

When It's One Down and 1,249 Themes to Go, It's Time to Establish a Realistic Teaching Load for English Teachers

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WHEN IT'S ONE DOWN AND 1,249 THEMES TO GO, IT'S TIME TO ESTABLISH A REALISTIC TEACHING LOAD FOR ENGLISH TEACHERS*

WHEN it's one down and 1,249 themes to go, it's time to establish a realistic teaching load for community college instructors of English. Not one of us here would argue with that statement. But community college deans—those sentinels of the purse strings—would, can, and do.

My interest in the topic of class size and teaching effectiveness originated at the 1977 SAMLA convention when Don Tighe made an impassioned plea for help. His situation was one most of us teaching in community colleges share—large classes and unbearably high teaching/student loads. Because his state of Florida requires that each community college faculty member carry a fifteen-hour course load (or five classes, all of which may be composition sections) and because his school permits a ceiling of twenty-eight students per class, an English instructor may teach as many as 140 composition students a week—a number far above the student/class load recommended by ADE, NCTE, and SAMLA. ADE recommends that a college English instructor teach no more than three sections of composition per semester, that each section be limited to twenty-five students, and that each remedial section be further limited to twenty students. The NCTE "Guidelines" specifies that twelve hours be the maximum class load for any college English teacher, that twenty-five students be the maximum enrollment for any writing class (with fifteen or twenty being the ideal), and that fifteen students be the maximum for any remedial sections. SAMLA's Durham Resolution is even more encouraging—or discouraging, as the case may be. It recommends that a college English instructor teach no more than fifty composition students per week and that these fifty be considered the full teaching load. "Sensible statements made by influential organizations," we say. "Unrealistic demands made by self-interest groups," say administrators. And they ask, "Where is the hard-core (i.e., empirical, experimental, analytical, replicable, systematic, operational, protracted, scientific) evidence to support your claim that fewer students, lighter loads, and smaller classes produce better results? What is the probability that reduced class size will result in better writing?" Since, unfortunately for us, ADE, NCTE, and SAMLA all failed to include such hard-core ammunition in their statements, Tighe called on his audience to supply the necessary supportive evidence.¹

Bertie E. Fearing

Sparked by Tighe's call to arms, I set out early last year with grim determination to track down what, if anything, empirical research had to say about class loads and teaching effectiveness. I say with "grim" determination because, like so many of you, I find scientific research tedious. First, relevant studies are difficult to locate (nary a word in *PMLA*); once located, they are difficult to read and interpret (strange terms like "analysis of covariance," "multiple regression," and "kurtosis" are strategically placed to bemuse the readers); and once read and interpreted, they are often contradictory (one study finds x is true; another draws an antithetical conclusion).

Yet, just as we English teachers—by disposition and training—are largely oblivious and indifferent to empirical research, our administrators—being of different temperament and training—are wedded to the scientific-research orthodoxy. To understand their strange propensity, we must first consider their position as administrators and recognize the integral role research plays in that position.

According to J. William Asher, one of the major responsibilities of administrators is to make decisions, and administrators prefer to base these decisions, not so much on opinion, as on quantifiable data. As decision makers, administrators think in terms of cause-and-effect relationships. The effect they seek is the fulfillment of their schools' educational objectives, and administrators know that there are various ways to achieve that effect *and* that some means are less costly than others.² A primary responsibility of administrators, then, is to consider each possibility and to select the one that achieves the educational objective with the most effective balance of—dare I say?—cost and effect. Thus, administrators will certainly decide on large classes over small classes if both produce about the same

* A paper presented at the Convention of the South Atlantic Modern Language Association in Atlanta, Georgia, 10 November 1978. The author is Coeditor of *Teaching English in the Two-Year College and Co-ordinator of the Graduate Program for Two-Year College English Teachers at East Carolina University.*

effect. And the burden of proof is on those of us who advocate small classes, especially when economic realities pressure administrators into increasing class size and teaching loads.

Before reporting the findings of research, I'd like to pass on a word of caution from NCTE: "Entry into a quest for reduced workload . . . is in essence a political or quasi-political action." Steps and strategies must be carefully worked out before one approaches the battle line.³ What follows, then, is a suggested campaign, replete with counterattacks you may well encounter in your attempt to reduce class size and student-teacher ratio.

Before confronting the dean, you would be wise to conduct departmental and, possibly, interdepartmental meetings to define your specific goal. Once you have consulted other departments about the writing skills they want their students to have and once you have their support, then your department can decide on the number of composition students each instructor can effectively teach in a week. This decision will be based on the length and number of papers that should be assigned and on the time it takes to evaluate these papers. If your teachers hold individual student conferences and check revised papers, be sure to include the time spent in these activities, too.

To determine the average number of hours spent per week on all these activities, you can conduct an experiment in your department similar to the one done by William Dusel, or you can use his study. Dusel asked 430 experienced English teachers to record the time it took them, working as rapidly as possible, to mark a 250-word theme just as they would their own students' papers. Collating the responses, Dusel found that the average time required to respond carefully to a simple 250-word theme was 8.6 minutes.⁴ At Tighe's school, then, each teacher would need about twenty hours a week to grade papers, plus an additional 6.5 hours each to check revisions. (Note: I did not include time for student conferences.)

In another useful study college teachers reported that, to learn to write well, a composition student should turn in at least 630 words a week (the ideal being 680 words).⁵ These teachers also estimated that the average number of words a teacher can read "thoroughly and carefully" in an hour is 2,200 (2,600 for a "forced and inefficient" reading) and that the duration of a teacher's maximum efficiency when grading is limited to two hours a day. With Tighe's 140 students writing 630 words a week, each teacher would spend 39.7 hours a week simply grading themes.

Now, for hypothetical purposes, let's say your department decides that 500 words is the appropriate amount of writing for each student. Then each

teacher, reading 2,200 words an hour for ten hours a week, can successfully handle a grand total of thirty-six students. If teachers work on weekends—and who doesn't nowadays?—each can handle an additional twelve students. Even if your department agrees on the pressured and inefficient reading rate of 2,600 words an hour, each instructor can handle only sixty-two students, tops! And we have not even accounted for teacher time spent in student conferences, class preparation, curriculum development, departmental meetings, committee assignments, or professional improvement.

Armed with high-powered figures like these, you're quite apt to go off half-cocked and bombard the dean with your new, lethal weapon, statistics. Well don't, because not all the statistics are on your side; some are on the dean's.

Countermissile 1: Research fails to show that students learn better in small classes than in large classes. This statement is true, on the surface, but only because scientific investigation, being parsimonious, is significantly better at telling us what is not so than it is at telling us what is so. That is, it is far easier to show that there is little or no significant difference in the achievement of small classes over large classes than it is to show that small classes achieve significantly higher gains than do large classes. If you were an administrator looking for justification to increase class size, which way would you set up your hypothesis? Many other faults exist in the typical class-size investigations done to date. Howard E. Bosley points out that, on the one hand, in far too many studies the size differential of classes was too small to show any significant effect. On the other hand, truly large classes were often taught by master teachers, who admittedly met the challenge of teaching large classes with enthusiasm and a determination to succeed. Also, many of these class-size experiments included only "content" courses, such as history and geography, which are traditionally taught by the lecture method.⁶ And finally, even when experiments were run on composition courses, the researchers relied too heavily on standardized objective texts as measuring instruments, even though the validity of objective tests as indicators of writing ability is tenuous.

Countermissile 2: Research fails to show that frequency of writing in and of itself has a measurable effect in improving writing skills. The evidence is again convincing unless we note that the students in several of these studies wrote the entire term without instruction in writing, evaluation of writing, or guided revision. Regarding the validity and usefulness of research, one can hardly argue with Jean Hagstrum's statement that "reason and experience—those most indispensable tools of intellectual pro-

gress in any field—are insulted and ultimately weakened when we run to the laboratory for proof of the obvious.”⁷

Countermissile 3: Research shows that theme evaluation and revision have a negligible effect on improving writing. Again, we must watch the way in which the hypothesis of a study is stated. Does it test whether teacher evaluation and student revision have a negligible effect on student writing or whether they have a significant effect? Either way, we certainly know that lack of instruction, lack of writing practice, lack of evaluation, and lack of revision will definitely have no effect. Besides, the outlook is not all that bad. There is ample evidence that composition students can and do improve when frequent writing assignments are accompanied by instruction, close evaluation, and careful revision. My point is simply that, before we confront our administrators, we must have full command of the facts. We must have researched the evidence on their side as carefully as we have the evidence on ours.

Over a decade ago, James Squire questioned whether it was too much to ask English teachers to know the research in education and psychology. One outspoken critic responded with a resounding “Yes. It is too much. Research is long and life is short. We need guides into the relevant studies, and we need rigorously analytical bibliographies” (Hagstrum, p. 53). So advised, I have prepared for you a modestly annotated bibliography as a guide to the material available on class size and teaching loads. When you study the list, you will see that roughly half the research studies provide us enough ammunition to cause a *probable* (i.e., positive, correlated, significant) doubt that large classes and high student-teacher ratios will ever produce the level of decent writing that the public and our conscience demand.

NOTES

¹ Don Tighe’s call for research appeared in “Readers Write,” *Teaching English in the Two-Year College*, 4 (Spring 1978), 169–70.

² J. William Asher, *Educational Research and Evaluation Methods* (Boston: Little, 1976), pp. 10–11.

³ Henry B. Maloney, chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee on English Teacher Workload in Secondary Schools, *Workload for English Teachers: Policy and Procedure* (Champaign, Ill.: NCTE, 1973), p. 35.

⁴ William Dusel, “Determining an Efficient Teaching Load in English,” *Illinois English Bulletin*, 43 (Oct. 1955), 1–19.

⁵ Edwin M. Hopkins, comp., *The Labor and Cost of the Teaching of English in Colleges and Secondary Schools with Especial Reference to English Composition*, 16th ed. (Chicago: NCTE, 1923).

⁶ Howard E. Bosley, “Class Size and Faculty-Student Ratios in American Colleges,” *Educational Record*, 43 (April 1962), 153.

⁷ Jean H. Hagstrum, “Research in Written Composition,” *College English*, 26 (Oct. 1964), 54.

BASIC BIBLIOGRAPHY ON RESEARCH IN ENGLISH

General Works on Research Methods

Asher, J. William. *Educational Research and Evaluation Methods*. Boston: Little, 1976. A good overview of the nature of research. Gives a brief introduction to statistical analysis and measurement methods, tips on how to read research literature, and ways to spot common errors in research.

Campbell, Donald T., and Julian C. Stanley. *Experimental and Quasi-Experimental Designs for Research*. Chicago: Rand McNally, 1963. Discusses the basic principles of research design, such as randomization, internal and external validity, interactions, and generalizations. Also discusses types of research studies: the descriptive study, the case study, the historical study, and the survey.

Popham, W. James. *Educational Statistics: Use and Interpretation*. New York: Harper, 1967. Explains terms one encounters in research literature in simple, easy-to-understand language. No longer be terrified of a chi-square, the F test, or kurtosis.

Basic Works on Research in English

Blount, Nathan S. “Research on Teaching Literature, Language, and Composition.” In *Second Handbook of Research on Teaching*. Ed. Robert M. W. Travers. Chicago: Rand McNally, 1973, pp. 1073–97. Provides a comprehensive summary of research studies conducted on the teaching of English, complete with bibliography.

Braddock, Richard. “English Composition.” In *Encyclopedia of Educational Research*. Ed. Robert L. Ebel. 4th ed. New York: Macmillan, 1969, pp. 448–61. Provides a summary of research on teaching load, marking papers, writing frequency, and difficulties in conducting research on composition. Has an extensive bibliography.

——— et al. *Research in Written Composition*. Urbana, Ill.: NCTE, 1963. An indispensable source of information on research in composition, this book presents the description and analysis of five important research studies.

Journals Containing Reviews of Research

College Composition and Communication (available from NCTE, 1111 Kenyon Road, Urbana, IL 61801)

English Journal (available from NCTE)

Reading Research Quarterly (available from the Inter-

national Reading Association, 6 Tyre Ave., Newark, DE 19711)

Research in the Teaching of English (available from NCTE)

Research Monograph Series (available from NCTE)

Studies on the Effect of Class Size on Student Achievement

Although the research on class size and student achievement is plentiful, many studies refute the contention that student achievement is inversely related to class size. Three studies find students learn better in large classes:

Huddleston, Earl. *Class Size at the College Level*. Minneapolis: Univ. of Minneapolis Press, 1928. In one of the most ambitious studies of the correlation of class size and student achievement, Huddleston paired college students on the basis of IQ and grades and assigned one of each pair to a large class and one to a small class. The study involved over 6,000 students, of which 1,288 matched pairs were divided among 59 large and 59 small classes. On exams (most were objective) the differences in achievement between the large and the small groups were not statistically significant. But in 46 of the 59 pairs of classes, the students in the large classes did slightly (but not significantly) better than did those in the small classes.

Eastburn, Lacey Arnold. "The Relative Efficiency of Instruction in Large and Small Classes on Three Ability Levels." *Journal of Experimental Education*, 5 (1936), 17–22. On each of three ability levels, one large English class of 60 students was paired with two small English classes of 30. (The same was done with history.) Based on objective tests, the findings indicated (1) that upper-ability-level students performed slightly (not significantly) better in the small classes, (2) that middle-ability-level students performed significantly better in the large classes, and (3) that lower-ability-level students did slightly better in the large classes.

Silver, A. B. *English Department Large-Small Class Study: English 50–60 Revised*. Bakersfield, Calif.: Bakersfield Junior Coll., 1970. ERIC ED 041586. Students were assigned either to large English classes of 100 or to small English classes of 35. Gains for the large-group students were significantly better than were those for the small-group students in English 50. Mean and median score gains for the large-group and regular English 60 students also differed significantly. These results justified the continuation of large-group classes at Bakersfield Junior College. (Note that the measuring instrument was a standardized test, not a writing sample.)

But six studies find that students learn better in small classes or in classes taught by teachers with a small student load:

O'Shaughnessy, Louis. "The Size of College Classes and the Percentage of Failures." *School and Society*, 14 Sept. 1929, p. 374. O'Shaughnessy studied the

relation between the size of classes and the percentage of failures at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and found a positive correlation between the size of classes and the percentage of students failing the courses.

Anderson, Kenneth E. "The Relationship between Teacher Load and Student Achievement." *School Science and Mathematics*, 50 (1950), 468–70. Anderson found that high school chemistry students achieved significantly higher grades on their final exams when taught by teachers whose student loads were in the lowest quartile than did students who were taught by teachers whose loads were in the highest quartile.

Furno, Orlando F., and George J. Collins. *Class Size and Pupil Learning*. Baltimore: Baltimore City Public Schools, 1967. ERIC ED 025003. This five-year study examined the relationship between class size and the achievement of elementary students and concluded that students in small classes (under 25) made significantly greater achievement gains in reading and arithmetic than did students in larger classes.

Woodson, Marshall S. *Effect of Class Size as Measured by an Achievement Test Criterion*. IAR Research Bulletin, 8. New York: Columbia Univ., 1968. ERIC ED 021320. To determine whether or not there was a relationship between class size and student achievement, Woodson compared the achievement-test scores of students enrolled in classes of various sizes in 95 school systems. Evidence led to the conclusion that a small, but positive, inverse relationship exists between class size and academic achievement.

Smith, Doris Iona. "Effects of Class Size and Individualization on the Writing of High School Juniors." Diss. Florida State 1974. To compare the effects of class size and individualized instruction on the writing of high school juniors, the researcher studied 12 classes: a control group of six large classes, a small-class group of three classes, and an experimental group of three classes. The large- and small-class groups received traditional instruction; the experimental group received individualized instruction. (A pretest divided the total sample into low, average, and high achievement levels.) The posttest writing sample showed (1) significantly greater gains for the small-class group over those for the large-class group, (2) even greater gains for the individualized-instruction group, and (3) gains greater for low- and average-achievement-level students than for high-achievement-level students.

Gurley, Jay. "The Comparative Effects of Using Alternative Modes of Instruction in Developmental Writing on the Achievement of Selected Groups of College Students." Diss. East Texas State 1975. Gurley concluded from his study that developmental students enrolled in small-group instruction classes improved their writing skills more than did students enrolled in independent study or in traditional classes.

Six studies refute the hypothesis that students learn better in small classes than in large ones:

Smith, Dora V. *Class Size in High School English: Methods and Results*. Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 1931. This is one study you won't want to know about, but your administrators will. Dora Smith assigned bright ninth-grade students to a small class of 21 and to a large class of 51. (In the large class 21 students were matched in ability, achievement, etc., with the students in the small class; the remaining 30 students simply filled up the large class.) Smith taught both classes for a year, during which time the students studied grammar and wrote some 30 essays each. In the following results, only the matched students in the large class were compared with the students in the small class. Five objective tests given during the year revealed that the large class was slightly (though not significantly) superior to the small one in capitalization and more clearly (but still not significantly) so in spelling. Both classes had practically the same punctuation scores. Five additional tests in grammar revealed no significant differences between the two classes, and the posttest essays showed little difference in writing proficiency. Since it did not take her quite 2½ times as long to grade 50 themes as to grade 20, Smith estimated that the school could save 28% of its teaching expense if it assigned teachers three classes of 50 students each and clerical assistance rather than five classes of 20 students each and no clerical assistance. She questioned, however, "how many classes of 50 a teacher may teach in one day, without harm to herself or to her pupils."

Cammarosano, Joseph R., and Frank A. Santopolo. "Teaching Efficiency and Class Size." *School and Society*, 27 Sept. 1958, pp. 338–41. Pairing above-average students, the researchers assigned one of each pair to a large section of 60 students and one to a regular section of 30, in three social science courses at Fordham College. Based on course quizzes, written assignments, and exams (as summarized by semester averages), the findings revealed that students in the small sections did not score significantly greater gains than did students in the large sections.

Siegel, Laurence, F. G. Macomber, and James F. Adams. "The Effectiveness of Large Group Instruction at the University Level." *Harvard Educational Review*, 29 (1959), 216–26. Students at Miami University of Ohio were assigned to large lecture sections and to regular sections of various courses, including freshman composition. Although the differences between the two groups were not statistically significant on the objective portions of the various final exams, in English the large group scored significantly higher than did the small group on the posttest essay in one area—"content." The groups, however, did not differ significantly on "mechanics," "organization," or "sentences and diction." (Note that the students in both groups

wrote only a pre- and a posttest theme. No themes were written during the course.)

Johnson, Robert H., and M. Delbert Lobb. "Jefferson County, Colorado, Completes Three-Year Study of Staffing, Changing, Class Size, Programming and Scheduling." *Bulletin of the National Association of Secondary School Principals*, 45 (Jan. 1961), 57–59. To determine the effect of class size on the achievement of learners, the study randomly assigned 1,075 students in eight high schools to classes of 20, 30, 60, and 70 students in various courses, including English III. As measured by a standardized test, the achievement of students in English III did not differ significantly according to the size of their classes.

Hooper, Harold H., and Helen Keller. *Writing Skills—Are Large Classes Conducive to Effective Learning?* Ft. Pierce, Fla.: Indian River Junior Coll., 1966. ERIC ED 012583. By a stratified random sampling, 274 students were assigned to large English classes of 56 students or to regular English classes of 30 students. There was no significant difference between the performance of the two groups on posttest writing samples.

Johnson, Mauritz, and Eldon Scriven. "Class Size and Achievement Gains in Seventh- and Eighth-Grade English and Mathematics." *The School Review*, 75 (1967), 300–10. ERIC ED 016653. The researchers classified 130 English and 135 mathematics classes according to size and homogeneity. The large classes had more than 34 students; the small, fewer than 24 students. A study of the achievement gains indicated insignificant and inconsistent differences in respect to class size and class variability.

Studies of the Effect of Writing Frequency on Improved Writing Performance

The studies are pretty well evenly divided on the issue of whether or not increased writing frequency produces increased writing skills:

Lokke, Virgil L., and George S. Wykoff. "'Double Writing' in Freshman Composition—An Experiment." *School and Society*, 18 Dec. 1948, pp. 437–38. When a group of Purdue freshmen wrote 32 to 34 themes one semester, there were 66% fewer failures in the course than in the regular course that required only 20 themes. However, 40% of the students attained their level of achievement after writing only 14 to 16 themes (the equivalent of a normal semester's work). Conversely, 60% improved their final grades (by one or two levels) through the additional writing practice. That is, 60% were failing at midterm; only 20% were failing at the end of the course.

Maize, Ray C. "A Study of Two Methods of Teaching Freshman Composition to Retarded College Freshmen." Diss. Purdue 1952. When a group of college

- freshmen wrote twice the normal number of themes (28 instead of 14), they demonstrated statistically significant gains in writing skills over the group that wrote the traditional number of themes.
- Buxton, Earl W. "An Experiment to Test the Effects of Writing Frequency and Guided Practice upon Students' Skill in Written Expression." Diss. Stanford 1958. This study showed that college freshmen who wrote a theme a week improved more than freshmen who did no writing and that those who received rigorous marking and who revised themes did better than those who received little guidance and did not revise.
- McQueen, Robert A., Keith Murray, and Frederika Evans. "Relationship between Writing Required in High School and English Proficiency in College." *Journal of Experimental Education*, 31 (1963), 419-23. When students' scores on a college English proficiency test were compared with the amount of writing required of the students in high school, the relationship between proficiency in college writing skills and the quantity of writing done in high school was statistically significant.
- Burton, Dwight L., and Lois V. Arnold. *Effects of Frequency of Writing and Intensity of Teacher Evaluation upon High School Students' Performance in Written Composition*. USOE Cooperative Research Project No. 1523. Tallahassee: Florida State Univ., 1963. ERIC ED 003281. In this year-long study two experimental groups wrote weekly themes that were evaluated either intensively or moderately, and two control groups wrote infrequently (every six weeks). At the end of the year, no significant differences in the writing progress of these groups were found. Thus, no significant differences can be said to be associated with frequency of writing or intensity of evaluation.
- McColly, William, and Robert Remstad. *Comparative Effectiveness of Composition Skills Learning Activities in the Secondary School*. USOE Cooperative Research Project No. 1528. Madison: Univ. of Wisconsin, 1963. ERIC ED 003279. In one part of this study, an experimental group of high school students wrote four times as many themes as did the control group. The experimental group did not improve significantly over the control group, indicating that additional writing alone did not increase writing skills.
- Sutton, Joseph T., and Eliot D. Allen. *The Effect of Practice and Evaluation in Written Composition*. USOE Cooperative Research Project No. 1993. De Land, Fla.: Stetson Univ., 1964. ERIC ED 001274. This study supports Burton and Arnold's findings that neither writing practice nor intensive evaluation can be said to influence writing skills. Two groups of college freshmen wrote weekly themes that were evaluated rigorously. Two other groups wrote only pre- and posttest themes (for evaluative purposes) and studied literature. There were no significant differences in writing skills at the end of the ten-week period.
- Studies on the Effect of Feedback on Writing Performance*
- Instructor Evaluation*
- Two major studies indicate that conventional teacher evaluation of themes has a positive effect on student writing:
- Buxton, Earl. "An Experiment to Test the Effects of Writing Frequency and Guided Practice upon Students' Skill in Written Expression." Diss. Stanford 1958. This convincing study indicates that rigorous evaluation of themes and guided revision can improve writing skills. (Buxton did not report whether or not that improvement was statistically significant.)
- McColly, William, and Robert Remstad. *Comparative Effectiveness of Composition Skills Learning Activities in the Secondary School*. USOE Cooperative Research Project No. 1528. Madison: Univ. of Wisconsin, 1963. ERIC ED 003279. This study suggests that conventional teacher correction of themes, along with writing instruction, can produce increased writing ability.
- Four studies find positive effects of teacher comments on students' writing and/or attitudes:
- Seidman, E. "Marking Students' Composition: Implications of Achievement Motivation Theory." Diss. Stanford 1970. This study reports that informative, positive comments produced better motivation than did negative, judgmental comments or no feedback. (Seidman did not report whether or not the quality of writing improved.)
- Schroeder, T. S. "The Effects of Positive and Corrective Written Teacher Feedback on Selected Writing Behaviors of Fourth Grade Children." Diss. Univ. of Kansas 1973. This study found that both positive and corrective comments produced positive gains in children's writing. (Schroeder did not report whether or not the differences were significant.)
- Wolter, Daniel R. "Effect of Feedback on Performance of a Creative Writing Task." Diss. Univ. of Michigan 1975. Comparing the effects of positive feedback, corrective feedback, and no feedback, Wolter found that positive and corrective feedback produced significant gains in writing.
- Marzano, Robert J., and Sandra Arthur. *Teacher Comments on Student Essays: It Doesn't Matter What You Say*. ERIC ED 147864. Comments to indicate faults, comments to correct errors, and comments to foster thinking—all produced about the same improvement in writing. (The authors did not report whether or not the improvements were statistically significant.)
- Two studies find negligible effects of intensive evaluation on students' writing:
- Burton, Dwight L., and Lois V. Arnold. *Effects of Frequency of Writing and Intensity of Teacher Evaluation upon High School Students' Performance in*

Written Composition. USOE Cooperative Research Project No. 1523. Tallahassee: Florida State Univ., 1963. ERIC ED 003281. This study indicates that intensive evaluation is no more effective than moderate evaluation in improving the quality of written composition.

Sutton, Joseph T., and Eliot D. Allen. *The Effect of Practice and Evaluation in Written Composition*. USOE Cooperative Research Project No. 1993. 1964. ERIC ED 001274. This study supports Burton and Arnold's findings that intensive evaluation has little or no effect on writing performance.

Four studies report that positive feedback, while it results in more positive attitudes toward writing than does negative feedback, has no significant effect on writing improvement:

Clark, G. A. *Interpreting the Pencil Scrawl: A Problem in Teacher Theme Evaluation*. ERIC ED 039241.

Bata, E. J. "A Study of the Relative Effectiveness of Marking Techniques on Junior College Freshmen English Composition." Diss. Univ. of Maryland 1972.

Kelly, M. E. "Effects of Two Types of Teacher Response to Essays upon Twelfth Grade Students' Growth in Writing Performance." Diss. Michigan State 1973.

Stevens, A. E. "The Effects of Positive and Negative Evaluation on the Written Composition of Low Performing High School Students." Diss. Stanford 1973.

Two studies on the use of teachers' comments in re-writing themes find no significant differences between groups who revise papers and those who do not:

Fellows, John Ernest. *The Influence of Theme Reading and Theme Correction on Eliminating Technical Errors in the Written Compositions of Ninth Grade Pupils*. Univ. of Iowa Studies in Education, 7. Iowa City: Univ. of Iowa, 1932.

Effros, Charlotte. *An Experimental Study of the Effects of Guided Revision and Delayed Grades on Writing Proficiency of College Freshmen*. ERIC ED 079764.

Student Conferences

Of three studies conducted to determine whether or not student-teacher conferences result in improved writing skills, two report positive findings:

McColly, William, and Robert Remstad. *Comparative Effectiveness of Composition Skills Learning Ac-*

tivities in the Secondary Schools. USOE Cooperative Research Project No. 1528. Madison: Univ. of Wisconsin, 1963. ERIC ED 003279. The researchers found that immediate feedback presented in a tutoring situation was not effective.

Farmer, William Lewis. "Individualized Evaluation as a Method of Instruction to Improve Writing Ability in Freshman College Composition." Diss. Southern Illinois Univ. 1976. This study reports that students who participated in conferences improved their writing skills significantly over students who received only traditional written evaluations.

Fritts, Mildred Frances Holland. "The Effects of Individual Teacher Conferences on the Writing Achievement and Self Concept of Developmental Junior College Students." Diss. Mississippi State 1976. Fritts found significant differences in the writing achievement of students who engaged in conferences. (She did not report the writing achievement gains of students who received traditional written teacher evaluations.)

Peer Evaluation

Two studies find no significant difference in the effects of peer evaluation and teacher evaluation on writing improvement:

Sutton, Joseph T., and Eliot D. Allen. *The Effect of Practice and Evaluation in Written Composition*. USOE Cooperative Research Project No. 1993. 1964. ERIC ED 001274.

Pierson, H. *Teaching Writing*. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1972.

Two studies find evidence to support peer evaluation:

Ford, B. W. "The Effects of Peer Editing/Grading on the Grammar-Usage and Theme Composition Ability of College Freshmen." Diss. Univ. of Oklahoma 1973. Students in the peer-evaluation group made greater gains on a grammar-usage test than did those in the teacher-evaluation group. (The difference was not statistically significant, however.)

Lagana, J. R. "The Development, Implementation, and Evaluation of a Model for Teaching Composition Which Utilizes Individualized Learning and Peer Group." Diss. Univ. of Michigan 1974. Peer-group evaluation produced greater gains in student writing performance than did teacher evaluation. (Lagana did not report the significance of the differences.)

d) down. 24 It is still uncertain whether or not the place __. The decision must be made before May. 2 It won't take us long/much time to finish the project. 3 I think I would be working for AKK now, if they had paid more/ I hadn't rejected their offer a few years ago. 4 I suggested Mary (should) change the way she treated her staff. English Placement Test C1/C2. 24 We can't have worked for FTD at the same time. 25 Once Steven finishes this project, he will have much more time. Part II. f) It's going to rain. g) She's a very sensitive girl. h) Now just relax and remember what I told you. Let's go down to the river. It's a really nice ..spot. for a picnic. I'm afraid I'm going to be late. I'm having a ...spot. of bother with. It's only a. of time before the city falls to the rebels. Dealing with problems like that is all just a. of being firm. Although I was officially a guest, it 1 was made clear to me from the start that there was to be no room for. passengers, and that I'd have to (4) my weight. For the first few nights, none us was able to sleep for more than a couple of. hours at a (5) before being rudely awoken by an aggressive command. Then we'd do physically exhausting work in total darkness.