.
2. The factors which originally caused failure are no longer operative among some children in the intermediate grades.
3. Among other children the causal factors continue to be operative, nevertheless these children have achieved the maturity to overcome the causal factors.
4. Some of the subjects studied were retained in the primary grades.
5. Use of the RSWE program will show measurable results in the limited time available for reteaching.
6. The developed screening test will be adequate for testing the skills needed for written expression.
7. The RSWE program teaches those skills necessary for written expression.
8. Judges who meet the stated criteria will be in significant agreement.

Limitations

Several limitations to the study were:

1. The Hawthorne Effect could be expected since the experimental groups were taught by the reseacher.
2. Students were assigned to experimental or control groups according to regular summer school administrative procedures rather than according to a specific procedure for randomization.
3. ~~The community was primarily Caucasian and of middle income level.~~
4. The data were collected during a summer school when attendance, expectations and attitudes of the students, and assignments are less structured than during the regular school year.
5. The testing and data collection were done within a period of nineteen school days which is less time than the researcher believes is necessary to reteach the skills of written expression.

Definition of Terms

The following terms were used in the study:

Learning disability--any of a variety of specific difficulties which prevent children from acquiring and using information and skills necessary for learning and communication. These difficulties are not related to blindness, loss of hearing, or mental retardation.⁸

Written expression--the expression, in writing, of one's own ideas or impressions.

Writing--the act of putting on paper the symbology of language.

Learning modality--a sensory channel through which a percept reaches the brain.

⁸The definition used is based on those used by Kirk, op. cit., p. 441, and Robert Valett, Programming Learning Disabilities (Palo Alto, California: Fearson Publishers, 1969), p. 3.

Visual copy--a printed paper from which the student is expected to copy the text.

Zeigarnik effect--the tendency of an individual to recall or resume interrupted tasks. The term has come to be used to apply to the feelings of tension involved when any task is interrupted.⁹

Tape--the magnetic tape used to record and play back sound.

Blind ranking system--a system of judging performance in which a number of raters working independently quickly read and rate the performance. The mean of the ratings is used as the final rating.¹⁰

Reteaching--the presentation of a learning activity to which the student has been exposed at an earlier time. For purposes of the study it is assumed that the student was unable to learn the task when it was originally presented.

SUMMARY

Many children are unsuccessful in school subjects because of the inability to express themselves in writing. This study was based on the assumptions that these students have a learning disability; that they can be identified with a screening test; and that they can be taught to be more successful in written activities. The teaching method used was based on one method of reteaching the skills of written expression in approximately the same sequence as used in

⁹Morton Deutsch, "Field Theory", International Encyclopedia of the Social Science, V., (Macmillan Company and the Free Press, 1968), p. 407.

¹⁰Richard Braddock, Richard Lloyd-Jones, and Lowell Shoer, Research in Written Composition, (Champaign, Illinois: National Council of Teachers of English, 1963) p. 12.

teaching skills of written expression in the primary grades.

A review of literature related to the teaching of the skills of written expression will be found in Chapter 2.

Chapter 3 will include a detailed description of the procedures used in the study. The findings will be found in Chapter 4 and Chapter 5 will discuss the conclusions and recommendations of the investigation.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF SELECTED LITERATURE

The areas of research which were considered to be pertinent to the study are: (1) a theoretical basis for the choice of population, (2) developmental aspects of learning, (3) learning modalities, (4) development and remediation of communication skills, (5) learning disabilities, (6) teaching with tapes and measurement of written expression.

THEORETICAL BASES FOR POPULATION CHOICE

The decision about the age level of the population to be studied was based upon two factors:

1. the age at which the neurophysiological systems involved have reached the developmental levels necessary for attainment of the skills of written expression,
2. the age at which the lack of skill in written expression could be considered an educational handicap.

Written expression is the most complex of the skills of language. It involves the ability to translate ideas into written symbology and in normal children, develops after the skills of listening, speaking, and reading have been learned.¹ The content of written expression is a language

¹Doris A. Johnson and Helmer R. Myklebust, Learning Disabilities: Educational Principles and Practices (New York: Grune and Stratton, 1967), p. 193.

of writing skills. The decision about the optimum time for remediation was based upon: (1) determining the approximate age of developmental maturity needed for learning, and (2) determining the age after which remediation may not be successful.

Skill in development of oral communication is considered to be prerequisite to written expression; therefore, Piaget's statement that genuine understanding does not take place in children's oral communication before the ages of seven or eight⁵ was one basis for consideration of a minimum age for remediation. Other factors considered were those of motor skill and coordination. According to Burns⁶ motor coordination is at a state where the more refined skills necessary for handwriting can be expected by nine or ten years of age. Statements by Havighurst that the skills of reading and writing rarely improve after the age of twelve and that a developmental task "if not achieved at the proper time will not be achieved well" were used as a basis for deciding upon a maximum age for this study.⁷

The following theoretical bases were used to determine the optimum time for remediation: (1) that writing is the last of the communication skills to develop,

⁵Jean Piaget, The Language and Thought of the Child (New York: Harcourt Brace and Company, Inc. 1926), p. 49.

⁶Burns, op. cit. p. 4.

⁷Robert J. Havighurst, Human Development and Education (New York: Longman, Green, and Co. 1953), p. 33.

(2) that understanding in oral communication might not develop until a child is eight, (3) that the motor skills necessary for handwriting will probably be developed by the time a child is nine, and (4) that the child who has passed the age of twelve may be developmentally past the "teachable moment".⁸ Using these as criteria, the intermediate (fourth, fifth, and sixth) grades would seem to be the optimum time for remedial measures for the skills of written expression.

DEVELOPMENTAL ASPECTS OF LEARNING

The study proceeded from the frame of reference that learning develops in a sequential manner. Authorities such as Piaget, Gesell, and Havighurst⁹ agree that learning proceeds from simple to complex, from known to unknown, and from perceptual to conceptual. How, when, and why learning takes place are sources of some disagreement.

Havighurst suggests that, for any individual, nature allows many possibilities and that what is learned is determined by what the individual has experienced.¹⁰ This is in contrast to Montessori who believes that certain behaviors, particularly language development, are innate

⁸Ibid., p. 5.

⁹Jean Piaget, Psychology of Intelligence (Totowa, New Jersey: Littlefield, Adams and Co., 1947), p. 9; Arnold Gesell and Frances Ilg, The Child from Five to Ten (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1946), Chapter 1; Havighurst, op. cit., Chapter 1.

¹⁰Ibid., Chapter 1.

and develop in a certain way as soon as the necessary conditions for development are met. An example of her theory is the statement that the beginnings of speech take place at a certain time in a child's life "as if a precise timekeeper were superintending this part of his activity."¹¹ Yet Montessori and Havighurst agree that there is an optimum time for learning specific tasks and that a task not learned within this period will not be learned as easily or as well.¹² Gesell agrees and, in addition, warns that teaching efforts may be wasted and even harmful if the child's developmental stage is not interpreted correctly.¹³

LEARNING MODALITIES

Such authorities as Meeker, Monroe, Johnson, and Myklebust¹⁴ agree that learning takes place through sensory input, that some sensory channels are more important than

¹¹Maria Montessori, The Absorbent Mind, Claude A. Claremont translator (New York: Delta, Dell Publishing Co., 1967), Chapter 10.

¹²Maria Montessori, Spontaneous Activity in Education, (1917) Florence Simmonds translator (New York: Schoecken Books, 1965), p. 81; Havighurst, op. cit., p. 3.

¹³Arnold Gesell, op. cit., p. 26.

¹⁴Mary Nicol Meeker, The Structure of Intellect: It's Interpretation and Uses (Columbus, Ohio: Charles E. Merrill Publishing Company, 1969), p. 108; Marion Monroe and Bertie Backus, Remedial Reading (New York: Houghton Mifflin and Co., 1937) p. 5 ; Helmer R. Myklebust, Development and Disorders of Written Language: Volume I Picture Story Language Test (New York: Grune and Stratton, 1965).

others in learning academic skills, and that individuals differ in strengths or preferences of specific sensory channels. These sensory input channels are often called learning or strength modalities.

Meeker discusses four major learning modalities: the auditory, visual, kinesthetic, and tactile.¹⁵ A need for diagnosis in order to determine modality strengths is confirmed by the work of many, including a study of the auditory-visual channels by de Hirsche,¹⁶ work with kinesthetic channels, as described by Kephart,¹⁷ and studies done by Myklebust¹⁸ on disturbances of all three of these learning modalities.

DEVELOPMENT AND REMEDIATION OF COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Listening, speaking, reading, and writing are the skills of language and those aspects of communication which involve language. These skills develop in a sequential, hierarchical relationship according to a pattern determined

¹⁵Mary Nichol Meeker, op. cit., p. 109.

¹⁶Katrina de Hirsche, Jeannette Jefferson Jansky and William S. Lanford, Predicting Reading Failure: A Preliminary Study of Reading, Writing and Spelling Disabilities in Preschool Children (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1966), pp. 80-83.

¹⁷Newell Kephart, The Slow Learner in the Classroom (Columbus, Ohio: C. E. Merrill Books, 1960).

¹⁸Myklebust, op. cit., Chapter 2.

phylogenetically and ontogenetically, neurologically and psychologically.¹⁹

If the development of any phase of language does not proceed in a "normally predictable manner", some and sometimes all of the other aspects of language will be affected.²⁰ Because of this interrelationship of all language skills and the importance of communication skills to school success, it is important to recognize that appropriate remedial instruction is sometimes necessary.²¹

Although listening and speaking are not the basic concern of the study, it is recognized that they provide the basis for the development of the more complex skills of reading and writing.²² A brief discussion of listening and speaking is provided as background information. Reading will be explored in some depth for two reasons: (1) Nearly all of the skills necessary for reading also appear to be necessary for the learning of written expression and (2) it has been necessary to draw from the literature on reading for basic teaching procedures because of the limited resources for determining either the basic principles or the remediation of written expression.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 2.

²⁰Ibid., p. 3.

²¹Johnson, op. cit., p. 195.

²²Myklebust, op. cit., Chapter 1.

Listening

The bulk of the research on listening skills has been done within the last twenty-five years.²³ In summarizing what is known Ayers postulates that listening is the first of the communication skills to be learned. From infancy until about sixth grade listening is the principal means of learning for all children. Listening continues to be an important source of learning, and for some people the major source, throughout the school years. Because listening is a receptive skill, teaching and evaluation are both difficult.²⁴

The body of research indicates that there are different kinds of skills needed for listening and that these skills can be effectively taught.

Strickland specifies that children "need to be taught that listening is a complex mental process that requires effort and thoughtful attention."²⁵ In her discussion about the teaching of listening she mentions the following as necessary listening skills for a child to learn: These skills are:²⁶

1. to give full attention,

²³Ruth G. Strickland, The Language Art in the Elementary School, (3d Edition; Lexington, Massachusetts: D. C. Heath and Company, 1969), p. 129.

²⁴Grace A. Ayers, "Improving Oral Communications," Elementary English. XLVIII, November, 1971, 800-805.

²⁵Strickland, op. cit., p. 129.

²⁶Ibid., Chapter 6.

2. to cut out voices or other auditory stimuli which are not directed to himself,
3. learning the different kinds of listening necessary and how to distinguish which kind of listening is needed,
4. learning to increase the span of listening attention,
5. appreciative listening,
6. analytical listening.

Ayers lists some of the techniques for teaching the skills of listening, but does not discuss these as remedial techniques, nor does she state an optimum time for learning.²⁷ Strickland suggests that most of the skills for listening can and should be taught in the primary grades and that analytical listening should be taught during the intermediate grades. She comments that the same techniques used for teaching primary students should be used to teach intermediate students who lack needed listening skills.²⁸

Speech

Speech is normally the second of the communications skills to develop.²⁹ The sounds of speech and the grammar and syntax of a child's native language are developed before a child enters school.³⁰

Speech as a skill of communication continues to

²⁷Ayers, op. cit., p. 804.

²⁸Strickland, op. cit., Chapter 6.

²⁹Myklebust, op. cit., p. 2.

³⁰Strickland, op. cit., Chapter 2.

develop during the school years³¹ but the teaching of the skills of oral communication is not usually taught as a specific area of the curriculum in elementary school. Remediation for difficulties in speech is usually limited to the highly specialized work done by a speech therapist.³²

Reading

In a literate society, reading is the next communication skill developed by the child.³³ The teaching of reading skills is usually begun after a child enters school. Certain generally accepted principles of reading instruction outlined by Ruth Strang are of interest because of the possibility of applying most of these principles to the teaching of written expression. These principles are:

1. start where a child is,
2. nothing succeeds like success,
3. respect for the pupil increases his self-esteem,
4. learning takes place in a relationship,
5. success in dealing with seriously retarded readers depends upon discovering what makes them tick,
6. success in teaching reading results from changing the dynamics of the situation.

³¹Ibid., Chapter 3.

³²Ralph D. Robinovitch and Winifred Ingram, "Neuropsychiatric Consideration in Reading Retardation", Children With Reading Problems, ed. Gladys Natchez (New York: Basic Books, 1962), p. 147.

³³Myklebust, op. cit., p. 2.

7. children may react differently to what seems to be the same approach.³⁴

In spite of the amount of time spent in the teaching of reading and no matter what methods are used many children either do not learn to read or learn to read well.³⁵ For this reason and because our society places a premium on reading proficiency, a great body of literature has been amassed on the subject of remedial reading and teaching techniques for remediation.

Not all authorities agree on the specific methods of diagnosis or teaching which should be used but there is general agreement with the guidelines which were postulated by Monroe in 1937. She suggested the use of techniques which:

1. are best done individually,
2. are based on simple, interesting, and varied materials,
3. are systematic and regular,
4. give direct therapy in the field of weakness,
5. are geared to the utilization of the strongest learning modality.³⁶

An expanding area of literature pertains to methods of discovering the field of weakness and providing appropriate therapy. Frostig has found that most remedial

³⁴Ruth Strang, Diagnostic Teaching of Reading (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1964), p. 4.

³⁵Robinovitch, op. cit., p. 145.

³⁶Monroe, op. cit. p. 5.

readers have deficits in one or more areas of visual perception. She has developed methods for both diagnosis and remedial treatment.³⁷ Fernald was an early advocate of a multisensory approach to remedial reading. Her "seeing, saying, tracing" technique has been used for many years.³⁸ The techniques listed by both Frostig and Fernald have a direct application to the teaching of written expression although they were ~~developed as techniques for the teaching of reading.~~

Written Expression

The last to develop and most complex of the skills of language is that of written expression.³⁹ Ruth Strickland has given one of the most complete descriptions of the task of writing.

Writing involves a number of separate, discrete skills which the writer utilizes in orderly sequence, yet almost simultaneously he must:

1. make up his mind what to write and arrange his ideas in the sequence he wants to produce,
2. put the ideas into words and the words into sentences that say what he wants to say yet are conventional and clear enough so that the reader can interpret his thought,
3. come to terms with a sentence before he starts to write it. One cannot edit amid ships as he does in speech,
4. write horizontally across a page in a left to right direction,

³⁷Marianne Frostig, and David Hume, The Frostig Program for the Development of Visual Perception (Chicago: Follett Publishing Co., 1964).

³⁸Grace Fernald, Remedial Techniques in Basic School Subjects (New York: McGraw Hill Book Co., 1943).

³⁹Johnson, op. cit., p. 193.

5. select from among the 26 letters of the alphabet the ones needed to spell the words he wants and arrange them in proper sequence,
6. make his hand do what he wants it to do in forming the letters so that they are legible (or strike the right keys on a typewriter),
7. use appropriate starting, stopping, and other punctuation.⁴⁰

In order to ascertain how children are taught the skills of written expression, six sources of teaching methods were examined.⁴¹ Each source checked had been listed as a reference in at least three selections on written expression examined in a preliminary search of the literature. The selected sources covered a span of more than twenty years. An attempt was made to determine a system or methodology common to all or part of this group of authors. The lack of a common systematic approach is shown in Table 1. This table was compiled from index listings and subsequent examination of the text.

⁴⁰ Strickland, op. cit., p. 299.

⁴¹ Mauree Applegate, Easy in English (Evanston, Illinois: Harper and Row Publishers, 1960); Learning the Three R's (2d ed.; Minneapolis: Educational Publishers, Inc. 1947); _____, Language Arts for Today's Children New York: Appleton-Century Crofts, Inc. 1954; Harold G. Shane, Mary E. Reddin, and Margaret C. Gillespie, Beginning Language Arts Instruction With Children (Columbus, Ohio, Charles E. Merrill, 1961); Willard F. Tidyman, Charlene Weddle Smith, and Marguerite Butterfield, Teaching the Language Arts (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1969); Don Wolfe, Language Arts and Life Patterns, Grade 2 through 8, (New York: The Odyssey Press, Inc., 1961).

Table 1

Methods of Teaching Specific Skills Needed in Written
Expression as Shown by Greatest and Fewest Number
of Pages Devoted to Each Skill in Selected
Reference Sources

Skill	Fewest Number of Pages	Greatest Number of Pages
Mechanics of Punctuation and Capitalization	1	19
Handwriting	0	118
Spelling	14	52
Grammar and Usage	1	54
Teaching of Composition	10	120
Teaching of Oral Expression	2	40
Remediation for Written Expression	0	0
Evaluation of Written Expression	0	25

Further investigation indicated that very little of the available research can be adopted to a systematic method of teaching. West, writing in the Encyclopedia of Education, states:

The study of written language remains at the beginning of the 1970's, an unsettled field, full of controversy, unresolved questions and various practices and philosophies....Despite the lack of research base for teaching practices, there is little disagreement regarding the importance of written composition.⁴²

In spite of the lack of a research base, authorities such as Strickland, Dawson, and Shane⁴³ are in general agreement that dictation by the child to the teacher is the first step in teaching children to express themselves in writing. The steps for initial instruction in written expression are outlined by Strickland:

1. dictation,
2. dictation with copying,
3. writing with all the help he needs,
4. writing with increasing independence.⁴⁴

⁴²William W. West, "Teaching of Composition" Encyclopedia of Education V II, ed. Lee C. Deighton (MacMillan Co. and Free Press, 1971), p. 364.

⁴³Strickland, op. cit., p. 302; Mildren Dawson and Marion Zollinger, Guiding Language Learning (Yonkers-on Hudson, New York: World Book Company, 1957), p. 309; Harold G. Shane, Mary E. Reddin, and Margaret C. Gillespie, Beginning Language Arts Instruction with Children (Columbus, Ohio: Charles E. Merrill Books, Inc. 1961), p. 230.

⁴⁴Strickland, op. cit., p. 303.

As shown in Table 1, none of the six sources discussed remediation for the older child who cannot express himself in writing. Strickland, however, does make note of the problem, and states that arrested development is more common in written language than in any other area of language learning. She suggests that older children be taught with the same sequence of instruction but that special attention needs to be given to motivation.⁴⁵

Summary

Written expression is the last of the communication skills to develop. Proficiency in written expression is dependent upon the "normal" development of the skills of listening, speaking, and reading. Any interference with the learning process of one of the language arts may inhibit learning in all of these areas, so that some type of special or remedial teaching may be necessary. The major focus of remedial teaching has been in the field of reading. At this time the researcher of written expression must depend upon what is known about remediation of reading to provide a background for developing materials for remediation of skills of written expression.

LEARNING DISABILITIES

The literature in the field of learning disabilities was important to this study because the children described

⁴⁵Ibid., pp. 328-329.

in the introduction of this study have characteristics of a learning disability. These children who put little or nothing on paper also meet the standard for learning disability given in the Encyclopedia of Education.

Disability is indicated when a significant discrepancy exists between a child's general ability and his functioning in a specific area, such as reading, writing or arithmetic, even though adequate instruction has been given and no sensory or intellectual deficit exists.⁴⁶

No attempt was made in this study to discuss more than a small part of the fast growing collection of literature on learning disabilities since so little of this literature deals with writing. The particular interest in this literature was due to the fact that skills of writing and written expression are frequently mentioned as either symptoms or areas of disabilities but little is written specifically about diagnosis or remediation.⁴⁷

The literature on learning disabilities had stressed the need for diagnosis of the specific disability and prescriptive teaching techniques.⁴⁸ A wide variety of physical, achievement and psychological tests are suggested for diagnosis.⁴⁹ Most of these tests can be classified as ability, reading, and perceptual-motor functioning tests.

⁴⁶Samuel A. Kirk and James J. McCarthy, "Learning Disabilities" Encyclopedia of Education, Vol. 5, ed. Lee C. Deighton (Macmillan Company and the Free Press, 1971) p. 443.

⁴⁷Ibid., pp. 441-445.

⁴⁸Ibid.

⁴⁹Ibid.

The remedial techniques are usually visual-perceptual such as the Frostig material,⁵⁰ perceptual motor learning according to methods suggested by Kephart and Strauss⁵¹ and reading, with particular emphasis on multisensory techniques such as those developed by Fernald.⁵²

Johnson and Myklebust⁵³ are two authors who have placed special emphasis on writing and written expression.

Both describe:

1. possible causes of difficulties in the area of written expression,
2. the relationship between disorders in the language systems of reading and writing,
3. the inter-connection of all language systems,
4. the neurological functions or dysfunctions involved in aquisition of skills of written expression.

Myklebust,⁵⁴ especially, has gone into the area of development and disorders of written language. A discussion of his finding will be found in the section of Chapter 2 under the subtitle Measurement of Written Expression.

⁵⁰Frostig, op. cit.

⁵¹Kephart, op. cit; Alfred A. Strauss and Laura E. Lehtinen, Psychopatholgy and Education of the Brain Injured Child (New York: Grune and Stratton, 1947).

⁵²Fernald, op. cit.

⁵³Johnson, op. cit. Chapter 6; Myklebust, op. cit., Part I.

⁵⁴Myklebust, Ibid.

TEACHING WITH TAPES

The introduction of any new classroom materials or changes of subject matter should be preceded by the study of student needs, current curriculum commitments and the availability of necessary materials.⁵⁵ The use of pre-recorded materials with self correcting lesson materials can provide for meeting the individual needs of students with a minimum disruption of classroom or curriculum routine. Tape recorders and cassette players have, within the last few years, become important and generally available teaching tools which add to the desirability of pre-recorded materials.

Before preparing instructional materials for classroom use in the current study, it was found that several factors must be considered. These are:

1. economic use of teacher time both for preparation and evaluation,
2. ease of use by students,
3. meeting needs of individual students,
4. time needed for organization of materials,
5. space needed for storage,

The use of pre-recorded tapes meets the first three of these

⁵⁵Edward A. Krug, Curriculum Planning (New York: Harper Brothers, 1950), Chapter 6.

criteria.⁵⁶ The development of the compact cassette recorder and tapes does much to eliminate problems formerly encountered in storing taped materials. Organization of materials is kept relatively simple if each lesson is pre-packaged.⁵⁷

Lalime, Macarthur, and Silverstone⁵⁸ agree that careful planning and organization are essential if a tape recorded lesson is to meet the objectives. Outlines

~~suggested for the tape scripts are similar to the following:~~⁵⁹

1. The taped lesson should provide for motivation and the introduction to lesson and materials.
2. The voice recording of the teaching portion of tape should be done in a normal speaking voice.
3. Provisions should be made on the tape for pauses of sufficient length for student response.
4. Directions on tape must be explicit.
5. Summary, review, and evaluation sections are essential elements of each taped lesson.

Ease of use and consistent presentations of lessons are important considerations in the choice of a teaching

⁵⁶Arthur W. Lalime, "Tape Teaching", Unpublished Monograph from directors of Instructional Materials (Norwalk, California: Norwalk Board of Education, no date), p. 3. (Mimeographed.)

⁵⁷Ibid.

⁵⁸Ibid.; Margaret J. Macarthur, "Learning Through Listening," Audiovisual Instruction, 13:1, January, 1968, 59; David M. Silverstone, "Listening and Tape Teaching", Audiovisual Instruction, 13:8, October, 1968, 870.

⁵⁹The points listed are derived from information given by Lalime, op. cit.; Macarthur, op. cit.; and Silverstone, op. cit.

method. Also important is the opportunity for a multi-modal approach to learning as suggested by many authors⁶⁰ who work with students with learning disabilities. The use of taped lessons, printed worksheets, and copying of writing by the student involves three of the four learning modalities mentioned by Meeker.⁶¹

A fourth and more subtle reason for the choice of this media is described by Klyhn:

Not until I started to work with young children on the tape recorder did I realize that a machine could come alive. Adults are inhibited by the machine. Children accept it without a thought--talk to, talk back to, interact with the machine in a relaxed and easy way. In some learning situations a child can be more at ease with a machine than with a human teacher.⁶²

The use of pre-recorded tapes provides for ease of use by both the student and the teacher. These taped materials must be carefully and systematically prepared to meet the objectives of the lessons. Tapes are well suited to the multi-modal type of teaching which seems beneficial to many remedial students, provides for repetitions of lessons when necessary, and provides a pleasant relaxed atmosphere for teaching.

⁶⁰ Among these are: Johnson, op. cit.; Myklebust, op. cit.; Kirk, op. cit.; and Marion Fenwick Stuart Neurophysiological Insights into Teaching (Palo Alto: Pacific Books, 1963).

⁶¹ Meeker, op. cit., p. 109.

⁶² Joan Klyhn, "A Tape Library for First, Second and Third Grades," Audiovisual Instruction 13:4 April, 1968, 350.

MEASUREMENT OF WRITTEN EXPRESSION

The paucity of reported research about written expression is not due to lack of interest. Anderson's research reports that Edgeworth expressed concern in 1888 about the lack of research.⁶³ The concern has continued and so has some research but most has been inconclusive.⁶⁴ According to Anderson, Edgeworth also discussed, in 1888, the fact that no satisfactory method was available for assessment for research in written expression.⁶⁵

The literature reviewed covers nearly a century of research. Two things are notable: (1) nearly everyone agrees that the essay is an important part of written expression and (2) no one has established an objective method of assessing or measuring the quality of an essay.⁶⁶ When one considers the changes which have taken place in the world during these years, he may be tempted to agree with Reimer who says:

Educationists explain the vacuum in writing research by saying they have no valid tests for measuring writing. Now this seems odd because there are stacks of tests for evaluating reading....There are easily as

⁶³C. C. Anderson, "The New Step Essay Test as a Measure of Composition Ability," Educational and Psychological Measurement, 20:95 1960, 95.

⁶⁴Richard Braddock, Richard Lloyd-Jones, and Lowell Shoer, Research in Written Composition (Champaign, Illinois: National Council of Teachers of English, 1963), p. 29.

⁶⁵Anderson, op. cit.

⁶⁶Ibid.

many reading-measurement experts as the total number of Fuller Brush men and Avon ladies combined. Wouldn't you think at least one among them could turn up some simple test to measure writing?⁶⁷

Many people have attempted to devise, if not a simple, at least, a valid test for written expression. Mata Bear⁶⁸ studied 12,000 compositions of public school students in grades one through twelve in an effort to determine what were the important elements in a composition. Among the elements measured were word counts, sentence counts, length of sentences, types of sentences, and the relationship of each sentence type to the total number of sentences. Other methods of measurement which have been used are discussed by Braddock.⁶⁹

The major problem with studies like those done by Bear⁷⁰ is that they have measured the quantity of writing rather than the quality.

Myklebust has designed a test to measure both quantity and quality and in addition is to be used as a diagnostic instrument. This test is found in Development and Disorders of Written Language, Volume I. The Picture

⁶⁷George Reimer, How They Murdered the Second "R" (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, Inc., 1969), p. 299.

⁶⁸Mata Bear, "Children's Growth in the Use of Written Language", Elementary English Review, 16:312-19, December, 1939.

⁶⁹Braddock, op. cit.

⁷⁰Bear, op. cit.

Story Language Test.⁷¹ The Picture Story Language Test has three diagnostic scales: (1) productivity, (2) syntax, and (3) abstract-concrete. In a review of this test, Anastasiow criticized the research methods and data which were available to him and was particularly critical of the sampling methods and reliability data. Another reviewer, William Perkins, spoke of the test as a "landmark test of written language" and called it a "valid test of facility, with the written word".⁷² Myklebust's own statement of purpose indicates that the test was designed to fill the void and provide a usable valid instrument for measuring written language.⁷³ It seems unlikely that he has met this goal since the test was published in 1965, and this investigator has found no research in the field which uses the Picture Story Language Test as an instrument for either a diagnosis of specific difficulties or for measurement of the degree of success attained.

No one yet seems to have devised a method for measuring the quality of written expression in an objective way. The element of human judgement is always present. The problems involved with measuring judgement are discussed by

⁷¹Myklebust, op. cit.

⁷²Nicholas Anastasiow and William Perkins, "Picture Story Language Test" The Seventh Mental Measurements Yearbook ed. Oscar Buros (Highland Park, New Jersey: The Gryphon Press, 1972).

⁷³Myklebust, op. cit.

Diederich, Braddock, and Coffman.⁷⁴ The lack of objectivity among even highly trained judges is summed up by Coffman:

The accumulated evidence leads to three inescapable conclusions: (1) different raters tend to assign different grades to the same paper, (2) a single rater tends to assign different grades to the same paper on different occasions, (3) the differences tend to increase as the essay question permits greater freedom of response.⁷⁵

This lack of objectivity is illustrated further by ~~studies such as the one discussed by Diederich which showed~~ an inter-rater reliability of .31 when using readers with no specific training and .41 when the raters were trained English teachers. He also indicated that there is greater reliability when judges are asked to judge compositions by rank in general placement such as the top one-fourth of the class, middle one-half of the class and bottom one-fourth of the class.⁷⁶ The highest inter-rater reliability found in judgement of written expression was .845. This has been discussed by McColly in his study about judgement of writing ability. This high rating was achieved after carefully training the judges in the criteria of judgement and the

⁷⁴P. B. Diederich, "How to Measure Growth in Writing Ability", English Journal, April, 1966; 435-449; Braddock, op. cit.; William E. Coffman, "On the Reliability of Ratings of Essay Examinations in English", Research in the Teaching of English, 5:1 Spring, 1971, 26.

⁷⁵Ibid.

⁷⁶Diederich, op. cit.

use of a ranking method.⁷⁷

Anderson expressed the opinion that no valid rating system is possible⁷⁸ but Braddock suggested that there are means of attaining valid and reliable ratings, "despite the colleague variable".⁷⁹ He has used the terms "general impression" or "blind ranking"⁸⁰ and the "analytical system".⁸¹

Many different methods have been devised to test the various aspects of written expression. At this time there do not seem to be any objective instruments for measurement of the quality of expression, but by combining the evaluations of a number of qualified judgements it may be possible to obtain valid measurements of quality of written expression.

SUMMARY

The scarcity of literature in the field studied seems to be due to: (1) the complexity of the task of written expression and (2) the lack of valid means of measurement of written work. The complexity of the task is illustrated by

⁷⁷William M. McColly, "What Does Education Research Say About the Judging of Written Ability?" Journal of Educational Research 64:148-50, December, 1970.

⁷⁸Anderson, op. cit., p. 96.

⁷⁹Braddock, op. cit.

⁸⁰See Definition of Terms in Chapter 1.

⁸¹Braddock, op. cit.

the vast body of literature which relates to the teaching and learning of written expression, but does not deal specifically with the task of written expression.

The developmental aspects of all learning are easily illustrated in the acquisition of language skills. Each of the skills, listening, speaking, reading, and writing has a developmental heirachy of its own, yet is somewhat dependent upon the developmental stage reached in each of the other aspects of language. This is particularly true of writing which is the last of the language skills developed. In addition to this, skill in writing is also dependent upon the level of development of motor skills.

The lack of a large body of systematic and definitive research in the field of written expression has left those in curriculum planning without a base for developing teaching techniques. At best the teaching methods are developed from general principles for teaching the other language skills and at worst the curriculum for "composition" consists of lessons in grammar, usage, and syntax plus occasional assignments to write a paragraph or "story". In addition to the lack of research on which to base general teaching techniques and curriculum, there is even less help from research on how to teach toward or measure the elusive goals of quality and true communication in written expression.

Further, there is also no adequate background for specific methods of remediation when a student has a deficiency or learning disability in the area of written expression. One

must either devise teaching methods and the materials based on general principles of remediation or rely on faith that the student will somehow learn without specific instruction.

The survey of the literature gives little definitive direction to one studying the teaching or learning of the skills of written expression. The available literature contains a great deal of information about things which need ~~to be done and the difficulties encountered by those who~~ study this particular field. Although there is agreement that systematic research is needed, the evidence suggests that the body of literature will continue to grow as it has in the past, without specifics, unless some agreement can be made on what is being studied. When some accord is reached among leaders in the field, then what is known can be evaluated and further study can progress with structure and system.

CHAPTER 3

The following material pertaining to the study is presented in Chapter 3:

1. Population source and sampling procedures
2. The screening instrument
3. ~~Pre and post tests~~
4. Evaluation of data
5. Research procedures
6. Summary

POPULATION SOURCE AND SAMPLING PROCEDURES

Population Sample

The population was of intermediate grade public school students enrolled in grades four, five and six whose age range was from nine to twelve years in Antioch, California during the 1972 summer session.

The sample included a cross section of the population of Antioch since students from the total community were transported to one school. The population of Antioch is not a cross section of the population of the country or the state as a whole. The only minority group represented to any degree in this population are Mexican-Americans and this group is for the most part absorbed by the community and not noticeable as a minority. Antioch is a fast growing industrial city of slightly over thirty thousand people,

most of whom are economically at a lower-middle or middle class level.

Method of Sampling

The experimental group was taken from three language improvement classes taught by the experimenter. The control group came from similar classes taught by two other teachers.¹ The classes were made up of intermediate students whose ~~parents or teachers had indicated that they needed to~~ improve in some or all aspects of the language arts curriculum.

The choice of subjects for the study was made on the basis of scores derived from a screening test devised by the experimenter.² All students who had unsatisfactory test scores were considered to be possible subjects for the study. Thirty-seven students from the three experimental classes and forty-five students from the five control groups met the criteria for possible subjects. The experimenter had planned to have a total of at least forty subjects with twenty in each group. No immediate attempt was made to choose a sample from the group because summer school enrollment had been unpredictable in previous years. Therefore, the decision was made to choose the sample at the end of the summer school session with regular attendance as

¹The choice of teachers for the control group was based on two criteria: (1) that they had approximately the same amount of teaching experience as the experimenter and (2) that an important aspect of curriculum planning was for the teaching of the skills of written expression.

²See Appendix A.

an additional criterion for selection. At the end of the four week session twenty-one of the control students and twenty-four of the experimental group had had regular attendance.³ The final choice of a sample included twenty-one students for each of the groups studied.

THE SCREENING INSTRUMENT

Purpose of the Screening Instrument

The instrument for identification of subjects for the study was a test of written proficiency designed by the experimenter, the McDonald Test for Written Proficiency.⁴

The objectives of the test were:

1. to identify possible areas of deficiency in written expression.
2. to identify those students who are capable of doing acceptable written work.⁵
3. to identify those students who would probably not profit from the type of instruction used in the System for the Multimodal Sequential Reteaching of Skills of Written Expression by the Use of Taped Instruction (RSWE) program.⁶

The students described in item three are those who:

- (a) had problems with most or all of the test items,

³In order to make the groups even, the names of all students from the experimental group were placed in a box and three students names were drawn from the box. These students were not included in the study.

⁴No standardized or other previously used test was found which met the needs for a screening device for this study.

⁵Acceptable written expression for purposes of the study are those which meet minimal standards of clarity, completion, and compliance with directions for the task.

⁶Refer to discussion on page 2, Chapter 1.

(b) failed the items which depended entirely on a response to auditory stimuli, and (c) made multiple errors on the items which involved a copying task without auditory clues. Students with any of the characteristics listed above probably need individually prescribed programs. The taped instructions of the RSWE could possibly present a failure situation for students with any of the characteristics listed above. Therefore, they were to be screened out.

Description of the Screening Instrument

The entire test was on tape and was accompanied by a printed copy of some but not all of the test items. All test items were timed. The time interval was ample for completion but not so long as to encourage inattention.⁷ During the test period the person giving the test made observations to check on those who did not stay with the task or those who had obvious lapses in performance. These observations were considered as part of the diagnostic information.

The test includes the following tasks:⁸

⁷The time allotment was determined by working informally with small groups of intermediate students. Assignments similar to the test items were given and response times were noted. Most students were able to respond in less than the time allowed. It was noted that no responses were made after a period of time and most students became restless. The final decision of time allowances was to allow a few seconds less than the amount of time when most students began to show a lapse of attention.

⁸See Appendix A for the McDonald Test for Written Proficiency.

1. writing from dictation with no visual copy,
 2. writing with both a visual copy and specific dictation,
 3. copying without dictation but with specific instructions,
 4. writing sentences which include a phrase or group of words from the printed test form,
 5. listening to a short informational passage, then writing within a timed interval what is remembered,
-
6. writing about one of several large pictures which were visible to all of the students.

Scoring the Screening Test

The scoring of the screening instrument was done by the experimenter. Each of the ten test items had a value of two points.⁹

A score of four or less was judged to be indicative that the student should probably have an individually prescribed remedial program. Those students scoring between fifteen and twenty points were considered to be proficient enough in the skills of written expression that the RSWE program would be of little value to them. Those students with scores between five and fourteen were judged to be those most likely to profit from the reteaching program and therefore became the study group.

Validity of the Instrument

Concurrent validity had previously been established for the screening instrument by testing students in three

⁹A complete description of scoring procedures for each item can be found in Appendix A.

intermediate classrooms. Prior to the test, each teacher was asked to list the names of those students who usually did unsatisfactory written work. The names of the students, who had unsatisfactory test scores were compared to those students named by the teachers. The students named by the teachers and by the examiner were found to be identical in all three classes tested.

PRE AND POST TESTS

The pretest consisted of two stories written on consecutive days before the RSWE program began. The post-test was of similar stories written on two consecutive days immediately following the taped lessons.¹⁰ All four papers were written under the conditions discussed in the following paragraphs.

Five large colored pictures¹¹ were placed in the front of the room. All students had writing paper and a pencil. They were told that more paper was available if desired, as were additional pencils. Each writing period was timed for ten minutes at the end of which the papers were collected. The following instructions were given for

¹⁰One of the stories used for the pretest was given as part of the screening test. It was done on separate paper and analyzed but not marked.

¹¹All pictures used were 12 x 18 photographs from a teaching kit by Ruth H. Grossman and John U. Michaelis, Schools, Families, Neighborhoods, A Multimedia Readiness Program, (San Francisco: Field Educational Publications, Incorporated, 1969).

each test paper:

Choose one of the pictures in the front of the room and write a story about it. Write the best story you can in the time given. Do not worry about your spelling or your handwriting. Spell the way that seems best to you. You will write until you are told to stop. Begin your story now.

The children were instructed to write only their names on the papers for identification purposes. Specific ~~instructions were given that no dates were to be on the~~ papers, however a number of students did date their papers. All dates were carefully marked out. Each story was subsequently identified with a number. Each number was the same as the publisher's number on the picture chosen as the topic for that story. If a subject had written more than one story about the same picture, a plus or a star was added to the identifying number of one of the stories. This information was necessary for judging procedures.

EVALUATION OF THE DATA

Choice of Judges

The method chosen for evaluation of the pre-and post-tests was the blind ranking system.¹² Four judges were asked to rank the test. In order to have the highest possible inter-rater reliability,¹³ specific criteria used were:

¹²Richard Braddock, Richard Lloyd Jones, and Lowell Shoer, Research in Written Composition (Champaign, Illinois: National Council of Teachers of English, 1963), p. 12.

¹³See Chapter 2 for discussion of inter-rater reliability.

1. Judges were to be experienced teachers.
2. They would have a particular interest in children's written work.
3. They would have knowledge about learning problems of elementary school children.
4. In order to avoid the chance that a subject would be known by a judge, all judges were chosen from outside the Antioch Unified School District.

Judging the Data

The experimenter met with each judge, briefly explained the study, and gave instructions for judging and scoring the tests. The following instructions were given for judging the stories:

1. Read through the stories quickly.¹⁴
2. Rank the stories, as quickly as possible. Try not to spend time re-reading the stories several times.¹⁵
3. Judge on the content of the story. Use criteria such as communication of an idea or series of ideas, logical presentation, and other criteria which you consider important to content.
4. Attempt to use the same criteria for judging all stories.
5. Attempt to disregard poor handwriting or errors of punctuation and spelling. However, handwriting and spelling must be considered in those cases where they interfere with communication.

Each judge was given a set of cards on which to

¹⁴The instructions to go through quickly were common to all sources investigated. The remainder of the instructions were the decision of the experimenter.

¹⁵The judges found it difficult to follow the instructions about reading and ranking the stories quickly, they discussed being somewhat distracted by the inclination to stop, evaluate, and diagnose individual needs.

record the rank he or she had assigned to each story. (See Figure 1). The best story was assigned the rank of "1" and the poorest story was assigned a "4".

Identification number assigned to subject	1	Story identification numbers
	1 (78)	
Rank of	2 (45)	
Story	3 (69)	
	4 (69+)	
	A	Identification letter assigned to each judge

Figure 1. Sample Card Marked by Each Judge for Each Subject.

A random mixing of the control and experimental groups was achieved by alphabetizing the first names of the subjects. For ease in identification of each subject, the number one was assigned to the first name of the alphabetical list and number forty-two was assigned to the last name on the list.

Judging was done over a period of one week, without consultation or discussion among the judges. Each judge ranked four stories for each of the forty-two subjects, wrote the information on the cards, and returned the sets of cards and stories to the experimenter.

RESEARCH PROCEDURES

There were two groups in this study, an experimental and a control. Subjects in both groups were given pretests; the experimental group was presented with a series of taped

lessons which were designed to improve skills of written expression; posttests were administered to both groups.

The Experimental Treatment

The experimental treatment for the study was a series of ten lessons designed to improve the skills of written expression of intermediate students. The lessons were presented to students who had been diagnosed as having learning disabilities in written expression.¹⁶

All lessons were on tapes and were used with printed work sheets, writing paper and pencils. Each lesson had two parts. Each part of the lesson included pre-taped instructions for the lesson, the lesson itself, directions about how to check the lesson. All students completed Part A of each lesson. Part B was done only by those students who had difficulty with Part A. In addition to the information given in Part A, Part B discussed possible reasons the student made errors on Part A and some ways to avoid these errors. The teaching portion of Part B included different material than for Part A but the learning task was the same.

The lessons were planned to progress from simple to more difficult tasks.¹⁷ The sequence of lessons was:

1. copying from a printed copy and at the same time listening to detailed dictation during the entire lesson,

¹⁶See Appendix B, page 76.

¹⁷The sequence of difficulty was based on the experience of the investigator.

2. listening and writing from dictation with no visual stimulus,
3. copying from a printed copy within a timed interval after the material had been read to them and specific directions given,
4. writing after listening to specific instructions, then working from work sheets printed with words or groups of words which were part of the lesson,
5. listening to information given on the tape and writing what was remembered using a work sheet with clue words.¹⁸

Methods Used to Train the Experimental Group

The lessons in the RSWE program were designed to be done with a minimum of teacher assistance after an initial training program. Before the lessons began there was a brief discussion between the teacher and the students about: why they were chosen, about the experiment, a description of the lessons, and what the lessons were designed to teach. The students then took part in a brief training session.

The training included briefing the students on:

1. what materials were to be used and their location in the classroom,
2. how the material was organized,
3. how to run the tape recorder,
4. how to check their work,
5. how to put materials away,

¹⁸Lessons having to do with item 5 proved to be more difficult than any of the other lessons. The original plan devised by the experimenter included several lessons not included in the study. They were eliminated because of the short period of time available for the study. The deletion of these lessons may or may not have a bearing on the difficulty with the lesson described in item 5 above.

6. what to do if not satisfied with their performance on a lesson,
7. when to go to the teacher for a conference for additional help.

The Unplanned Zeigarnik Effect

The plan for the experimental treatment has been described above. That was not what happened. Lessons one and two proceeded as planned with nearly every subject ~~completing the lessons successfully. Lesson three did not~~ follow the planned procedure. At the end of the taped lesson, several students insisted upon doing the lesson again immediately. They did not want to do Part B of the lesson either that day or the next. They did not want to carefully correct their papers. They did want to do the same lesson again immediately because they knew they had not done it successfully the first time. The same spontaneous behavior was observed in each of the three experimental classes. Since there was no external pressure for success from the teacher-investigator or from other students, it is assumed that the described behavior was an example of the Zeigarnik effect.

The final results of the study were probably not affected by the changes in procedure. It is important to note, however, that each student who made numerous errors on a lesson did that lesson a second time, but some subjects chose to repeat Part A while some did Part B of the lesson. Some students chose to do both parts of the lessons although they had successfully completed the A sections. No effort

was made by the examiner to interfere with the subjects' choices about the second part of the lesson.

SUMMARY

The research on written expression was done during a summer school session with a sample screened from among the students in eight reading and language improvement classes. Each of the forty-two subjects wrote two stories at the beginning of the summer session and two stories at the end of the summer session. These served as pre- and posttests. The experimental group had a series of ten tape recorded lessons designed to reteach the skills of written expression. Four specially chosen judges ranked the stories of each subject. A comparison of the rankings of the control and experimental groups will be discussed in Chapter 4.

CHAPTER 4

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

The data presented in Chapter 4 was collected for the purpose of testing two hypotheses:

1. Students who have difficulty with written assignments, and have capability for learning, can be identified with a test designed for this purpose.
2. Intermediate grade students who can read but do unsatisfactory written work can be taught to be more successful by reteaching them the skills of written expression in sequence of difficulty of these skills.

In Chapter 4 the results obtained from the use of the screening instrument will be described first; next will be a discussion of the inter-rater reliability of the four judges, and last will be the results of the pre-and posttests.

RESULTS OBTAINED FROM SCREENING INSTRUMENT

In order to test Hypotheses 1, the screening test was administered to 224 students. Test results showed that eighty-two students had disabilities to the degree that remedial teaching was indicated. Teacher judgement was compared with the test results for verification of the findings. The teachers agreed that all of the students identified by the test had problems with written expression.¹

¹All three teachers named students as having disabilities who had not been identified by the test. Further investigation showed that no test results were available for these students either because they had been absent or had not put their names on the test papers.

The assumption was made that some students would not be able to do certain parts of the test because of a learning deficit in either the auditory or visual learning modality. The test results do not support this assumption since no student tested showed a complete lack of facility in any learning modality.

The findings from the screening test tend to support the hypothesis that the test will show which students have disabilities in the skills of written expression. However, the results do not provide support for the assumption that the test will screen those students who have deficiencies so serious that they need individual instruction.

INTER-RATER RELIABILITY

In order to test Hypothesis 2, the blind ranking system was used to obtain data for evaluation.²

Four judges for the study were given the four stories written by each subject. Two stories were pre-tests and two were post-tests. The stories for each student were ranked by the judges according to the quality of the story written as determined by criterion which had previously been established.³

The stories written by each subject were ranked by each judge. The judges' rankings for a subject were compared to the rankings of the three other judges. The number of judging differences was then recorded. For this phase of the

²Refer to discussion in Chapter 2 p. 7.

³Refer to Chapter 3, p. 44.

analysis, a two way analysis of variance was used. Data were obtained by tabulation and comparison of the ratings made by each of the four judges for each of the forty-two subjects. A reliability quotient was computed from the statistical data derived from the analysis of variance.⁴ The inter-rater reliability was .987. Using McColly's research as a basis for judgement, .8 was considered to be sufficiently reliable for significant results.⁵

RESULTS OF THE PRE- AND POSTTESTS

The four stories of each student were ranked by each judge as to the quality of the written expression. The stories were ranked 1, 2, 3, 4 with 1 as the rank assigned to the best story. The investigator used these results to make the following judgements. The ranks assigned by each judge were compared to the chronology of the stories as written. Stories ranked 3 and 4 were compared to the stories written as pretests and those ranked 1 and 2 were compared to those written as posttests. Each correct ranking was scored 1 with a possible score of 16.

The purpose of the study was to determine whether there would be a measurable difference between the control group and those receiving the treatment in the form of the

⁴See Appendix C, p. 88.

⁵Refer to the discussion of inter-rater reliability, pp. 32-34.

RSWE program. It was determined that a subject could receive a score of 8 by chance. Any score of 8.5 or more was considered to be greater than the probability allowed by chance.

Table 2 shows the scores for each subject.⁶ The total score was determined by the number of correct judgements as to which were pretests and which were posttests. The mean score was calculated in order to determine the relationship to chance. A mean score of 8, meaning 8 correct judgements, could be expected by chance. Any score above 8 was considered to be greater than the possibility of chance. Since the sign test was to be used for purposes of statistical comparison, all scores of 8 or less were assigned a minus score. All scores greater than 8.5 were assigned a plus score.

Table 3 shows the frequency of each score for both the treatment and control groups. It is of interest to note that no subject in the treatment group had a score of less than chance. Also worth noting is the fact that the mode for the treatment group was the highest possible score while the mode for the control group was 8, or chance.

⁶The numbers under the heading "Subject" were assigned when the names of the students from the control and treatment groups were arranged in one list according to the alphabetical order of first names.

Table 2

A Comparison Between the Experimental and Control Groups As To Total Score, Mean Score, and Relationship to Chance

Experimental Group				Control Group			
Subject	Total Score (16)	Mean Score (4)	Relationship to Chance	Subject	Total Score (16)	Mean Score (4)	Relationship to Chance
2	14	3.5	+	1	6	1.5	-
5	12	3.0	+	3	10	2.5	+
6	14	3.5	+	4	14	3.5	+
7	16	4.0	+	10	6	1.5	-
8	16	4.0	+	11	4	1.0	-
9	16	4.0	+	12	8	2.0	-
17	8	2.0	-	13	0	0.0	-
18	10	2.5	+	14	0	0.0	-
21	8	2.0	-	15	8	2.0	-
22	16	4.0	+	16	2	0.5	-
23	16	4.0	+	19	16	4.0	+
26	8	2.0	-	20	2	0.5	-
27	12	3.0	+	24	14	3.5	+
29	12	3.0	+	25	6	1.5	-
33	16	4.0	+	28	8	2.0	-
34	12	3.0	+	30	0	0.0	-
35	8	2.0	-	31	8	2.0	-
36	8	2.0	-	32	16	4.0	+
37	16	4.0	+	38	8	2.0	-
40	10	2.5	+	39	8	2.0	-
42	10	2.5	+	41	8	2.0	-

Table 3
Distribution of Scores

Experimental		Control	
Total Score	Frequency	Total Score	Frequency
16	7	16	2
14	2	14	2
12	4	12	0
10	3	10	1
8	5	8	7
6	0	6	3
4	0	4	1
2	0	2	2
0	0	0	3
Mean 12.3		Mean 7.2	
Mode 16		Mode 8	

In order to test Hypothesis 2, a chi-square test of significance was computed with the data compiled after judging the pre and post tests as shown in Table 4. Using a computation based upon one degree of freedom the chi square was 11.52. A chi-square of 6.64 is significant at the .01 level. The difference between the two groups is highly significant which tends to support Hypothesis 2.

Table 4 shows the scores to be used for statistical comparison. The treatment group had sixteen scores above chance and five at chance or below while the control group had five scores above chance and sixteen at chance or below.

Table 4
Relationship of Scores to Chance

	Experimental Group	Control Group
Chance or below	5	16
Above chance	16	5
Total	21	21

SUMMARY

The findings of the study were presented in Chapter 4. Hypothesis 1 which proposed that a screening test could identify those intermediate students who had learning disabilities in written expression was tested by a comparison with teacher judgement. The findings support the hypothesis.

Hypothesis 2 proposed that administration of a specially designed program could teach the skills of written expression to the students identified by the screening test. This was tested by comparison of pre- and posttests of the treatment group and a control group. A chi-square test showed a high degree of significant difference. The findings support Hypothesis 2.

The evaluation of data collected for the study supports the hypothesis that students with disabilities in written expression can be identified by the McDonald Test for Written Proficiency and can be taught to be more successful with the RSWE program.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The research for the study was done in Antioch, California with the sample being chosen from the students in eight reading and language improvement classes. A test devised to determine which students needed remedial instructions in the skills of written expression was administered to all of the students in these classes. On the basis of this test forty-two students were selected to be included in the study with twenty-one in each of the experimental and control groups.

Students in the experimental group were given ten taped lessons on the skills of written expression. These lessons were given in sequence of difficulty and covered skills taught in the early primary grades. Each lesson had two parts. The second section of the lesson was to be done if the students had difficulty with the first part of the lesson. The lessons were completed over a fifteen day period of time.

For purposes of measuring the degree of difference between control and treatment groups, four judges evaluated stories written as pre-and posttests. Each subject wrote stories on two consecutive days as part of the screening procedure. Immediately following the period of instruction

each subject wrote two more stories, again on consecutive days. The first two stories were used for the pre-test and the second two stories were used as a post-test.

The scoring done by each judge was compared to the judgement of the other judges. The inter-rater reliability correlation was .987 which is a high correlation for judgement of written expression. The assumption was made that significant learning had taken place if the judges could determine which were pre-and which were posttests..

The correct judgements were totaled for each subject. The total scores showed that of the control group, five scored above chance and sixteen scored at chance or below and the experimental group showed sixteen above chance and five at chance or below. A comparison was made using a variation of the sign test, with a chi-square score of 11.52 which is highly significant.

CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this study was to determine if children with problems in written expression can be taught to do better work by reteaching them the skills of written expression in sequence of difficulty. The assumption was made that a diagnosis could be made to determine which students need and can profit from this type of instruction. A screening test was devised for this purpose. The following conclusions are made from the results of the study.

1. The McDonald Test of Written Proficiency which was used as a screening test did determine which students were deficient in skills of written expression.
2. There was not enough evidence from the study to determine whether the screening test will show which students cannot profit from the RSWE program.
3. There was a highly significant difference between the achievement of the subjects who were taught with the RSWE program and those subjects who were not.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The study described was concerned with whether a specific method of teaching would improve the written expression skills of children who were having difficulty with this task. As a result of this investigation, proposals for future research which may be indicated are investigations such as:

1. the study be replicated in intermediate classrooms during the regular school year,
2. the study be replicated using the program originally planned by the experimenter which included additional lessons and would require a longer period of time,
3. investigations be made as to the use of other remedial techniques in the teaching of written expression,
4. that the RSWE program and/or other programs for remediation be tried at a variety of grade levels in an effort to determine the optimum time for this type of instruction,
5. that a study be made to determine what effect is seen on the self-esteem of students whose written expression is inferior to their oral expression and the effect, if any, on their total school achievement.

The above suggestions are a few of the possible studies in this field. The review of literature shows that there is a need for re-evaluation and systematization of previous research in the field of written expression. This must be done if future research is to be of maximum value in improvement of instruction in this neglected area of the curriculum.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

BIBLIOGRAPHY

A. BOOKS

Anastasiow, Nicholas and William H. Perkins. "Picture Story Language Test" in The Seventh Mental Measurements Yearbook, Oscar Buros, ed. Highland Park, New Jersey: The Gryphon Press, 1972.

Applegate, Mauree. Easy in English. Evanston, Illinois: Harper and Row Publishers, 1960.

Braddock, Richard, Richard Lloyd-Jones and Lowell Shoer, Research in Written Composition. Champaign, Illinois: National Council of Teachers of English, 1, 1963.

Burnes, Paul C. Improving Handwriting Instruction in Elementary Schools. Minneapolis: Burgess Publishing Company, 1962.

Dawson, Mildred and Marion Zollinger. Guiding Language Learning. Yonkers-on Hudson, New York: World Book Company, 1957.

de Hirsche, Katrina, Jeannette Jefferson Jansky, and William S. Lanford. Predicting Reading Failure: A Preliminary Study of Reading, Writing and Spelling Disabilities in Preschool Children. New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1966.

Deutsch, Morton. "Field Theory," International Encyclopedia of the Social Science, V., Macmillan Company and the Free Press.

Fernald, Grace. Remedial Techniques in Basic School Subjects. New York: McGraw Hill Book Company, 1943.

Frostig, Marianne and David Hume. The Frostig Program for the Development of Visual Perception. Chicago: Follett Publishing Company, 1964.

Gesell, Arnold and Frances Ilg. The Child From Five to Ten. New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1946.

Havighurst, Robert J. Human Development and Education. New York: Longman, Green, and Co., 1953.

Hildreth, Gertrude. Learning the Three R's, 2nd Ed. Minneapolis: Educational Publishers, Inc., 1947.

- Johnson, Doris and Helmer R. Myklebust. Learning Disabilities: Educational Principles and Practices. New York: Grune and Stratton, 1967.
- Kephart, Newell. The Slow Learner in the Classroom. Columbus, Ohio: Charles E. Merrill, 1960.
- Kirk, Samuel A. and James J. McCarthy. "Learning Disabilities," The Encyclopedia of Education, 1971. The Macmillan Company and the Free Press.
- Krug, Edward A. Curriculum Planning. New York: Harper Brothers, 1950.
-
- ~~_____.~~ Language Arts for Today's Children. New York: Appleton-Century Crafts, Inc., 1954.
- Meeker, Mary Nichol. The Structure of Intellect: It's Interpretation and Uses. Columbus, Ohio: Charles E. Merrill Publishing Company, 1969.
- Monroe, Marion and Bertie Backus. Remedial Reading. New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1937.
- Montessori, Maria. The Absorbent Mind. Claude A. Claremont, translator. New York: Delta, Dell Publishing Co., 1967.
- Montessori, Maria. Spontaneous Activity in Education. Florence Simmonds, translator. New York: Schocken Books, 1965.
- Myklebust, Helmer R. Development and Disorders of Written Language, Vol. I, Picture Story Language Test. New York: Grune and Stratton, 1965.
- Piaget, Jean. Psychology of Intelligence. Totowa, New Jersey: Littlefield, Adams and Co., 1947.
- Piaget, Jean. The Language and Thought of the Child. New York: Harcourt Brace and Company, Inc., 1926.
- Reimer, George. How They Murdered the Second "R". New York: W. W. Norton and Company, Inc., 1969.
- Robinovitch, Ralph D. and Winifred Ingram. "Neuropsychiatric Consideration in Reading Retardation" in Children With Reading Problems. ed. Gladys Natchez. New York: Basic Books, 1962.
- Shane, Harold G., Mary E. Reddin and Margaret C. Gillespie. Beginning Language Arts with Children. Columbus, Ohio: Charles E. Merrill Books, Inc., 1961.

Strang, Ruth. Diagnostic Teaching of Reading. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1964.

Strauss, Alfred A. and Laura E. Lehtinen. Psychopathology and Education of the Brain Injured Child. New York: Grune and Stratton, 1947.

Strickland, Ruth G. The Language Arts in the Elementary School, Third Edition. Lexington, Massachusetts: D. C. Heath and Company, 1969.

Stuart, Marion Fenwick. Neurophysiological Insights Into Teaching. Palo Alto: Pacific Books, 1963.

~~Tidyman, Willard F., Charlene Weddle Smith, and Marguerite Butterfield. Teaching the Language Arts. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1969.~~

Valett, Robert. Programming Learning Disabilities. Palo Alto, California: Fearon Publishers, 1969.

West, William W. "Teaching of Composition," Encyclopedia of Education. Vol II, Lee C. Deighton, ed., MacMillan Co. and the Free Press, 1971.

Winer, J. Statistical Principles in Experimental Design. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1962.

Wolfe, Don. Language Arts and Life Patterns, Grades 2 through 8. New York: The Odyssey Press, Inc., 1961.

B. PERIODICALS

Anderson, C. C. "The New Step Essay Test as a Measure of Composition Ability," Educational and Psychological Measurement, 20:95, 1960.

Ayers, Grace A. "Improving Oral Communications," Elementary English. 63:7. (November, 1971).

Bear, Mata. "Children's Growth in the Use of Written Language," Elementary English Review, 16 (December, 1939).

Coffman, William E. "On the Reliability of Ratings of Essay Examinations in English," Research in the Teaching of English, 5:1 (Spring, 1971).

Diederich, P. B. "How to Measure Growth in Writing Ability," English Journal. (April, 1966).

Klyhn, Joan. "A Tape Library for First, Second and Third Graders, Audiovisual Instruction, 13:4. (April, 1968).

Lovitt, Thomas C. "Assessment of Children with Learning Disabilities." Exceptional Children, 34:4, (December, 1967.)

MacArthur, Margaret J. "Learning Through Listening," Audiovisual Instruction, 13:1 (January, 1968).

McColly, William M. "What Does Educational Research Say About the Judging of Written Ability?", Journal of Educational Research, 64:148, (December, 1970).

Silverstone, David M. "Listening and Tape Teaching," Audiovisual Instruction, 13:8 (October, 1968).

OTHER SOURCES

Grossman, Ruth H. and John U. Michallis. Schools, Families, Neighborhoods, A Multimedia Readiness Program. San Francisco: Field Educational Publications, Incorporated, 1969.

Lalime, Arthur W. "Tape Teaching," Unpublished Monograph from Director of Instructional Materials. Norwalk, California: Norwalk Board of Education. (Mimeographed).

APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A

THE MCDONALD TEST FOR WRITTEN PROFICIENCY

Purpose of the Test

The McDonald Test for Written Proficiency is designed to be used as a supplement to teacher judgement in order to test for serious difficulties in the skills of written expression. The test may also provide clues in the diagnosis of problems with auditory and visual discrimination. This test is designed to be used in the intermediate grades with students between the ages of nine and twelve years.

Materials Needed

The taped-test

A tape recorder

Five large pictures to be used to stimulate storywriting.

For each student:

A test form

A pencil

Two sheets of writing paper

Administration of the Test

Each student should have a pencil, two pieces of paper and the test form. The large pictures should be displayed so that they are visible to every student. The volume of the recorder should be checked to make sure it can be heard without strain. The taped test will last for thirty minutes.

Students should be told:

that they are taking a test,
that they must not talk during the test,
that listening carefully is important if the test
is to be accurate,
that additional pencils and paper are available
as needed,
that the tape will not be stopped except for
grave emergencies,
the reasons the test is being given.

Any questions should be answered before the test begins since it is important that the tape not be stopped once it is started. All of the time intervals, including the total times, are considered to be important to the diagnosis. If, for some reason the tape must be stopped, it should be done at the end of a test item when the directions say to stop. If the interruption is for more than five minutes, it may be desirable to begin again on another day.

During the test period, the examiner should observe the students and make note of those who: (1) become restless, (2) seem to lose track of where they should be, (3) are distracted by external events, or (4) do not attempt some test items.

Scoring the Test

Each item on the test has a score of two possible points. Some of the scoring is necessarily subjective, particularly on items 9 and 10. These require judgement about thought

units (T units) which are clauses, sentences, or commands. Since this test is designed to aid in diagnosis of a learning disability the author is of the opinion that it is best to give no score to doubtful items.

A score of 4 or less indicates a need for further diagnosis. It probably also indicates a lack of readiness for work in the area of written expression. A score of fifteen or more indicates that the student does not need a remedial program such as the RSWE program except as noted in the section on interpretation.

<u>Item</u>	<u>Points</u>
1 a. No errors	2
b. 2 errors or less which could be attributed to not hearing the letter name or not knowing the letter symbol. Each letter is counted.	1
c. More than two errors of any type	0
2 a. All problems written correctly	1
b. Problems written in vertical notation.	1

(No importance is attached to answers for this item, so wrong answers or no answers do not detract from credit given.)

<u>Item</u>	<u>Points</u>
3 a. No copying errors	1
(If the item is incomplete but everything which has been completed is correct, credit is given.)	
b. Item completed	1
(Credit is given whether or not there are copying errors.	
Completion is the criterion for credit.)	
4. a. All problems copied without error	1
b. Vertical notation with at least two answers attempted.	1
5. a. Copied without error	1
b. Sentence completed	1
6. a. Copied without error	1
b. Sentence completed	1
(Spelling of words not copied should not be checked for errors.)	
7 a. Copied without error	1
b. Sentence completed	1
8 a. Twelve words	1
(Words need not be spelled correctly, but must be able to recognize what word is meant.)	

<u>Item</u>		<u>Points</u>
	b. fourteen words or more	1
9	a. five thought units	1
	b. six or more T units	1
10	a. six T units	1
	b. eight or more T units	1

Interpretation of the Test

Items one and two are designed to help in the diagnosis of those students who are weak in the auditory learning modality. They should be given some type of instruction other than the RSWE program which has a strong auditory emphasis.

Items three and four are designed to help diagnose those students with visual discrimination difficulties, or motor difficulties or both. If a student does poorly on these items, he probably needs visual-motor training before going on to work in written expression. Further diagnosis is suggested for a student who makes more than three transposition errors or more than two omission errors or three or more combined transpositions and omission errors on items three through seven.

Some students will have nearly everything correct except the ninth item. These students may have problems with listening, memory, organization, or ability to work independently. If they also missed item 8, the latter should be explored. Further diagnosis is warranted for these students. Some of them may profit from the RSWE program

for the practice in organization and the gradual shift from completely directed activity to largely self-directed activity.

Summary

The McDonald Test of Written Proficiency is designed as a diagnostic tool to be used as a supplement to teacher judgement and other diagnostic instruments. The test is concerned with the beginning skills of written expression as they are learned by most students during the early school years, and does not attempt to diagnose all of the skills needed for written communication.

FOCUS ON WRITTEN PROFICIENCY

Tapescript:

This is a test to see how well you listen. It is also a test to see whether you can do written work in a reasonable amount of time. Like many other tests it begins with some very easy things to do. Please do the entire test without talking. If you talk, it will interfere with the people around you. If you do not finish an answer do not worry about it. Go on when the taped directions go on. If you do not understand what to do, skip that item. If you listen carefully, you will probably understand what to do. You will not understand unless you listen carefully because the tape will not repeat or stop to answer questions.

You should have a pencil, two sheets of paper and a test paper. Do not write on the test paper. Do write your name on the top left hand corner of one of the writing papers and write the date on the top right hand corner of the paper. Do that now.

(45 seconds)

Now you are ready to begin the test. Do not worry about the other sheet of paper at this time. You may write on both sides of the paper if you need that much space. Skip one space under the one where you wrote your name. Write the numeral 1 in the next space. Put your pencil down. I will read a sentence to you. Then you will write the sentence on your paper one word at a time as I say and spell each word for you. Do not talk and do not erase. If you make a mistake draw one line through it and go on with the correct letters. Do not worry about doing your best writing. Get ready to listen carefully.

(1) The first sentence is: Very few men grow to be seven feet tall. I will say each word, then I will spell it. Write each letter as I say it: Very, capital V e r y f e w m e n g r o w t o b e s e v e n f e e t t a l l. Put a period at the end of the sentence.

(2) Skip one space after that sentence and write the numeral 2 in the next space. Put your pencil down. For number 2, some math problems will be read to you. There are two addition problems and two subtraction problems. These problems should be written in vertical notation. Vertical notation means that one numeral is written under the other numeral and the plus or minus sign is written to the left of the bottom numeral. Listen carefully: twelve (2 seconds) plus (2 seconds) seventeen. (2 seconds) Do this problem. (5 seconds)

The second problem is: twenty-eight (2 seconds) plus (2 seconds) seventeen. (2 seconds) Do this problem. (5 seconds)

The third problem is: forty-six (2 seconds) minus (2 seconds) twenty-three. (2 seconds) Do this problem. (5 seconds)

The fourth problem is: sixty-two (2 seconds) minus (2 seconds) forty-eight. (2 seconds) Do this problem. (5 seconds)

(3) Skip one space and write the numeral 3 in the next space. Put your pencil down. Look at your test sheet. Find number 3. The sentence says: No one likes to make mistakes. You will copy each word as I say it. When you have finished writing each word, check to make sure you have copied it correctly. Pick up your pencil. Write: No one likes to make mistakes. Put a period at the end of the sentence.

(5 seconds for each word except mistakes.)

7 seconds allowed for mistakes.)

(4) Skip one space. Write the numeral 4 in the next space. ~~Look at the test page. Find number 4. Copy and do the problems for number 4. When you have finished, check to make sure you have copied and done the problems correctly. Do number four now.~~

(1 minute)

(5) Stop. Skip one space. Write the numeral 5 in the next space. Put your pencil down. Find number 5 on the test sheet. The sentence says: It takes many years for a pine tree to grow to be thirty feet high. You will copy this sentence. When you have finished, check your work to make sure you have copied correctly. Begin.

(45 seconds)

(6) Stop. Skip one space. Write the numeral 6 in the next space. Look on the test sheet and find number 6. It says: The brown and white dog ran to. You will copy this group of words and add a word or group of words to make a sentence. Do it now.

(45 seconds)

(7) Stop. Skip one space. Write the numeral 7 in the next space. Put your pencil down. Find number 7 on the test sheet. It says: high up on a mountain. This group of words is not a sentence. Write a sentence with this group of words in the sentence. Begin.

(1 minute)

(8) Stop. Skip one space. Write the numeral 8. After the 8 you will write as many words as you can. You will write until you are told to stop. It does not matter what words you write, just do not write the same word more than once. Begin.

(1 minute)

(9) Stop. Skip one space. Write the numeral 9 in the next space. Put your pencil down. You will listen now to some information about horses. Then you will write down everything you can remember. You will write until you are told to stop. You will spell the best way you can and do not worry about using your best handwriting. Get ready now to listen carefully.

HORSES

Men have been using horses for work and play for thousands of years. People used horses to carry heavy loads and to pull carts, wagons and plows. Riding horseback was the fastest way to travel over land until the invention of the trains and automobiles.

Now, in our country, many people own horses for the pleasure of riding. Horses make good pets and companions because they are eager to please their masters. Most horses have good memories and are easily trained to obey commands.

Saddle horses are horses bred for riding. There are several breeds which are very popular in the United States. Among these are the American Saddle Horse, the Tennessee Walking Horse, the Morgan, the Quarter Horse, the Arabian and the Thoroughbred. Most race horses are either Throughbreds or Quarter Horses.

Horses have larger eyes than any other land animal. They see well in both the dark and the daylight. A horse can see forward with one eye and backward with the other eye. A horse's ears are short and point upward. He can turn his ears to hear sounds coming from almost any direction. Horses have sharp hearing and can often hear noises which people cannot hear. When a horse points his ears forward, it means he has seen or heard something which has frightened him.

Pick up your pencil. Write until I tell you to stop. Do not worry about spelling. Write everything you remember about horses. Begin.
(4 minutes)

(10) Stop. Put your pencil down. Take another sheet of paper. On this piece of paper you will write a story about one of the large pictures you can see in the front of the room. Look at the pictures and decide which one you will write about.

(15 seconds)

Now pick up your pencil and write the number of that picture near the top of your paper. Then write your name in the top left hand corner of the paper. Put your pencil down. You may write any kind of story you wish about the picture. Do not worry about your handwriting or spelling. Do the best you can. You will continue writing until you are told to stop. You will stop then even if you are not finished. Your directions are: Write a story about one of the pictures. Spell the best you can and do not worry if you are not sure how to spell a word correctly. Write until you are told to stop. Now pick up your pencil and begin writing. Your teacher will give you more paper or another pencil if you need them.

(8 minutes)

Stop. Put your pencil down and wait for the teacher's instructions.

APPENDIX B

Ten lessons were used in the treatment program. Each group had two sections. Each student in the experimental group did part 1 of each lesson. Part 2 was a follow-up lesson if the student experienced difficulty with the first lesson.

The tapescripts and worksheets for two lessons are included as examples. The title "Focus on Written Expression" was used on all of the material, since some title seemed to be necessary for a reference point.

FOCUS ON WRITTEN EXPRESSION

Tapescript: Lesson 3A,I

Today you will need a pencil, paper and worksheet 3 from the lesson 3 box. Get those now. (30 seconds) Write your first and last names on the left and the date on the right. (30 seconds) You will write words in vertical columns just as you did in lesson one. I will say a word; you will find it on the worksheet and then write it down. Do not erase. If you make a mistake, draw a line through it and write the word again. Do not worry about little mistakes in handwriting. Right now we are not concerned with how your paper looks. We are concerned about your getting everything on your paper.

We will begin with column I. The first word is:

<u>red</u>	(Allow five seconds after each word
<u>blue</u>	then say the next word)
<u>yellow</u>	
<u>green</u>	
<u>purple</u>	
<u>black</u>	
<u>brown</u>	
<u>white</u>	

That is the end of the first column. The directions are different for the other two columns. Look at column II. You will copy all of the words in column II. Stop when you have finished. Begin
(1 minute)

Stop. Look at column III. You will copy this column in the same way that you did column II. Copy column III now. Begin.
(45 seconds)

Stop. That is the end of Lesson 3. Check your paper carefully. Check each letter of each word. Be sure the letters are in the right order. If you have more than three errors in spelling or if you left out or did not finish three or more words, you should do lesson 3-b. Stop the tape.

FOCUS ON WRITTEN EXPRESSION

LESSON 3-A
WORKSHEET

I	II	III
1. red	1. big	1. run
2. blue	2. little	2. walk
3. yellow	3. small	3. hop
4. green	4. large	4. jump
5. purple	5. huge	5. skip
6. black	6. tiny	6. swim
7. brown	7. week	7. ride
8. white	8. enormous	8. sleep

FOCUS ON WRITTEN EXPRESSION

Tapescript: Lesson 3-B

If you are doing this lesson it probably means you had problems with the first part of the lesson. This part of the lesson 3 will be done in the same way. The first column will be read to you; the other two columns you must do within a time limit. If you had trouble with the first column, it was probably because you did not keep your place or you did not think of each letter and write the letters in sequence. You may want to use a card or piece of paper as a marker if that is a problem. If you had problems with the second and third columns your problem is probably one of using time well. This is very hard for some people to do. Here are some hints about doing it better.

Don't think about anything else but what you have to do.

Look at the word, think about the order of the letters, write it as quickly as you can, then quickly check the word to see if it is right. After you check the word, quickly move your eyes back to the worksheet. Do not look anywhere else. Then do the same thing with the next word. Make your eyes and hand work quickly even if it isn't terribly neat. Right now we are not concerned about neatness.

Now we are ready to begin the lesson. You will need a pencil, paper, and worksheet 3-b. Get those now. (30 seconds) Write your first and last names in the top left hand corner of the paper and the date in the top right hand corner. (30 seconds)

You will write words in vertical columns just as you did in lesson 1 and the first part of lesson 3. I will say a word; you will find it on the worksheet and then copy it. Do not erase. If you make a mistake, draw one line through it. Do not worry about handwriting. Just try to get everything finished.

We will begin with column I.

The first word is laugh

The second word is smile

The third word is yell

The fourth word is shout

The fifth word is talk

The sixth word is eat

The seventh word is chew

The eighth word is grin

(Allow five seconds after each word, then say the next word.)

That is the end of the first column. The directions are different for the other two columns. Look at column II. You will copy all of the words in column II. Stop when you have finished that column. Begin. (75 seconds)

Stop. Look at column III. You will copy this column in the same way you did column II. Copy column III now. Begin.

(1 minute)

Stop. That is the end of lesson 3-B. Check your paper carefully. Check each letter of each word. Be sure the letters are in the right order. If you have more than three errors in spelling or left out or did not finish 3 or more words, take your paper to the teacher. If you had 3 errors or less, put your paper in the lesson 3 box. Put the worksheet in the envelope.

Stop the Recorder.

FOCUS ON WRITTEN EXPRESSION

LESSON 3-B
WORKSHEET

I

1. laugh
2. smile
3. yell
4. shout
5. talk
6. eat
7. chew
8. grin

II

1. cat
2. dog
3. horse
4. pony
5. goat
6. fish
7. turtle
8. hamster

III

1. swim
2. dive
3. race
4. jump
5. throw
6. pass
7. catch
8. climb

FOCUS ON WRITTEN EXPRESSION

Tapescript: Lesson 6

You will need a pencil, paper, and the worksheet for Lesson 6. Get these now and write your name on the paper. Put your pencil down.
(30 seconds)

You have had some lessons during which you copied words or sentences at the exact time you were told to do so. During this lesson you will copy sentences in the same way that you did in Lesson 5, but you will also write one or two sentences of your own. Do not worry about spelling or your handwriting. At this time the correct spelling in the sentences you write by yourself is not an important part of the lesson. It is important that you copy each sentence correctly. The most important part of this lesson is for you to complete everything you are told to do. When you have completed copying each sentence, check it over to see if it is correct.

Skip one space under your name. In the next space, write the numeral 1. Put your pencil down. Look at sentence number 1. The first sentence says: Fred is a small orange cat who lives at our house. Copy that sentence now. (1 minute) Put your pencil down.

Skip one space. In the next space, write the numeral 2. Put your pencil down. Look at sentence number 2. The second sentence says: Like most cats, Fred does not like to get wet. Copy this second sentence now. (1 minute) Stop.

Skip one space. Write the numeral 3 in the next space. Put your pencil down. Look at sentence number 3. The third sentence says: Like most cats, Fred loves to eat fish. Copy the third sentence now. (1 minute) Stop.

Skip one space. Write the numeral 4 in the next space. Put your pencil down. Look at sentence number 4. The fourth sentence says: Not long ago, we put three fish in our fishpond. Copy this fourth sentence now. (1 minute) Stop.

Skip one space. Write the numeral 5 in the next space. Put your pencil down. Look at sentence number 5. The fifth sentence says: Now we know that Fred loves fish more than he hates water. Copy the fifth sentence now. (1 minute) Stop. Put your pencil down.

You should have all five sentences from the worksheet copied. Now you are going to add one or two sentences to the story. You may want to write about how we know the last sentence is true. You may want to write about Fred getting the fish. You may want to write about how you would feel if Fred were your cat. You may finish the story in any way that you wish. Do it now. (3 minutes).

Stop. Put your pencil down. Check each of the sentences you copied to see if there are mistakes. If you have more than three mistakes you will do lesson 6-b. If you did not get any sentences of your own written or if you did not finish your sentences you will do lesson 6-b. Do not put the paper for this lesson in the folder. Give your paper to the person in charge of the recorder so this paper can be given to the teacher. The teacher will tell you if you should do lesson 6-b. Remember: Check your paper carefully.

Stop the recorder.

FOCUS ON WRITTEN EXPRESSION

LESSON 6
WORKSHEET

1. Fred is a small orange cat who lives at our house.
2. Like most cats, Fred does not like to get wet.
3. Like most cats, Fred loves to eat fish.
4. Not long ago we put three fish in our fish pond.
5. ~~Now we know that Fred loves fish more than he hates water.~~

FOCUS ON WRITTEN EXPRESSION

Tapescript: Lesson 6-B

You will need a pencil, paper and the worksheet for Lesson 6-b. Get these now and write your name and date on the paper. (30 seconds) Put your pencil down.

This lesson is just like the first part of lesson 6. You will copy the sentences from the worksheet then write one or two sentences to finish the story. Look at the worksheet, now. I will read the sentences to you as if it were a story, then I will talk about how to finish the story. Look at the worksheet while I read.

Jack's dog Spot, likes to go swimming with him. Jack and Spot stand on the dock at the edge of the lake and get ready to dive into the lake. Jack says "Ready, Spot? One! Two! Three! Go!" Then they both dive into the lake. One day, Jack said all of the usual things and Spot jumped into the water, but Jack stayed on the dock.

This story could end here, but I want you to add more to the story. What did Jack do next? Did he laugh? Did he dive into the water later? What do you think Spot did? How did he feel? What will happen the next time Jack wants Spot to go swimming again? You won't answer all of these questions. You do not need to answer any of them if you think of some other way to end the story. The questions are to help you with your thinking. After you have copied the sentences we will go over these things again. Now we are ready for you to begin writing.

Pick up your pencil. Skip one line after your name. Write the numeral 1. The first sentence is: Jack's dog, Spot, likes to go swimming with him. Copy the first sentence.
(45 seconds)

Stop. Skip one space. Write the numeral 2. The second sentence is: Jack and Spot stand on the dock at the edge of the lake and get ready to dive into the lake. Copy the second sentence.
(1 minute)

Stop. Skip one space. Write the numeral 3 in the next space. The third sentence is: Jack says, "Ready, Spot? One! Two! Three! Go!" Copy that sentence. Remember all the punctuation marks.
(45 seconds)

Stop. Skip one space. Write the numeral 4 in the next space. The fourth sentence is: Then they both dive into the lake. Copy the fourth sentence.
(45 seconds)

Stop. Skip one space. Write the numeral 5 in the next space. The fifth sentence is: One day, Jack said all of the usual things and Spot jumped into the water but Jack stayed on the dock.
(90 seconds)

Now you will finish the story. You may want to write about what Jack did or how he felt or maybe you will want to write about what Spot did or how he felt. Begin writing.
(3 minutes)

Stop. Put your pencil down. Check each of the sentences you copied to see if you have made mistakes. If you had trouble getting this lesson finished or done correctly, talk to your teacher about it.

Stop the recorder.

FOCUS ON WRITTEN EXPRESSION

LESSON 6-B
WORKSHEET

1. Jack's dog, Spot, likes to go swimming with him.
2. Jack and Spot stand on the dock at the edge of the lake and get ready to dive into the lake.
3. Jack says, "Ready, Spot? One! Two! Three! Go!"
4. Then they both dive into the lake.
5. One day, Jack said all of the usual things and Spot jumped into the water but Jack stayed on the dock.

APPENDIX C

Table 5

Sample of Working Tables for Comparison
of Ratings by Judges

Judges					Total
Story Number	A	B	C	D	
1	1	2	2	2	7
2	1	1	1	1	4
3	2	1	1	1	5
4	2	1	1	1	5
5	1	1	1	1	4
6	1	1	1	1	4
7	2	2	2	1	7
8	2	2	2	2	8
.
.
.
Total 252	252	252	252	252	1,008

An arbitrary assignment of number 1 was made for all pretests and number 2 for all posttests..

Stories were numbered according to the sequence written by each subject. The first four stories were written in that order by Subject 1. Stories 5 through 8 were written in that sequence by Subject 2. The remainder were numbered accordingly with Story number 168 being the final story written by Subject 42.

Table 6

Analysis of Variance to Determine Inter-Rater
Reliability of Judges

Source of Variation	SS	df	MS
Between stories	120.5	167	.72
Within stories	47.5	504	.009
Between judges	0	3	
Residual	47.5	507	
Total	168.0	671	

Table 7

Estimate of Reliability of Ratings Made
on Each Story

$$r = 1 - \frac{\text{MS within stories}}{\text{MS between stories}} = 1 - \frac{.009}{.72} = .987$$