THE DEVELOPMENT OF A QUESTIONNAIRE
TO IDENTIFY
ATTITUDES OF SELECTED NATIVE STUDENTS
TO WRITING ENGLISH

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by
Amy Hamilton
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan
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Head of the Department of Curriculum Studies
University of Saskatchewan
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan
ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to describe and analyse the development and pilot test of a questionnaire designed to discover the concepts of and attitudes to writing English of native high school students perceived by their teachers as having difficulties writing English.

The researcher felt that a knowledge of such attitudes and concepts could be beneficial to school board administrators, teachers, and other educators involved in the creation of writing programs for this group of students. She also felt that the study would provide useful information about questionnaire construction for graduate students involved in research of the education of native students.

The researcher adopted the rationale that learning to write English could be one way to create cognitive and psychological growth that brings about literacy in the sense used by Freire -- the capacity to create with language and critically reflect upon one's creation. She reviewed the philosophies of language theorists Piaget, Vygotsky and Bruner and the findings of current researchers to understand their views of the effects of language upon cognition.

The research of native cultures was reviewed for findings related to cultural differences between native and non-native people. This research suggested reasons for the failure of the education system of the dominant culture to accommodate the learning needs of native students.
The researcher chose the "product" and "process" approaches to the teaching of writing English, as described by professional educators Moffett, Dixon, and Britton, as a theoretical basis upon which to construct questions for a questionnaire designed to elicit the students' concepts of and attitudes to writing English.

To understand the process of constructing a questionnaire, the researcher studied existing questionnaires dealing with attitudes to writing and those dealing with issues of particular relevance to native students. She also studied books about research procedure. However, the primary sources of information about her questionnaire's suitability and effectiveness with regard to the purposes of her study were the oral and written reactions of native and non-native educators to three drafts of the questionnaire. The researcher also received advice for conducting the pilot test of the questionnaire from the consultant to native education at the Saskatoon Public School Board. The teachers of the native students selected for the pilot test assisted in administering the questionnaire.

Based upon the students' responses, the researcher analysed the questionnaire's effectiveness in relation to the purposes of her study. She made specific recommendations for changes to some questions (responses to some questions suggested that the questions were vague or ambiguous) and
general recommendations for subsequent researchers who plan to develop and pilot test a questionnaire for native students.
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Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

The constitutional talks between the Canadian government and the native people of Canada in the summer of 1982 made apparent the increasing confidence and rising political aspirations of the native people. On the local educational level, in the province of Saskatchewan, there has been an influx of native students into urban and rural schools. Yet despite the emerging political profile of native people and their growing participation in the education of the dominant culture, the educational attainment of native students is "far below that of other Canadians" (Perspectives Canada III, 1980, p. 173). Although native students' attendance in university has increased tenfold since 1970 and their attendance in secondary schools by 50 percent since 1969, their "retention through to the end of secondary school is about 20 percent compared to a national rate of 75 percent" (Indian Conditions, 1980, p. 47). Furthermore, many native students continue to drop out of school mid year (Perspectives Canada, 1980).

Research has been carried out in an effort to understand why some native and other minority group students have difficulties remaining in school. Thus far researchers have focused on the influence of culture on psychology and cognition (King, 1975; Koenig, 1981) as possible sources of difficulties, and on reading (Reich, 1978), native language background and language performance (Burnaby, 1982,
Tootoosis, 1983), native self-concepts (Parry, 1978), native value systems (Clark, 1983), and native attitudes to education (Kirkness, 1980). There has been little research to determine native students' attitudes to English language learning -- in particular, to their conception of what writing is and what it is for. Knowledge about their experiences with and attitudes to writing English could add to the existing knowledge about the kinds of demands the English language makes on native students as they progress through school.

There has been a dearth of research in Saskatchewan on the English written language of native high school students. Certainly standardized tests can be used to identify their performance, at one point in time, in recognizing grammatical structures of English. And "culture fair" tests, such as the Raven's Progressive Matrices (1938) and Catell's Intelligence Test (1972), can measure to a certain degree their non-language skills. But such tests do not reveal the students' concepts of and attitudes to writing English which have been shaped by earlier experiences with the English language and which may influence their performance in that language. Personally administered questionnaires and interviews may be two means of obtaining such information.

A recent study by Miller (1983) concerning the connection between self-concept of preservice teachers as writers and their attitudes toward the teaching of writing led her and the students to realize the influence of teachers upon their
present conceptions of suitable methods for teaching writing. Furthermore, the study itself increased the students' awareness of their deep-seated motivations and expectations regarding the teaching of writing, an awareness which created in turn "a larger framework from which to grow and learn" (p. 13). On the basis of her findings, Miller emphasized the need for teachers to have "a more congruent relationship between our proposed methods and our actual pedagogical approaches" (p. 16) to the teaching of writing, a relationship that can only come about when one is aware that past and present educational experiences can influence attitudes to learning. If teachers are aware of what views their students have about writing they would be in a better position to shape programs more adapted to their students' needs and concerns.

**Purposes of the Study**

This study describes and analyzes:

1. The development of a questionnaire designed to discover concepts of and attitudes to writing English of native high school students who are perceived by their teachers as having difficulty writing English;
2. the pilot test of the questionnaire with native students;
3. the concepts of and attitudes to writing English of these students as elicited by the questionnaire;
4. any relationships between language background and concepts of and attitudes to writing English of native students.
Rationale for the Study

Native people are participating actively in Canadian politics. Their growing concern to establish land claim settlements, to develop the North (with respect to mining, lumbering, firefighting) and to educate their children in their culture reflects a strong self-concept. They appear to be increasingly dissatisfied with accepting the dominant culture's view of their place in history and have chosen to become their own decision-makers. Paulo Freire (1973) calls this movement of a society from one epoch to another "epochal transition" and his words bear particular relevance to the native situation today.

This shock between a yesterday which is losing relevance but still seeking to survive, and a tomorrow which is gaining substance, characterizes the phase of transition as a time of announcement and a time of decision. (p. 7)

At such a time a clear perception of what issues belong in a cultural transition, which ones are integral and which are irrelevant, is important. Education becomes crucial. Psychologist Jerome Bruner (1962) defines education to mean that which encourages the willingness to see, explore and criticize alternate ways of viewing society. Freire (1973) would agree. Education must be more than the development of the capacity to read and write; it must encourage reflection
through observation of oneself, on one's place in the cultural transition, and on the transition itself. For Freire, to be literate is to be capable of critical reflection and such capacity is developed through a critical involvement with language. If in the very act of learning to read and write the learner can be encouraged to reflect, to watch how he learns, how his mind works, how language shapes his thoughts and feelings; he can learn to appreciate the power of language. He can learn to use language to shape, create, in effect, to transform reality. And in the process of reflection the learner becomes aware that there are many points of view besides his own -- some worthy of consideration, some not -- and most important that he has a point of view of his own.

Yet different cultures define and develop the capacity for critical reflection in different ways. Freire emphasizes the analytical approach when he argues the necessity of critical involvement with language, be it in writing or reading, if one is to become literate and educated. Yet the analytical approach, in the words of Marshall McLuhan (1966) "organizes experiences into a linear sequential line," the effect of which "has been to make Western man to expect the world to act in a linear or rational manner" (p. 157). However, some North American Indian cultures organize experience differently and language animistically (King, 1975). The grammar of their language reflects thinking patterns which are

*For the purposes of this study "he" is used in the generic sense of the word.
holistic or relational rather than sequential and linear (Koenig, 1981; King, 1975). The native reflective process may differ from that of the dominant culture. Therefore what the dominant culture may see as an intellectual deficiency on the part of the native may be nothing more than a different approach to interpreting and recording experience. Hence, King argues, it is important to understand "the thought processes of the Indian child if we are to understand the possible sources of difficulty" (p. 2) in the dominant culture's schools. For the purposes of this paper it is important to interpret Freire's concept of literacy (the attainment of the analytical skills necessary to become critically reflective) as one way to become literate. It is important, too, to recognize that reflective capacity can be enriched, developed or expressed in culturally different ways; writing English, the central concern of this study is one aspect of literacy and therefore one way to enhance reflective ability.

Freire (1970) speaks of how the ability to reflect demands the ability to "decodify" (p. 214), to break down the whole of an experience into its constituent parts so as to note the relationships between each part and thus gain a better understanding of the whole. Freire suggests that decodification is analysis. If one can analyse one's concepts or beliefs or feelings, one can begin to understand
their structure. A belief may suddenly be seen as a prejudice, an ideological position that is antiquated, unrealistic, unfair. The dangers of dogmatic assertions of reality become apparent when one sees how necessarily limited are individual viewpoints.

Reflection thus demands the ability to abstract and analyse the important factors from a situation and theorize about the relative importance and relationship of each factor to the whole situation and to a larger context. Hence the quality of the language of thought, its versatility, elasticity, and range become important. The more words one has to think with the sharper one's analytical perception, and the better one is able to explain, describe and elaborate one's perceptions to others.

Freire feels that literacy, if viewed as critical involvement with language, can change the way the learner thinks; it can alter his cognitive processes. But Freire is concerned with adults. Does this mean that literacy training, as he intends it, works only for the mind that has attained a certain degree of maturity? Or does language training bring about that very maturity? How important a role does language play in cognition?

Two opposing schools of thought on the role of language in cognition are described by child psychologist, Jean Piaget, and his Russian counterpart, Lev Vygotsky. They differ in
their conceptions of how children acquire language and, in particular, about the role that egocentric speech plays in cognitive development. Egocentric speech is speech which, whether uttered alone or in the company of others, is not intended to communicate: individual children of two or three year olds can often be heard "talking to themselves" in groups.

Piaget (1967) believes that such speech is egocentric because the child lacks sufficient cognitive maturity to be able to differentiate his own perspective from those of others. When he can make this differentiation, his egocentric speech becomes social speech. The child must "wait" until his cognitive ability has developed to the point where he is able to use language to communicate and when he is cognitively aware of the needs of his listener. Language training does not bring about this maturity; language reflects but does not determine cognitive development. Special linguistic training will not help a child whose cognitive level is too immature to grasp the abstract and relevant concepts which words represent. Certain cognitive structures must be ready. These structures, which characterize thought, "have their roots in action and in sensorimotor mechanisms that are deeper than linguistics" (p. 98). The child must develop certain formal thinking mechanisms and these are brought about by active physical participation in his environment.

On the other hand, Vygotsky (1962) believes that language plays a predominant role in thinking. Egocentric
speech does not disappear but evolves into inner speech -- an abbreviated process of thinking in word meanings.

Inner speech is not the interior aspect of external speech -- it is a function in itself. It still remains speech, . . . thought connected with words; in inner speech words die as they bring forth thought. Inner speech is to a large extent thinking in pure word meanings. (p. 149)

For Vygotsky, then, inner speech becomes thought; inner speech does not disappear but evolves out of egocentric speech at about school age and serves both autistic and logical thinking.

Thought and language . . . are the key to the nature of human consciousness. Words play a central part not only in the development of thought but in the historical growth of consciousness as a whole. (p. 153)

Jerome Bruner (1964) agrees. Language makes possible certain cognitive abilities. For example, when children can use the symbolic properties of language rather than the perceptual properties of an image to represent experience, they will actually perceive more in that experience and be able to do more with it. That is, when children can categorize a group of objects by saying, "They're all tools," rather than, "Some are yellow," they are operating on a higher cognitive level and it is language that permits them to do so. It provides them with a sort of "linguistic rehearsal" of a perception. Bruner says that this new linguistic capacity permits them to transform reality; the child can draw infer-
ences and make hypotheses whereas at the iconic stage of representation he could not (pp.1-15). He and Vygotsky differ fundamentally from Piaget in that they believe that cognitive maturity can be hastened by teaching the child the more sophisticated mode of representing reality provided by the conservational properties of language.

Sinclair de-Zwart (1969) attempted to teach young children the more specific language of the older child and discovered he could not. He concluded that language training could help children focus on certain properties of a task and recall relevant information but the cognitive apparatus must be sufficiently mature for the child to make the distinctions that an older child can make. Language training does not contribute to thought directly; that is, there does not appear to be a direct cause and effect relationship between language and thought.

Dale (1976) sums up the dispute between Piaget and Vygotsky, concerning the effect of language upon cognition, when he says:

> Whether it is cognitive advance that explains the improvement in using language, or the reverse, remains a fundamental problem for developmental psychology. But the internalization of language in inner speech seems to tie all these advances together. (p. 266)

Vygotsky and Freire can be said to agree on the importance of language experiences upon linguistic functioning; Vygotsky focuses specifically upon the influence of the
evolving inner speech on later thought patterns and Friere focuses more generally upon the socio-cultural influences upon language formation. Yet they must agree with Piaget that language reflects cognitive development. Whether inner speech disappears or transforms, the kinds of linguistic contacts with reality that humans experience influence their disposition to language. When children begin to write, they draw from their inner language repertoire, be it rich or limited, which has been developed through their contacts with others. Depending on the nature of their language experiences attempts at a more abstract language form such as writing may be either a relatively painless transition or a difficult intellectual adjustment.

Cognitive changes appear to be required in the shift from oral speech to written language. In oral dialogue each speaker can adjust his words and meanings according to the immediate feedback he receives from the other; he can rely on visual clues, facial expression, gesture, and tone of voice as indicators of the direction his speech should take. He and his interlocutor usually share the same frame of reference; each is familiar with the general drift of the discourse, and, to a degree, each can anticipate the other's response. The speakers can afford to abbreviate syntax and take other linguistic shortcuts.

The writer cannot. He can take nothing for granted. He must shift, cognitively and psychologically, from thought to
the abstract domain of written language. He must imagine his audience, anticipate its questions. He has no visual clues to guide him. His job is difficult because he must externalize his thinking to accommodate a reader who may be unfamiliar with his personal and idiosyncratic world of meanings.

In effect the writer must elaborate an inner speech that is highly compact and predicated. It is highly compact because certain words or even a single word may convey for the writer a complex idea or emotion peculiar only to the writer. Thus for the writer some words may have connotations very different from those of the reader. To ensure maximum communication the writer must select words that he is sure his audience will understand. This is a "formality" that separates writing still further from everyday speech.

Inner speech is heavily predicated because the writer/thinker already knows who the subject is and needs to deal only with the situation involving the subject; his inner speech has no need for referents (Vygotsky, 1962, p. 100). It is this highly personalized, compact, and abbreviated inner speech that must be elaborated into syntactically mature and semantically clear written language for effective communication to occur. This process requires considerable abstraction and objectivity, certainly a strange and frightening demand for some beginning writers.

Writing is a complex task because it is "second-order
symbolism [which] requires symbolization of the sound image in written signs” (Vygotsky, 1962, p. 99). This is a difficult cognitive transition that requires guidance.

It appears that writing requires a great deal of cognitive adjustment and intellectual effort. For those who come from backgrounds or cultures where written expression of any kind, in any language, is not encouraged because there has never been any need for it, writing presents even more of a challenge. For such people, writing makes psychological demands in addition to intellectual demands. The language they must learn if they are to make themselves heard is predominantly the language of a culture that refuses to see them as equals.

Is learning to write worth so much effort? Writing as one part of the literary process effects cognitive changes. Are those intellectual changes of any personal value? When one translates experience from direct perception into written representation, one's cognitive capacity grows in the process. How one abstracts that experience, in effect, how one uses language to interpret reality influences what one perceives and, hence, to a degree, what one is. How one manipulates language determines how one conceives the world and consequently how one conceives of oneself. The composing process
is as much a part of oral as of written expression, but it is in writing that the manipulation of language is most laborious and painstaking. Yet writing provides an opportunity to observe ourselves in the act of translating thought into observable symbols. Dowst (1980) states:

Such a view of language and knowledge suggests that writing can be an activity of great importance to the writer. While one in effect composes his or her world by engaging in any sort of language using, it is by means of writing that one stands to learn the most, for writing is the form of language using that is slowest, most deliberate, most accessible, most conveniently manipulable, and most permanent. (p. 69)

While composing in writing one tinkers with sentences, works fragments into wholes, arranges paragraphs, considers overall form in its relationship to content, and considers its effects upon the reader. One begins to see relationships between ideas not previously seen and then realizes the limitations of immediate perceptions. Most important of all, the writer begins to see that his view of reality is personal.

Experimenting with words is experimenting with knowing, as Freire has indicated. Through writing one learns more about a subject and is in a better position to create hypotheses, to imagine what could be and hence to conceive of the possibility of change. Bruner and Olson (1977-78) state that during the composing process,
when text becomes autonomous from speech, the construction of reality can proceed on two planes -- a plane of intralinguistic logic, and a plane of ordinary experience. Ordinary experience can then be shaped more readily by a logically derived pattern of expectancies. Experience . . . can be pitted against logic. If they do not match, we pause, extract new logical implications, or reexamine experience. In this way we more readily create possible or hypothetical worlds, of which the world as experienced is merely one. (p. 11)

So one writes not only to make one's experiences more comprehensible but to discover what could be or what does not have to be.

Moffett (1968), a language theorist and an educator, argues for the benefits of writing in basically the same way that Freire (1973) makes claims for the benefits of literacy. Both see writing as a part of the literacy process that can expand human thought by increasing its capacity to abstract. Both educators are concerned that the language user become aware that there are other points of view of reality. But Moffett makes specific claims about the writer and his writing. He sees writing as a matter of bringing about changes in the writer's capacity to handle time and space. The writer matures cognitively and psychologically by growing in distance between himself and his subject, both chronologically and tautologically. A beginning writer merely records the present; he then learns to describe the past, and eventually to imagine what may happen. In effect he grows from mere recording, to
reporting or narrating, to generalizing and finally to theorizing; these movements parallel the corresponding movement in the relationship between himself and his audience. The more he becomes aware of the needs of his audience the wider will be his repertoire of writing abilities. Writing aids the ability to communicate (pp. 47-59).

Britton (1970) argues this point strongly. Writing leads to a maturer view of oneself because of the cognitive growth it brings about through the need to shape experiences so as to share them. But shaping experience also brings continuity to that experience:

Perhaps one of the first ways in which adolescents begin to achieve through their writing a maturer view of themselves and the world is by looking back into their own childhood: they look . . . for their own roots in a common soil. The mere act of contemplating a period in life when things seem to have been less transitory . . . may in itself be salutary for them: to realize its continuity with the present may help a sense of order to grow, an order embracing past and present, and providing, at times, a key to the solution of some of the riddles they are now confronting. (p. 253)

Furthermore, Britton claims that the imaginative possibilities provided by writing provide an escape from the difficulties of living in two worlds -- the child wanting to be an adult in an adult's world and yet very much a child needing the guidance of adults.
Writing, if viewed as Freire, Dowst, Moffett, and Britton view it, cannot help but lead to insights about language, cognition and, most important of all, the self. Self-understanding leads to autonomous individuality -- the freedom to be oneself and to believe in oneself as possessing something of worth to offer society. It would be foolish to suggest that the only thing people need to do to solve any problems they may have is to learn to write English; but, if writing can bring one closer to oneself, can help one to understand how language interprets experience, one will be the freer for it. Writing is worth taking seriously.

The ability to manipulate written language is important for everyone, not only for communication with others but also for developing a strong sense of self. In a school setting, if native students can learn to express feelings in a way that can be easily understood by others, they may become more confident individuals and more enthusiastic learners. If teachers, prospective teachers, and those who design English language curricula can be made aware of native students' concepts of and attitudes to English composition (and the language background that may account for them), more comprehensive English language programs can be prepared that take into account the learner and his world.

It must be stated here that this researcher's concern for the benefits of writing must not seem to undermine the
importance of other forms of expression. The culture of the native people of Canada has been transmitted through generations largely by oral means. Researchers like Littlejohn (1975) and Touchee (1979) have expressed concern about the tendency of educators of the dominant culture to disregard oral means of communicating ideas and expressing feelings. Littlejohn's work with Saskatchewan Cree has shown that "the oral tradition of the Indians is as valid a source of historical data as the written sources of the dominant culture" (p. 8). Touchee sees the oral tradition as already receiving more respect because "with the advent of technology, there is a new emphasis on oral communication and pictorial media which is similar to what our earlier culture relied on" (p. 15). However, she feels the need to "be eclectic in philosophy concerning materials and strategies to be applied to teaching in the classroom" (p. 15). This researcher agrees. Writing is not to be emphasized at the expense of oral expression (or of any other means of expression such as the artistic or musical) but only as one means to development of the self and the understanding of one's past. It is in this light that the rest of this study is to be viewed.
Definition of Terms

Native. As used in this study the word "native" refers to the 50 subjects for the questionnaire who were identified as status and non-status Indians by their principals and teachers.

Process approach or orientation to writing. This approach to writing emphasizes instruction in the act of composing, revising, editing, and any pre-writing activities -- in fact, all the processes involved in writing. In this approach, the process of writing is as important as the written product, the end result of the act of composing.

Product approach or orientation to writing. This is an approach to writing in which the emphasis in instruction is upon the finished product. In this approach, the product (the completed composition) is more important than the process of composing.

Native students with an English language background. These are students who indicated on the questionnaire that their only language is English.
Native students with a native language background. These are students who indicated on the questionnaire that they either speak, understand, think in, or write either Cree, Saulteaux, Sioux, Slavey or Chipewyan.

Modified English classes. These are classes for students who have difficulty reading or writing English.

Literacy. This term includes the capacity not only to speak and write words, but to create with words and critically reflect upon one's written creation.

Limitations of the Study

This study of the development of a questionnaire which seeks to identify native students' concepts of and attitudes to writing English was exploratory. Therefore, limitations evolved during successive drafts of the questionnaire. These limitations are described as part of the whole process of this study.

The identification of students suitable for the pilot test of the questionnaire was based upon teachers' perceptions of the students as having difficulty writing English, and upon the categorization of the students by the Saskatoon Public School Board as being suitable for the modified English classes.

The data of the pilot test of the questionnaire consist of the response of 50 native high school students'
about their concepts of and attitudes to English written language. These data are not generalizable beyond those provided by these students.

Summary

This study describes and analyses the development and the pilot testing of a questionnaire designed to discover concepts of and attitudes to writing English of native high school students (Cree, Chipewyan, Saulteaux, Sioux, and Slavey) described by their teachers as having difficulty writing English.

In the rationale for the study, the researcher, basing her argument upon Freire’s concept of literacy, asserts that learning to write English is one way to discover and develop ideas and feelings, to grow cognitively and psychologically, and recognizes that different cultures have different ways of defining and developing such growth. The rationale describes the two opposite language theories of Piaget and Vygotsky concerning the effects of language training upon cognition, and concludes that these theorists must at least agree that language reflects cognitive development. The rationale discusses the apparent cognitive changes required in the shift from oral speech to written language and that such changes, possibly difficult for cultures that do not emphasize writing, are worthwhile. The arguments of writing theorists Moffett and Britton are used to buttress the initial argument concerning the cognitive and psychological benefits of
writing, that writing causes psychological and cognitive growth because through it the writer shapes and shares experience.

A definition of terms was provided, followed by a description of the study's limitations which consist of its exploratory nature, native high school students' stated perceptions of writing English, and School Board members' and teachers' perceptions of students as being suitable subjects for a pilot test of the questionnaire.
Chapter II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The notion that poor academic performance by native and other minority groups in Canadian and American schools is caused by the intellectual inferiority of such groups has long since been dispelled. That variations in socio-cultural environment cause variations in ways people perceive and form attitudes about different facets of learning has been proven by previous research.

The Educational Attainment of Native Students

Various studies have stressed the growing gap between the achievement of the native and non-native students as they progress through school. In 1973, the Federation of Saskatchewan Indians revealed that the lag between Canadian native students and their non-native peers reached a peak at grade eight where "the average Indian student is 2.5 years behind the average non-Indian student . . . ." (p. 132). The studies also show that the native students tend to leave school at an earlier age than do the non-native students.

Age-grade delay and early drop-out rate of native students has not abated significantly since 1973. The Operational Review: Education Program (Saskatchewan), 1980, reports that there has been little improvement in the proportion of native children graduating from high school, and
high absenteeism continues to be a problem (p. 35). Burnaby (1982) reports that 30% of Regina natives attending provincial schools are two to three years behind grade level and that 75% drop out before reaching high school (pp. 14-15).

Several studies have explored the reasons for native students' poor educational attainment. They have varied from consideration of factors regarding reading ability, language background, verbal ability and language performance, cognitive approaches to learning, native attitudes to education, native home environment and value systems, native self-concept, and native student approaches to writing.

Native Students' Performance in Reading English

In 1973, the Federation of Saskatchewan Indians reached this conclusion after their investigation of the scholastic performance of Saskatchewan students in English and Mathematics.

All areas measured showed significant differences between Indian and White students. The discrepancy, particularly in language areas, was more marked at the Grade 7 level than at the Grade 3 level . . . Indian students on the average are probably achieving two to three years below grade level in reading by the time they reach Grade 7. (p. 251)
Earlier studies (Dilling, 1965; Ray, Ryan, and Parker, 1962) noted academic deceleration of native students after grades four and five. These researchers claim poor reading ability as a factor and suggest that native students require more exposure to oral English. Reich (1978) reviewed studies (Phillion and Galloway, 1969; Gordon, 1972) that show grade four and five British Columbia native children lagging behind their non-native peers, reading at the frustration level. She suggests that academic deceleration occurs at the intermediate level because it is here that vocabulary becomes more difficult, sentence structure more complex, and pictures less frequent. There is at this time, she says, a shift from a controlled English to a more literary one. She suggests that more exposure to oral English would increase the students' ability to handle literary English, an ability that makes cognitive demands that native students do not have because of their essentially "non-verbal" culture.

The Alberta funded Mighty Moose Reading Project (1978) suggests that increased reading ability for native students would come about if reading materials were more culturally relevant and thus more interesting for the native student. This researcher does not argue with these findings (with the exception of the "non-verbal" language background of native students which will be discussed later). She suggests that other factors besides reading ability may be contributing to
academic deceleration; the concepts of and attitudes to writing that native students have in the intermediate and high school years may not be conducive to academic attainment, at least in the language arts. That is, some native students may view writing as so uninteresting or irrelevant that they fail to develop the writing competence to achieve academically.

Language Background of Native Students

Bowd's (1972) findings show three pervading variables that influence the academic achievement of native children from Western Canada: socio-economic status, language background, and intelligence. In an effort to define the relative importance of each variable in determining grade level, he tested 137 native boys and 35 white boys using the Standard Progressive Matrices (Raven, 1938) and the Mill Hill Vocabulary Scale Jr. Set "A" (Bowd, 1972). He discovered that grade progression is primarily dependent upon intelligence for the white sample and upon verbal ability for the native sample. He also discovered that paternal use of English at home correlated positively with vocabulary and grade level, but "vocabulary appears as the prime determinant of grade level" (p. 274). He concludes that native children progress poorly at school because of inadequate exposure to English.

With this point in mind, Burnaby (1982) charts the educational achievement of Ontario native people over 15 years of age. She states:
When broken down by mother tongue (English or Native) and language most used in the home (English or Native), it is quite clear that the more Native language there is in these people's background, the lower their educational achievement, or alternatively and more positively, the more English there is in their backgrounds the higher the achievement. (p. 16)

She admits that the degree to which school achievement is affected by language differences is difficult to ascertain yet "... one educational implication of these figures is that English language background has some strong role to play in schooling" (p. 17). For the purposes of this study, the English language background of the native student may have a role to play in how he views English composition.

In a later study (1974) Bowd suggests that the quality of English at home may affect the verbal ability and hence school achievement of the native student. Reich (1978) reviews studies by Knachman (1974) and Ohannessian (1972) which suggest that the English learned from parental models may hinder more than help the native child at school. In her words:

His parents' English may be described as lacking the vocabulary, appropriate syntax, correct pronunciation, and background conceptual experience needed to cope with the Standard English of the classroom. (p. 23)
Reich herself (1978) attempted to determine the influence of Cree language background on the perception of English consonant phonemes in first grade children. She used the Fast-Cosens Auditory Discrimination test (1968) to do so and discovered that the native child did have difficulties. She suggests that the errors could be attributed to the "essentially non-verbal background they have and the limited model of English they have been exposed to" (p. v). She suggests (just as Bowd, 1972, has done) that the native child needs more oral English language experiences.

"Verbal Ability" of Native Students

Griese (1974), as reviewed by Reich (1978), and Bowd (1974) conclude that the harsh physical environment of natives and Inuit demand the development of "practical or concrete" abilities over abstract ones. Native children, they claim, have not developed a background of abstract or verbal capacities similar to those of non-native children because they have not had to. Summarizes Reich:

The cognitive skills developed as part of a verbal society are not naturally part of their intelligence repertoire, rendering them unprepared for our educational system and the expected abilities and skills. (p. 22)
Reich assumes that verbal interaction is not part of the native learning process, and hence any cognitive strategy essential to verbal learning is missing in the native. However, researchers such as Giles (1980), Trudgill (1976) as reviewed by Tootoosis, 1983, pp. 30-32, and Labov (1972) argue that people from lower socio-economic classes possess in their language all the necessary cognitive and linguistic apparatus for expressing logical thought. Giles claims that non-standard dialects of English are just as full of rich abstract expressions. Trudgill claims that what researchers may define as linguistic characteristics are really stylistic ones; Labov states that often the monosyllabic responses of children from lower socio-economic classes are nothing more than defence reactions in what the child may perceive as a threatening situation. Are native students reacting similarly?

Tootoosis (1983) is careful to point out that native children do not have verbally deprived backgrounds. Her study of the language experiences of a five-year-old Cree revealed that during non-teacher dominated classroom activities the child and her native classmates "engaged in considerable talk and enquiry in a collaborative interactive mode" (p. 223). She adds that researchers often obtain their language data from children in experimental situations that are necessarily "unfamiliar, artificial, or threatening . . . " (p. 3) for
them. Labov (1972) claims that verbal deprivation theories are based upon myth. Most children are communicatively competent, although their language performance will naturally vary according to their mood and evaluation of a particular moment.

Lujan (1979) supports Tootoosis' observations. His study of American native students in and outside the classroom revealed a startling contrast in their "verbal ability." Inside the classroom they are reticent, revealing a limited use of verbal response patterns. Outside of the classroom, among their friends and family, verbal reticence disappears. Lujan wonders if the school is just one among many factors which may contribute to native students' reluctance to express themselves in the classroom. This researcher wonders if native students are perceived by teachers as being deficient in cognitive skills because they are reticent or may not speak standard English. If so, teachers may teach language with such prejudice in mind. As a result, native students' concepts of and attitudes to writing English may include a view of writing that is not conducive to honest self-expression and enhanced self-worth.

Other researchers (Wilson, 1972; Schubert and Cropley, 1972) have looked to strategies native students use to process information, in an attempt to understand some of their difficulties in the language arts. Wilson (1972), attempting to identify the psycholinguistic strengths and weaknesses of
native children in primary grades of schools in northern Saskatchewan, concluded that they were stronger in the visual-motor domain than they were in the auditory-vocal. He suggests that native children would learn more efficiently if materials were presented visually. Schubert and Cropley (1972) attempted to determine differences in intellectual functioning of two groups of urban and rural native students when compared with two groups of urban and rural non-native students. They used the Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children (Wechsler, 1949) followed by training on the Block Design and Similarities subtests of the scale to discover that the rural native students (the ones with the least contact with English speakers) had the lowest scores and that these scores resulted from "an underdevelopment of reflective verbal thought, but not from a biologically determined inadequacy" (p. 295). The authors conclude:

The major differences between the northern Indian child and the urban white child looks to lie in the fact that the former does not habitually and spontaneously analyse his experience in verbal terms (emphasis mine) and does not formulate internalized rules that might guide him in new learning situations. (p. 300)

Although the native students in this study now live in urban areas, many of them have come from northern or rural environments.
In line with the researchers mentioned above Brooks (1978) states "... the Indian children have not developed the information processing strategies to succeed in the White world and ... their schools have not helped them to overcome this deficit" (p. 66). Schubert and Cropley also imply the existence of "information processing strategies" (cognitive styles) at variance with those of the dominant culture.

Native Cognitive Style and Learning

Goody and Watt (1963) discuss the influence of literacy upon the cognitive strategies used by people in various cultures. The invention of writing, they say, created a literate society that brought accompanying changes in intellectual and cultural life. When early Far Eastern society changed from transmitting information orally in face-to-face contact to transmitting it by means of written records, it turned the past from an entity that exists only in memory to one that is immutable, unchanging, and capable of being understood only by historical inquiry -- a process involving speculation, skepticism, the testing of hypotheses, and other analytical strategies.

It seems then (as has been previously argued in the rationale of this study, p. 14) that writing creates the need for analytical thought. Analysis divides reality into segments. Such a thinking style does not match a culture whose past is more oral than written. Such a culture, as King
(1975) and Koenig (1981) point out, interprets reality in a holistic, non-analytic, field-dependent manner.

Koenig's (1981) study of the cognitive styles of Indian, Metis, Inuit, and non-native northern residents led her to identify relational (thinking that is subjective, field dependent, holistic, specific, simply stated, related to experience) and analytical patterns of thought (thought that is sequential, linear, and examines the parts in relation to the whole) that may be influenced by cultural background. She analysed tape-recorded responses of 100 of these people for differences in cognitive style. She found that native groups tend to think in relational style while the non-native style of thinking was analytical. Furthermore the Indian, Metis and Inuit cultures differed significantly from each other in thinking style.

Her extensive review of literature testifies that there is much evidence in support of her findings. Her premise that "... cognitive and learning styles of students are crucial components in the educational process" (p. 49) is worthy of consideration with regard to the education of minority cultures. In-depth consideration of how the native student's cognitive style is related to the writing of English is beyond the scope of this study. But it is relevant to this study to question whether native students' concepts of writing English are the result of teachers who employed methods of teaching writing that did not match their students' particular
approaches to learning writing.

King's (1975) study of the effects of animism on the cognitive development of Objibway children led him to suggest that teachers of such children not only be fluent in the native language but knowledgeable about the cultural and philosophical framework of the child. Teachers should incorporate into the language learning process the child's approach to organizing experience.

Native Attitudes to Education

Clifton (1977) discovered that Alberta Cree Junior High students in an integrated school had slightly less positive attitudes than the non-natives toward reading and learning. But on the whole he found greater similarities than differences between the two groups. Kirkness (1980a) suggests that native children in integrated schools do not progress academically, when placed in an integrated school, because of alienation and identity problems brought about by culture conflicts. However, in another study she completed in the same year (1980b) she found that most of the Manitoba native students she studied in federal and provincial schools are satisfied with their school performance and are optimistic about their educational futures and careers. A British Columbia Ministry of Education study (1982) that attempted to devise a reading program to improve the reading skills of
native students states that one of the major aspirations of native parents is "that their children develop the academic skills expected of all students" (p. 10). Clark (1983) noted that high achieving native students in rural North Dakota felt positively about and valued the educational process more so than the low achieving native students. If native parents or students see education as important but society in general or the white controlled schools in particular view native students as inferior, especially with regard to English language performance, there would exist a contradiction between native peoples' educational attitudes and the teachers' expectations of native students' educational performance. Such contradiction could influence the way these students view written English.

On the other hand, there are many native educators today who have abandoned the white dominated schools and are now running their own (Morrow and Randhawa, 1981, p. 11). Concerned about values and cultural conflict they see the only option as being complete native control of native education. It is likely that native high school students in integrated schools are aware of this recent movement which may influence their attitude toward learning to write English, a major task required of all students in elementary or secondary schools.
Native Students' Home Environment and Value Systems

Berry (1968) quotes this statement by Russell (which he found in Meriam's Problem of Indian Administration, 1928):

However important may be the contribution of the schools, the atmosphere and condition of the home are, especially in the early years of the child's life, the primary determinant of the development of the child . . . (p. 57)

Since it is the parents who are usually responsible for the home atmosphere, it is supposedly they who ultimately determine the child's educational aspirations. Yet Elliot's study (1970) of the relationship between Cape Breton native and non-native students' educational aspirations and those of their parents discovered that for the native student the parents play a less significant role in their child's aspirations than do non-native parents. (It may be unfair to make the comparison between native and non-native parents. In native families, it is often extended family members, rather than parents, who instruct and inspire children.) However, Elliot suggests that another influence upon the native students' educational aspirations is the native value system, that is, the values inherent in the whole native culture, not just the values of the parents.

Berry (1968) states:
Often, perhaps, behaviour which the non-Indian interprets as apathy is actually a widespread and traditional reluctance on the part of Indians to interfere in the affairs of others, including their own children. (p. 59)

He quotes the words of Wax and Thomas (1961) who claim that "the Indian . . . from earliest childhood, is trained to regard absolute non-interference in interpersonal relations as decent or normal" (p. 59). Here, Lujan's (1979) study becomes relevant. If native students are reticent in the classroom but not outside the classroom, then it is logical that the dominant culture may interpret such reticence as apathy.

Later studies by Miller and Thomas (1972), Friesen (1974), and Franklyn (1974) have examined the value systems of Canadian natives with regard to co-operation versus competition, and achievement. Miller and Thomas compared the performance of forty eight Alberta Blood Indians (Blackfoot) with forty-eight similarly aged non-native children on a Madsen Co-operation Board (Madsen 1967; Shapiro and Madsen 1969), a game in which co-operation among players yields higher scores than competition. They discovered that the Blackfoot children scored considerably better than the non-native children. Furthermore, they scored even higher than either Kibbutz or urban Israeli children who played the same game in 1969. The investigators concluded that Blackfoot
children see the value of co-operation in situations where "it is adaptive to do so" (p. 110).

To extend the Blackfoot's attitudes about co-operation to other native cultures where such behavior may be encouraged either by communal living or by being considered a desirable cultural trait, it is not difficult to see where native students would conflict with the competitive climate fostered by dominant culture schools. Certainly, competition is fostered in classrooms in which grades are assigned to written English.

Friesen (1974) used a questionnaire to study value differences between Calgary area Blackfoot natives and non-native students. He found that although native students scored lower than their non-native counterparts with regard to faith in human nature, life expectations, future planning, and the concept that education is necessary to future success, they scored higher on factors concerning independence. This would corroborate the earlier study by Miller and Thomas. Independence suggests an uncompetitive attitude toward one's peers, an attitude that would be at variance with competitive attitudes fostered in dominant culture schools. If Saskatchewan natives feel similarly about independence one can understand why they may find it difficult to function in competitive atmospheres.

Clark (1983) investigated the role of North Dakota
rural Indian high school students' values in academic achievement. From information obtained from a questionnaire and the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scales (1965) she found that the low achieving Indians in her study saw a closer relationship between "The Average Indian" and "The Ideal Self" than did the high achieving Indian students in her study. She suggests that low achievers may align themselves more closely with the Indian community than do the high achievers who may have outside reference groups. She concludes with a general statement that "For Indian students, the phenomenal self may have more to do with an extended self which is part of a community than with a separately identified self . . . " (p. 166). It appears again that Indian students have a strong group orientation, rather than a competitive, individualistic one.

In an earlier study Franklyn (1974) used a SCAT-Level 3, the Alberta Departmental Grade IX examinations, and a Pupil Attitude Questionnaire (Kolesar) to examine the assumption that Grade 9 Indian-Metis and non-Indian students differed in value orientations related to achievement behavior. He focused on alienation to test this assumption, using Seeman's (1959) dimensions of alienation as test categories: powerlessness, self-estrangement, meaningfulness, normlessness (a high degree of normlessness indicates a belief that illegitimate means may be used to achieve the school's goals),
and isolation. He discovered no significant differences between the two groups except for normlessness. Indian-Metis students apparently feel that socially unapproved behaviors are justifiable in achieving school goals. In essence, then, the Indian-Metis students, along with their non-native peers, feel that the school is useful as a means of achieving worthwhile goals, yet they "respond differently to the mode of pursuing the goals . . . " (p. 163).

Franklyn suggests that the school, by its emphasis on and rewards for academic achievement, has conditioned the native student to "accept" (that is, appear to accept) its goals. But personally the native student may feel such goals are meaningless; therefore any means, socially approvable or not, may be used to achieve them.

Morrow's and Randhawa's (1981) study of attitudinal factors of Canadian Indian and white students found there to be a clear differentiation between the attitudinal factors of the two cultures. They state:

It is generally agreed that the values emphasized in the classroom tend to reflect the white middle class perspective. It is thus reasonable to assume that Indian children who have a different sociocultural influence will find the values and attitudes of the classroom alien or incompatible with the values emphasized in their homes. (p. 11)
For the purposes of this study, if the native student sees the writing of English as representative of the values of the dominant culture (which he does not completely accept), and yet necessary to achieve valued goals, he may feel that writing English holds little of personal value for him beyond the acquisition of the skills needed to obtain a job. This view may be reinforced by a teacher who views writing in much the same way.

Native Self-Concept

The Hawthorne study (1967), one of the first and largest investigations of the education of Canadian natives, attributes poor academic performance of the native student to an incongruence between his attitudes, values, and motivations and those of the largely white middle-class school he attends, or of his non-native teacher. To the degree that the native child believes that of the two cultures his is the inferior, he develops a negative self-image and a sense of helplessness which alienates him from the education process. Hence he either fails or drops out. It seems reasonable to suppose the existence of the self-fulfilling prophecy for the native student: if the white teacher believes a native child is "inferior" it is impossible for that child to perform well.

Parry (1978) examines the concept that poor academic
performance by natives is caused by low self-image. She claims that the native student is aware of the "stigma" of being native and this very awareness creates defensive behavior which only reinforces discrimination by non-natives. The defensive behavior then interferes with academic performance.

Studies by Helper and Garfield (1965) and Abu-Laban (1965) reveal that native students, when compared to their non-native counterparts, tend to identify more closely with their ethnic groups than do non-natives. Such findings suggest that the school can be a powerful influence in shaping the natives' self-concept. The more positively the school sees the native culture, the more positively the native sees himself. Yet schools often reinforce negative self-concepts for native students (Adams, 1975) by the way they teach the native student the English language. Language, says Adams, can be used as a tool to make native students feel incapable.

Other studies reveal how a teacher's expectations of a child's performance can affect that child's behaviour. Parry (1978) reviews the findings of Pederson and Faucher (1978) who related the effects of teachers' attitudes and resulting behavior to the subsequent adult status of sixty children in . . . Montreal . . . They concluded that the classroom teacher, especially the grade one teacher, may have significant effects on children's chances for success (defined by Pederson in economic terms) in later life. (p. 2)
Rist (1970) studied the effects in one ghetto school of grouping children into reading ability groups that tended to remain unchanged throughout the early grades. He concluded that in this way the school created a "class structure" which eventually rigidified to the extent that the children came to identify themselves and their ability with that structure (or reading ability group), regardless of their real ability. Furthermore, he discovered that the teacher's idea of the successful student was closely tied to the student's social class; the lower the class, as perceived by the teacher, the less attention and encouragement the student received until eventually the student's performance matched the teacher's expectations. Luftig (1982) reports on studies done by Wicker (1977) and Borovetz (1975). Wicker found that older American native children were more aware than their younger counterparts of being native but also had lower self-concepts. Borovetz found that older native American children had lower self-concepts of how teachers perceived them than did younger native American children, and found these concepts to be related to reading achievement.

Pineo's (1977) findings are also relevant here. He discovered that natives are perceived by Canadians to be among the lowest in the cultural scale of the multicultural society that is Canada. If, as these studies suggest, the school authorities' attitudes and their practices, such as rigid ability grouping, exert such a powerful influence on student
self-concept and if natives are already perceived as "inferior", it can be seen how the native's self-concept is not conducive to positive academic achievement.

Native Students and Writing

There is a dearth of research related specifically to native students' use of written English. Taschow's (1981) study of Regina native and non-native students in grades one to eight discovered that the achievement for both groups in writing was not significantly different. Nonetheless, the native students wrote fewer sentences, more of which were incomplete, with fewer words. Even if the differences were minor, as he ascertains, there were still differences. The author attributes the native students' reticence with words to the fact that for the students in his study English is a second language.

Downing, Ollila, and Oliver (1975) compared two groups of native and non-native Canadian Kindergarten children to see if cultural differences in home background could be an important influence in the development of the children's understanding of the purposes of reading and writing. They used five subtests of the Canadian Reading Readiness Tests (Evanecheko, 1973) to discover that on all measures the native children scored significantly lower. The authors conclude that native students were less able to recognize literacy
activities, less cognizant of their purpose, and had poorer technical knowledge of units of speech and writing" (p. 312). The authors suggest that the understanding of literacy depends to a large extent on the cues to linguistic concepts provided by the home environment, a point argued by Reich (1978). The less exposure the child has had to English the more difficult may be his adjustment to it at school, the suggestion corroborated by Burnaby's (1982) findings. Is it possible that teachers, attempting to prepare native students to write English, have stressed the mechanics of writing at the expense of developing an understanding of the purposes of writing?

Burnaby (1982) says that although writing systems exist for most native languages, "reading and writing in Native languages does (sic) not have the important function in Native societies that reading and writing in English and French has (sic) in the majority society . . . " (p. 10). Although both the native and the non-native students need to make cognitive adjustments when learning to write, the nature and degree of the cognitive adjustments for the native child may be more extensive. Some native students may not see writing as important. This in turn may have influenced the way they have been taught or not taught writing.

Furthermore, findings from studies of the writing of non-native students demonstrate how the school itself can limit the opportunities children have to write and even
inhibit them when they do so. The language of the school and the activities are all "teacher-generated, monologic and nonfunctional in children's lives elsewhere" (Florio and Clark, 1982). Children, in effect, see no purpose to writing. Writing, to them, becomes not a means to express ideas or feelings but an opportunity to demonstrate to the teacher their mastery of its conventions. As Birnbaum (1980) says, "... Often the child's early academic experiences direct the child's attention to the component skills rather than to the meaningful uses of written language" (p. 203). Barnes (1976) discusses how the teacher establishes certain patterns of communication which may either help or hinder the child's learning process. If the child sees the teacher as primarily an evaluator he may become more concerned with impressing the teacher by telling the teacher only what he thinks the teacher wants to hear, rather than with exploring and expressing his new knowledge. What do students' views of writing suggest about the teacher's concept of what writing is and what it is for, particularly for the native student? Can a questionnaire designed to elicit concepts of and attitudes to writing English obtain such knowledge?

Other researchers contend that when a student is guaranteed an audience with whom to communicate, that is, when writing has a function, he will learn the necessary forms and
conventions. "Form follows function," says Shuy (1981, p. 103), and "it is consequences, not injunctions, that teach," says Moffett (1968, p. 200). "A child will learn to write a language if he finds that others find meaning in his work" (Boloz and Foster, 1980).

Do urban native high school students find writing meaningful, both personally as a means of communication and practically as a skill necessary for career advancement? "For most people, the way in which they were taught has determined their view of writing and the degree to which they practice it" (Graves, 1978, p. 16).

Summary

The review of literature examined some of the major studies conducted in the field of native education in an attempt to understand the low educational attainment of most native students. Researchers have looked at the low reading achievement of many native students and have suggested that more exposure to oral English and to culturally relevant reading materials would improve their academic performance. Researchers have also looked at the language background of native students and have suggested that poor English role models contribute to low educational attainment; they again suggest more experience with oral English.
Some researchers in the early seventies have attributed the native students' "poor verbal capacities" to an environment that stresses the development of concrete or practical rather than abstract abilities, an environment that does not encourage the development of the cognitive capacities needed for abstract, literary thought. Other researchers have attacked the "verbal deprivation" theories of these researchers, stating that the "non-standard English" language of people from lower socio-economic classes possesses all the necessary cognitive and linguistic characteristics to express logical thought.

Two separate researchers in the eighties have revealed in their individual studies the rich verbal backgrounds of native students. One researcher observed the startling expansion of verbal capacities of his native subjects once outside the classroom; he wondered how much the school contributes to the reticence of the native student.

The studies of other researchers (Wilson, 1972; Schubert and Cropley, 1972; Brooks, 1978) have led them to suggest that native students process information differently than do white students. Koenig (1981) found that native people tend to think in relational rather than analytical styles and King (1975) suggests that teachers be familiar with and incorporate the child's thinking style into their teaching style.
Other researchers have examined native students' attitudes to education and found that, on the whole, native students are optimistic and positive about their school performance. Clark (1983) noted this to be the case for high achievers rather than low achievers.

Some researchers have looked at native students' home environments and value systems and have noted differences from the dominant culture; natives are reluctant to interfere in the affairs of others, and prefer to co-operate rather than compete. This researcher suggests that refusal to interfere may be interpreted as apathy by the dominant culture and the lack of a competitive spirit may contribute to difficulties of some native students with schools of that culture. Franklyn (1974) revealed that the Indian-Metis students he studied believe that socially unapproved behavior is justified in achieving the school's goals. He suggests that the school has conditioned the native student to "accept" goals that internally he may reject. This researcher feels that such a position for a student is uncomfortable and not conducive to academic commitment.

Several researchers have examined the self-concept of native students. Hawthorne attributes poor native academic achievement to poor cultural self-concept and Perry suggests that this image of self creates defensiveness, which, in turn,
invites discrimination. Luftig reveals that the older the native student the lower the self-concept and the less the student feels the teachers respect him.

There is little research concerning native students' use of written English. Taschow's 1981 study found native children to be writing fewer and more incomplete sentences than white children but the differences were slight. Downing, Ollila, and Oliver (1975) discovered that native children in their study were less aware of the purposes of reading and writing than were the white children in their study.

Burnaby (1982) reminds us that writing systems do exist for native people but do not have the same degree or functional importance as in the majority culture. The native child may need to make more of a cognitive adjustment when learning to write.

There is also research to suggest that schools themselves inhibit children's writing, be they native or non-native. Children may learn to view writing as a means to impress the teacher rather than to expand and explore knowledge.

The review of literature suggested to the researcher several clues that are important to consider in developing a questionnaire to identify native students' concepts of and attitudes to writing English: the students' thinking style, attitudes to educational performance, reticence in the
classroom, competitive versus co-operative spirit, view of writing as consisting of personal value and "job" value, and the view of the teacher as evaluator.
Chapter III

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE

Literature Sources

Because there are no existing questionnaires about concepts of and attitudes to writing English of native high school students (although there are some for non-native and college students), the researcher studied a number of sources to devise relevant items and to learn the techniques of constructing a questionnaire:

1. A semantic differential used by Helper and Garfield (1965) to study acculturation in American native adolescents.
2. An attitude evaluation device created by John Ward (1966) and used with Washoe adolescents in Douglas County schools in Nevada.
3. A composition skills attitude scale developed by Hartig (1966) for college freshmen.
4. A composition attitude scale developed by Hyndman (1969) to measure attitudes of above average 10th graders.
5. An attitude survey to discover teachers' attitudes to teaching writing, prepared by the NCTE (1970-71).
6. Barbara King's "Construct Scale" (1979) and her use of the Emig Writing Scale (1971) to examine teacher and student attitudes to writing.
7. The description of an instrument to measure writing apprehension developed by Daly and Miller (1975).
9. A writing attitude scale developed by Reigstad and McAndrew (1984) to assess teacher attitudes toward writing before and after specialized training in writing.

Additional support was obtained from books about data gathering techniques, specifically, the development of questionnaire, by Wiersman, 1975; Hopkins, 1976; and Best, 1981.

Each of the above sources contributed the following information to the development of the questionnaire:

1. The researcher studied the semantic-differential scale used by Helper and Garfield (1965) as a possible alternative to the Likert scale used by the NCTE. She preferred the NCTE scale because she felt that it would be easier for the high school student to answer because it was more specific.
2. From the Ward (1966) attitude evaluation device the researcher studied Ward's method of classifying different categories of attitudes of native students (attitudes to school, law, and family relationships) within a single
questionnaire and his way of probing sensitive issues. Ward did not differentiate among the various subjects the questions dealt with but intermingled them throughout the questionnaire.  

3. The researcher studied Hartig's (1966) 40 statements about the writing process to obtain ideas for the questions in Part II of her questionnaire -- ideas specifically related to the writing process. She was also interested in Hartig's finding that confidence in and love for writing are related to writing proficiency. Although the researcher was not attempting to measure writing enjoyment and confidence, she wondered what concepts of and attitudes to writing that her target population would reveal might be contributing to poor writing performance. 

4. The researcher studied Hyndman's (1969) Composition Attitude Scale for the dimensions or constructs of attitudes he developed. She wanted to see if there were dimensions of attitudes that would be relevant to her study. There were no specific ones. She was also interested in Hyndman's finding that writers of different abilities have different attitudes about the writing process and that poor writers are very concerned about grammar and spelling. She wondered whether the students in her target population would consider spelling and grammar to be important.
5. From the NCTE (1970-71) teacher attitude survey the researcher chose those questions which appeared to be based upon or to reflect a "process" or a "product" orientation to teaching written language. Since this survey was carried out with teachers, many of the questions were reworded to ensure comprehension by high school students --the subjects of the study. The questions borrowed and revised from the NCTE study to use in the researcher's study were numbers 3, 8, 11, 19, 27, 30, 34, 35, 37, 38, 42, 43, 47, 49, 50, 53, and 54. (See Appendix A, pp. 179-187).

6. The researcher studied the Emig Attitude Scale (1971), as used by King (1979), to obtain ideas for specific questions that she could use about the writing process. Although, in the final draft, the researcher did not use any of Emig's questions per se, she did obtain the idea of "clustering" questions according to common ideas or feelings they exhibited. This method appeared to be useful for organizing responses to the questions. The researcher did not use any questions per se from the King Construct Scale or adopt her use of the bi-polar semantic differential scale but she was interested in the
conclusion King drew from the responses to her questionnaire. King describes some findings that indicate students are paying more attention to their writing. She claims that,

this may reflect an attitude in today's schools. Because of the publicity writing has been receiving lately, many schools have been including more writing in their English curricula. English teachers too are becoming more aware of this and introduce more writing instructions into their classrooms. (p. 127)

The researcher wondered that if the teachers of her target population were teaching more English, what kind of writing paradigm would this increased amount of instruction filter through -- the "process" or "product" paradigm?

7. The researcher studied the Daly and Miller (1975) description of the development of their writing apprehension scale to obtain knowledge of an alternative method of measuring responses to a Likert scale. Daly and Miller gave each item a positive or negative factor loading as a means of resolving the multidimensionality of each item. The researcher rejected this method of
measurement because her questionnaire was seeking not so much positive or negative feedback from each student about personal writing experiences but rather the student's concepts of or attitudes to a writing issue as related to a process or product paradigm. For example, she wished to see what percentage of students felt grades to be an important factor in motivating them to improve their writing, not whether they felt nervous about grades and therefore had negative feelings about them.

8. From the Smith questionnaire (1979) the researcher studied the questions related to reading and writing preferences of native students. She wished to obtain some idea of the space for responses Smith allotted to each question and the amount of choice he presented to the student in his interest survey form. This information helped her allot appropriate space and choice in Parts I and III of her questionnaire.

9. In the Reigstad and McAndrew Writing Attitude Scale (1984) the researcher studied the questions to see if any of the questions themselves or the concepts expressed by the questions could be used in her attitude scale. However, she found that, although the Reigstad and McAndrew questions were concerned with personal feelings about writing, most were not particularly related to either a process or product orientation and would invite
responses which would not give a clear indication of how the respondent had been taught.

Additional support was obtained from two books about data gathering techniques. From Hopkins (1976) the researcher obtained information for Part III of her questionnaire. Hopkins discusses the concept of open-ended questions but warns researchers to limit responses to questions by providing only the necessary number of lines. Hopkins states that open-ended questions reduce the reliability of data because such responses must be interpreted. However, the researcher was less interested in the responses per se than in the length and articulation of the response and its indication that the student comprehended the question.

From Wiersman (1975) the researcher obtained information about interview techniques with the educationally disadvantaged. Wiersman states that "since motivation for responding to a written inventory may be lacking" (p. 137) interviews may be a more successful means of obtaining data. He suggests that some respondents may be uneasy about answering questions and that the interviewer must recognize uneasiness and provide appropriate probes. Wiersman suggests that the interviewer be careful about leading the respondent.

The researcher studied Best (1981) to obtain ideas for
revising the final version of the questionnaire. One of Best's suggestions (among those not made by other educators or literature sources mentioned in this study) in how to improve a questionnaire was particularly relevant to the researcher -- the need to provide alternative choices within a question. In this study the researcher provided choice where she felt the student might lack the language experience to know a choice exists; for example, "It is more important to express one's feelings in writing than it is to write correct English," or "Talking is as important as writing."

Best also recommends that the questionnaire be administered personally: "The person administering the instrument has an opportunity to establish rapport, to explain the purpose of the study, and to explain the meaning of terms that may not be clear" (p. 167). This point had also been made to the researcher by the Public School Board consultant for native education. The consultant felt that native students who were not accustomed to answering questionnaires, would benefit by the personal appearance of the researcher.

Best also explains two ideas to consider when interpreting the responses, concepts the researcher knew would be significant with respect to her interpretations; that the responses do not necessarily represent positions of equal value in "for-ness" or "against-ness" and that people may be
responding according to how they think they should rather than according to how they really feel. Consequently the researcher made a point of explaining to the students that their responses should represent their opinions, not their teachers'.

The researcher considered and used Best's suggestions for good interview techniques: to have an outline of questions ready, along with appropriate probes; to have open-ended questions to encourage respondents to answer in their own words; to avoid lead-in questions; to assure confidentiality to the respondents; and, that if no tape recorder is used, to write down the actual words of the respondent as soon as it is convenient.

The "Product" and the "Process" View of Writing:

The Development of the Attitude Scale

In 1966 a conference was held in Dartmouth in which Canadian, American, and British educators discussed the teaching of English. The delegates expressed concern about the emphases on the finished product in the teaching of composition. They felt that the emphasis should be shifted to include the process of writing as well. In the same year John Dixon reported on the proceedings of the conference.
In 1975, Dixon's report was re-issued and included a forward by James Squire and James Britton about what had happened to the teaching of writing in the 10 years that had elapsed since the conference. During those 10 years, attention, hitherto focused on the need for students to acquire the skills to master reading and writing as evidenced in the written "product" or end result of the learning process, began to centre instead on "the processes of interaction through which children acquire competence . . . " in reading and writing (p. XV). With regard to language learning, the processes children engage in to acquire competence in language before arriving at mastery, began to be recognized as a crucial part of the learning experience.

Writing theorists and teachers such as Young (1978) and Hairston (1982) refer to this change of focus as a "paradigm shift," a term once employed by Kuhn in 1963 to refer to a structural change in learning theory that comes about when outdated methods can no longer solve new problems. Young describes the traditional writing paradigm as such:
The overt features . . . are obvious enough: the emphasis on the composed product rather than the composing process; the analysis of discourse into description, narration, exposition, and argument; the strong concern with usage . . . and with style; the preoccupation with the informal essay and research paper; and so on. (p. 31)

Hairston adds that adherents of the traditional or "product" paradigm believe that writers already know what they will say before writing and work only to fit their ideas into a pre-established form. These adherents view the composing process as linear, proceeding from prewriting to writing to rewriting and see writing teachers essentially as editors.

Adherents of the "process" paradigm (Moffett 1968; Britton, 1970; Dixon, 1975; Hairston, 1982) view writing essentially as an act of discovery. The writer develops and discovers ideas in the process of writing; the writing process is convoluted and recursive rather than linear. Writing teachers interact with the students while the students are writing, and are often writers themselves.

Moffett (1968), a strong advocate of the "process paradigm", claims "Writing is learned in the same basic way other activities are learned --by doing and by heeding what happens" (p. 193). The child learns correct speech because he has an audience with whom he wants to communicate and who will provide him with a correct speech model from which to revise
his own inarticulate utterances. The student should write because he has something to say, prompted by his own experiences and motivated by the knowledge that he will have a critical but supportive audience. From their feedback he learns the appropriate techniques of effective communication. Human interaction and response become vital.

Writing techniques (syntax, punctuation, grammar) become subordinate to the writer -- the person attempting to express and share a personal experience. Perhaps Moffett (1968) says it best about the place of writing technique and self-expression in the "process" orientation to writing:

> For the learner, basics are not the small focus, technical things but broad things like meaning and motivation, purpose and point, which are precisely what are missing from exercises. An exercise, by my definition, is any piece of writing practised only in schools -- that is an assignment that stipulates arbitrary limits that leave the writer with no real relationship between him and a subject and an audience. I would not ask a student to write anything other than an authentic discourse, because the learning process proceeds from intent and content down to the contemplation of technical points, not the other way. (p. 205)

"Form follows function," (Shuy, 1981). The techniques needed to create the proper form will follow when the function is understood and shared.
A relationship between reading, writing, and speech is emphasized; they may be separate forms of language or discourse, suggests Dixon (1975, p. 26), but their strategies overlap. Each demands an awareness and internalization of other points of view. Learning in each contributes to learning in the other.

Talk becomes important. Dixon (1975) speaks of the experimental research of Vygotsky and Luria that reveals that if children "talk out" their operations of a task prior to or while engaged in it they have a better chance of succeeding with it (p. 24). Moffett (1968) relates this concept to writing: "Writing should be taught as an extension of speech" (p. 41). He states that the real functions of writing techniques --punctuation, diction, commas, semi-colons, word order --are learned in the process of writing one's thoughts to another. "Generally, much of writing technique is a matter of simulation or replacing vocal characteristics" (p. 41). Language and its techniques are learned in the process of communication. "Language is learned in operation, not by dummy runs" (Dixon, p. 13).

Personal and expressive writing become the most significant forms of writing. Dixon explains (1975, p. xvi) that expressive language is the medium by which we seek relationship and understanding, and upon which we build an identity that will be needed later when participating in the
higher forms of intellectual, argumentative discourse.

The "process" paradigm necessitates different teaching methods. Grades, the stamp of approval or disapproval upon a finished product, can no longer be considered the only means of feedback or evaluation. Textbooks become merely a source from which to practise a particular skill, not a substitute for the teacher. Individual talks with the teacher and individual and group talks with fellow students are fundamental because they are social activities that foster communication. The student's attempts to communicate, even in his own dialect or language, to other culturally similar classmates, cannot be forbidden because the focus is, first and foremost, on helping the student express and communicate his thoughts, when he is ready to do so, not on teaching him to define noun and verb.

The teacher's role shifts from the editor concerned with the final product to a guide, helping the student to find and express his own voice and his own personality.

A shift from a "product" to a "process" paradigm in writing must not be viewed as lack of concern for the product--the writing. Far from it. The student cannot communicate in writing unless he has the skills to do so. But the purpose of writing is not only to learn how to write a sentence but also to discover how that sentence fits into the larger
context and intent of the whole composition, and how that composition can be an act of discovery and development of ideas and feelings, a growth of self. The questions on the attitude-scale in Part II of the questionnaire (Appendix A) have been developed to reflect the paradigm shift described in the literature of the field of English Education and to make it operative. The intent of these questions is to attempt to identify students' attitudes to writing that are "process" or "product" oriented.

For the researcher's classification of the questions as "process," "product," or "intermediate" (belonging to neither "process" nor "product") see Appendix B, pp. 188-192. For explanations of the researcher's categorization for each question see Chapter V on "Data and Analysis of Part II," pp. 100-116.

Programme Construction and Educators' Reactions

The goals of the questionnaire were to discover native students' concepts of and attitudes to writing English. The questionnaire itself underwent a number of changes. The reasons for the changes give some indication as to the types of problems encountered when preparing a questionnaire for a culture different from one's own and when preparing questionnaires in general.

The first draft of the questionnaire consisted of two parts of ...
was to identify high school students' written language experiences and their concept of written language. Part II included an attitude scale and some open-ended questions in an attempt to discover whether students viewed written language as a "process" or a "product" (see pp. 100-116). Parts I and II were to be given to the students at two separate times, about a month apart. It was felt that this procedure would give students sufficient time to "forget" their responses to the first sections so that their responses to the second section would be less "contaminated", less influenced by the responses they gave in the first section.

The first draft included specific and detailed questions covering a large domain of experiences: the student's pre-school language experiences; exposure to literature at home and at school, to libraries and to the media; experiences with and attitudes to elementary and high school writing experiences and teachers; and some writing experiences outside of school. Part II included an attitude-scale and some open-ended questions similar to the ones that appear in the final version.

This draft was given to several educators of native students, some of whom were native themselves, for analysis and critique. The questionnaire was revised on the basis of their written and spoken comments:

1. Some of the questions revealed a lack of knowledge of
either conditions in native schools or educational resources for the native students. For example, questions concerning reading material in the native languages were considered inappropriate because they claimed that no such material exists. Questions regarding native teachers in the school were irrelevant because these students, in elementary school at least, were not normally taught by native teachers.

2. Some of the questions were generally irrelevant. For example, a question about whether the student was raised by his/her grandparent or parent was seen to have no bearing upon his/her concept of an attitude to writing English. The researcher had included the question as a means of filling in a picture of the student's language background as to how much exposure he/she may have had to English. The question was based on findings of previous researchers that showed that the kind of exposure to English a student experiences at home can influence success with and attitudes to learning to use that language effectively. Several educators suggested that questions regarding the language of communication between parent and student, parent and parent, and student and friends, would be a more specific way of determining exposure to and practice with English. One prominent educator suggested that the places and number of elementary schools attended could give an indication as to
the nature of the student's education in English.

3. Some of the educators considered the vocabulary in the attitude-scale too difficult. Their examples included words such as "prior", "pantomime," and "mechanics."

4. One of the educators stated that some of the questions were too "sensitive". In his view the question about possible teacher criticism of the student's oral language would elicit unpleasant memories. Another native educator later remarked that this was indeed an important question because native children often have negative experiences with the English language early in school that he felt could affect their performance in that language for the rest of their school years. He recalled his own experience of being humiliated and chastised in class for using his native language in school.

5. Most of the educators noted that the questionnaire as a whole was too long, that a student who had difficulty of any kind with the English language would either not finish the questions or would give meager information.

6. Some of the educators wrote that the length of the questionnaire showed a general lack of focus. They felt it would be more beneficial to the purpose of the study to focus on one or two aspects of the student's school experiences. All of the educators believed that the questions on the attitude scale at the end of Part II were
well formulated, would be the easiest to interpret, and appeared to be the most objective.

7. One of the educators stated that the questions regarding writing experiences in the school should be asked only if the researcher was completely familiar with the Cree language and other native dialects. This was considered an interesting criticism because it was felt to reveal a general misunderstanding of the general purpose and intended depth of the study, and of the nature of exploratory research. The purpose of the study was to discover attitudes, not to identify linguistic competence or incompetence. For example, the question about interference between mother tongue and English writing was intended to elicit from the student whether he believes an interference exists. The researcher wondered if there would be any consistency of response between those who believe their mother tongue interferes and those who see no interference. Whether or not the student actually has an interference difficulty and, if so, whether it is of any consequence is considered a matter for linguists and beyond the scope of the study. These criticisms of the exploratory research approach which sought to establish a content for subsequent research on written language were important factors in shortening and rewording the questionnaire.
8. One educator pointed out that the questionnaire failed to provide enough information for the student as to the point of the questions. The student deserved to know the reasons behind the questions. He felt that this would be more "ethical" and would constitute a means of obtaining "enlightened" consent from each student.

With the above criticisms in mind, the researcher revised the questionnaire. The two sections were reduced to one; questions regarding experiences in the elementary school were omitted in order to focus exclusively upon those in high school. Some questions concerning the student's mother tongue or favored language were kept. The researcher felt that there might be some consistent relationships between language background and later concepts of and attitudes to writing English.

The second draft was then shown to a number of educators of native students. Their criticisms concerned three main aspects: the existence of "leading questions" caused by assumptions on the part of the researcher; again, too many questions about too broad a domain of experience; and, most important of all, too many questions which were too "subjective" in nature and would therefore lend themselves to subjective interpretation. They emphasized that the attitude scale was the most objective part of the questionnaire and
therefore the least likely to yield information that could be interpreted subjectively or from which a researcher could overgeneralize. They also felt the scale would be the easiest for the students to answer.

Examples of leading questions were those which asked the student to choose the kinds of writing difficulties he experiences (question 30. "The part of the writing process that I find the most difficult is: a. researching information b. getting a good idea c. arguing a point of view d. polishing the final draft.) Such a question not only assumed the student had difficulty but led him into making a choice among difficulties which he may not have in the first place. Questions attempting to cover too much ground were those which concerned outside influences, personal interests, and school experiences. This criticism is closely related to the concern that questions about personal experiences and interests lend themselves too easily to subjective interpretations. The researcher at this point considered that the responses that would emerge from the attitude scale would be sufficient to yield some indication of how these students were taught to conceive of writing.

The final draft of the questionnaire, now consisting of three parts, concentrated upon two main aspects of written language: (1) questions about language background, and (2) concepts of and attitudes to writing English (and writers and
writing teachers). This version was then taken to a consultant for the Saskatoon Public School Board involved in the education of native high school students. This person expressed interest in the questionnaire and a desire to have it administered to native students. However, she suggested that it would be important for the classroom teacher to be present while the researcher administered the questionnaire for the following reasons:

1. Native students are not familiar with questionnaire format. They might not be comfortable with it and might require the explanations of the classroom teacher who knows them well.
2. Native students do not usually feel comfortable in the presence of strangers and would need the reassurance of the teacher's presence.
3. The language of the questionnaire might not be completely clear to the students and thus the researcher should consider reading aloud all the questions to be sure they are understood.

The Saskatoon Public School Board educator also stressed the importance of conducting interviews with some of the students. She felt that some of the students could have difficulty answering the questionnaire and that a personal interview carried out after the administration of the
questionnaire could unearth more in-depth responses. With regard to particular questions she felt strongly that questions 50, 63, and 64 be included (see Appendix A, p. 179). These questions make an explicit distinction between native and non-native students.

**Evaluation of the "Process" and "Product" Questions**

The researcher's categorization of the questions as "product," "process," or "intermediate" (see Appendix B, p. 188) in their orientation to writing was evaluated by an experienced language arts teacher at the junior high school level. The evaluator agreed with the majority of the categorizations by the researcher but questioned numbers 30, 35, 39, 48, and 59.

With regard to question 30 ("The teacher should not mark all students exactly the same way: what is a "C" for one student may be an "A" for another."), the evaluator felt that the mere mention of grades "A," "B," and "C" put the question into the "product" category. The researcher understood but felt nonetheless that the immediate impact of the question is its emphasis on individualization -- a "process" orientation.

The evaluator used a quotation "Writing is not speech written down" (Smith, 1982) to argue against the authenticity of question 35 ("A student's speech should be corrected so that his writing may improve."). The researcher recognized
that writing is not speech written down. She was attempting to elicit the student's view about whether or not he felt a connection existed between speech and writing, a "process" orientation. But perhaps the question is too ambiguous and at the time should have been either reworded or eliminated.

The evaluator objected to question 39 ("All teachers, [English, Math, Science] are responsible for teaching students to write.") as being inexplicit. All teachers may be teaching students to write but they may be doing so in either a "product" or a "process" manner. The researcher felt that the obvious intent of the question is the idea that other teachers besides English teachers should teach writing -- a concept which points to an integrated approach to teaching writing -- a "process" concept.

The evaluator queried whether or not question 48 ("It is important to write a native language well.") belonged in any of the categories including the "intermediate." She did not specify a reason but the researcher included the question to see if there would be a compatibility of response between it and question 61 ("It is important to write English well.").

The evaluator noted that question 59 ("How the teacher feels about a student's writing is very important.") was vague and did not belong in either the "process" or "product" category. The researcher maintained the question (as a means of determining how many students valued the teacher's
opinion) but moved it to the "intermediate" category.

The views of the evaluator helped the researcher to conceptualize how these questions could be either rephrased or moved into another category. However, the researcher and the evaluator were basically in agreement about the "process," "product," and "intermediate" categorization of the questions.

Summary

The researcher studied a number of sources to obtain examples of questions used to obtain a knowledge of attitudes of teachers and of native students about various issues. She looked at the style, length, and vocabulary of such questions and examined ways of probing various issues.

The researcher then reviewed some of the works of theorists and researchers like Dixon, Young, Hairston, Moffett, and Britton to obtain an understanding of the philosophy of the "process" and "product" paradigms and the concept of "paradigm shift." She did this in order to construct a base upon which to formulate and categorize the questions in the attitude scale.

The researcher then presented a draft of the questionnaire to educators of native students, some of whom were natives. These educators analysed and criticized the questionnaire where they felt the questions displayed a lack of knowledge of conditions of native education, or were
irrelevant, difficult, over-sensitive, lengthy, unfocused or demanding of more specialized knowledge on the part of the researcher (such as a native language). Following revisions based upon the criticisms, a new draft was shown to a different group of native and non-native educators of native students who criticized questions which they felt could 'lead' the student, were based upon assumptions, or were too subjective. After further revisions a third draft was presented to a consultant for native education at the Public School Board who revealed positive interest but expressed a number of concerns dealing with the questionnaire's administration. The consultant also suggested that the researcher conduct a small number of interviews, after the administration of the questionnaire, in the hope of obtaining some in-depth responses. She felt that some of the students might not fully answer the questions in Part III.

A language arts junior high school teacher evaluated the researchers "process" and "product" categorization of the questions in the attitude scale. No specific changes to the questions resulted as both the researcher and the evaluator were in agreement on most of the questions.
Chapter IV

THE PILOT TEST OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE

The researcher conducted a pilot test of the questionnaire in order to gain a perspective on how the students understood the questions. Since the purpose of the study was to design a questionnaire which obtained students' attitudes to and concepts of writing English, she felt that such information could help her make suggestions to improve the questionnaire by indicating which questions the students found difficult or unclear, which questions yielded useful information, and which questions yielded useless information. Such knowledge would alert subsequent researchers about directions for future research in the use of questionnaires to identify concepts of and attitudes to writing English.

Subjects

Permission was granted by the Saskatoon Public School Board to conduct the study with 50 native students from three of the city's high schools. The students ranged in age from 14 to 20 years. Most of the students were in year two of high school although a small number were in year one or three. Of the students who spoke a native language, most spoke Cree; a few spoke either Saulteaux, Sioux, Chipewyan, or Slavey. Sixteen of the students spoke only English; 45 of the students were identified by their teachers as being age-grade delayed with respect to year in school and writing ability; five of the students were age-grade delayed with respect to their writing ability only. All 50 students were from modified English classes.
Administration of the Questionnaire

The researcher was asked to come to each of the schools in the morning and during the second period. She began each session with the following explanation:

I have taught native students for two different academic years in Manitoba and Saskatchewan. I became interested in how native students feel about writing English. Therefore I would like you to fill out this questionnaire. This is not a test, but a questionnaire designed to understand your feelings about written English. There are no right or wrong answers. Please feel comfortable about responding the way you really feel. Your answers will be kept confidential. However, because I would like to interview some of you later, I have given each of you a number that corresponds to your name on the class list.

There were no questions about, or objections to, the explanation. On the advice of the native consultant for the Saskatoon Public School Board the researcher decided not to use a tape recorder for fear of intimidating the students. She jotted down as soon as she could any question or responses made by the students, herself, or the teacher. Therefore words in quotations represent recall rather than verbatim responses.

In Section I of the questionnaire (Appendix A, p.179) a few students could not recall the age at which they started school. Also a few students could not understand question 12.1 ("My native language 'gets in the way' when I try to..."
write English"). The researcher therefore asked the student if he/she ever felt that having a mother tongue different than English slowed down their English. These students were also perplexed with Question 12.2 (If 'yes' can you describe how it 'gets in the way' when you write English?") The researcher found this question difficult to elaborate upon without actually leading the student. She said only, "When you are writing, in what way do you think you could write better if English was the only language you knew?" Some students had trouble with "Year in school". They took this to mean 1984.

In Section II of the questionnaire some students had difficulty with the following words: composition, appropriate, self-expression, grammar (virtually all the students expressed some confusion with this word), noun, verb, define, correct English, mechanics, assigned, talk out, and letter-grade.

The researcher (and in some instances the teacher) defined them as follows:

Composition - "a piece of written work, perhaps half a page to several pages long, sometimes a story, or perhaps an explanation of how to do something. It is the act of putting words together."

Appropriate - "the response that applies to you."
Self-expression - "to reveal your feelings or views, to talk or write about them. To tell others about how you feel about something."

Grammar - "explained by the teacher. "Bad grammar means putting the words in the wrong order or using words which aren't really words. 'I gots' is bad grammar."

Noun - "the name of a person, place, or thing. 'The man is smiling.' 'Man' is the subject and the noun."

Verb - "the action word. 'The cat is jumping off the sofa'. 'Jumping' is the verb."

Define - "to explain what a word means or to give an example of it."

Correct English - "English that is used properly. You speak correct English when you make no mistakes in grammar, spelling, pronunciation, or word order."

Mechanics - "punctuation, syntax, grammar."

Assigned - "to be given to you. The teacher does not let you choose a topic but gives you one to write about."

Talk-out - "to talk over with someone before actually sitting down to write about your subject. To discuss your ideas with a teacher or a friend before writing about them."

In Section II there were also queries and comments regarding the meaning of some questions as a whole; the explanations given by the researcher follow:

Question: "When writing to persuade someone to your point of view, spelling and punctuation are the most important part of the writing."

Explanation: "When you are writing to convince someone to see an issue the way you see it, the most important part of the writing is to use correct spelling and punctuation."

Question: "A student who wishes to become a garage mechanic should learn how to write properly."

No explanation asked for but question provoked much interest and laughter.

Question: "Writing is the best means of self-expression."

Explanation: "Are there other means of self-expression such as art or music which are as good a means of self-expression" (a difficult question to explain without leading the students).
Question: "It is important to know how to define "noun" and "verb" in order to write well."

Explanation: In addition to explaining the definition of noun and verb the researcher added this comment: "Do you think you should be able to give a definition of these words in order to use them properly in a sentence?"

Question: "If a student really wants to say something in writing, he or she will have little trouble with the mechanics."

Explanation: The teacher was overheard explaining to several students: "You'll find the words coming easily and correctly."

Question: "Personal writing is the most important kind of writing."

Explanation: "Writing in which you express feelings is the most important kind."

Question: "A student can learn more about periods, commas, nouns, and verbs in workbooks or grammar lessons than by writing book reports or essays."

Explanation: "You learn more about punctuation and parts of speech, like verbs and nouns, in a workbook or by listening to the teacher explain them than by actually using them in writing."
Part III of the questionnaire (Appendix A, p. 179) caused the most difficulty. The researcher could see that many of the students were not writing much at this point. She therefore explained each question aloud as follows:

**Question:** "Some writing teachers I really like because...."
**Explanation:** "What is it about some of your writing teachers that you really enjoy, either about the way they teach the lesson or about themselves as people?"

**Question:** "Some writing teachers I do not like because...."
**Explanation:** "Is there anything now, or was there anything in the past, about a writing teacher that really irritated you? Did you ever feel like skipping that class? Why?"

**Question:** "Write a comment telling what you like most about writing?"
**Explanation:** "Is there anything about writing that you really like? Think about your last writing assignment. What particular part of that assignment did you enjoy the most? Do you find that you usually enjoy that particular part of the writing assignment?"

**Question:** "Write a comment telling what you like least about writing?"
**Explanation:** "Is there any part about writing, or a writing assignment, that you dislike doing and wish you didn't have to do? Is there any part that you wish someone else could do for you?"
Question: "I wish writing teachers would teach me more...."
Explanation: "Is there any part of writing class that you wish the teacher would spend more time on? Is there any part that you find difficult to follow and would like individual help with?"

Question: "A good writer is one who ...."
Explanation: "What do you think good writers do that makes them good writers? When someone tells you that so and so is really a good writer, what do you take that to mean?"

Question: "What question(s) do you think this questionnaire should ask? If you like, answer them."
Explanation: This question caused general confusion. "Are there any particular points about writing that you feel strongly about and wished the questionnaire had dealt with? Are there any questions you felt should not have been asked --that the questionnaire had no business asking?"

The researcher concluded by asking the students to write down their impressions of the questionnaire as a whole.
Personal Interviews With Selected Students

The researcher selected for interviews 10 students whose written responses were the least informative (one word answers or no answers at all), or who checked too many of the "no opinion" boxes in the attitude-scale. She came to the interviews with a list of the questions for which she had prepared appropriate probes. Again, the probes repeat, in some instances, those used for the group as a whole because the researcher found it virtually impossible to expand on questions without actually putting ideas into the student's head.

The researcher used the following questions as a guideline for each interview:

a) Do you like to write?

b) What do you like to write about? (probes - Can you describe what you like to write about? Why do you enjoy writing about that?)

c) Do teachers on the whole give you much chance to write about what you would like to?

d) What activity do you enjoy doing the most in your English class? (probes - reading or writing?)

e) Think of your last writing assignment. What part of the assignment did you enjoy the most? (probes - looking up information? looking over your paper before handing it in? just writing it?) What part did you have the most difficulty with? (probe - Can you describe the part of the writing assignment that gave you the most trouble?) Why do you think that part of the assignment gave you difficult? Does it always give you difficulty?
f) If you were a writing teacher what would you do differently from teachers you have had? What would you enjoy teaching students to do in writing?

g) Can you describe the problems that most students seem to have with writing? What particular aspects of writing does your teacher seem to review often with the class?

h) What would you improve about your writing? How would you go about improving it?

i) Who is your favourite author? Can you describe what it is about his or her writing that you like?

j) Describe what you think good writers do that makes them good. What does your favorite writer do that makes you want to read him or her?

The researcher began each interview with the following comments:

I would like to go over with you some of the questions in Parts II and III that you did not answer or that you gave short answers to. Perhaps if we talk together you will think of something to add.

For these personal interviews the researcher did not at any point use a tape recorder because she felt this would intimidate the student. For the first three interviews she attempted to maintain eye-to-eye contact with the student in as relaxed and conversational a manner as possible. She also
asked the student to write down his responses. These techniques were not successful. The students did not appear to want any eye-to-eye contact, and they were hesitant to write down responses under the gaze of the researcher. Thus the researcher decided that for each remaining interview she would write down the student's responses on a sheet before her. For some reason this technique appeared to work more smoothly. Whether it was because the remaining students just happened to be more confident or whether lack of eye-to-eye contact was less threatening is difficult to ascertain without knowing more about each student.

The researcher discovered the following impediments to a successful (more information producing) interview process with these students:

1. The interviews were scheduled in advance but the student often did not appear because he or she was either absent from school or from class. In one case the student was supposed to be in "shop" and ready to leave class for the interview but was not there when the researcher arrived to go with him to the library.

In two other cases the students selected for the interview after answering the questionnaire were not available because in the interim they had dropped out of school.

2. Even though the students had been told of the interviews some appeared genuinely puzzled over the reappearance of the researcher. "I have nothing to say,"
"I've already answered the questions," and "Is this really all that serious?" were typical statements from these students. Some students complied willingly and politely to a request for an interview.

3. Two of the interviews had to be conducted in the library for lack of a private space. Several students from other classes interrupted the interviews to enquire about what was going on.

4. Most of the students responded in monosyllables. Responses such as "It's O.K.," or "Yeah, I suppose," or "I don't know" were typical. The students were not hostile. They lacked commitment to the interview process.

On the whole most of the students appeared indifferent or apathetic during the interview. A few appeared willing and curious. One of the students elaborated on responses without much probing from the researcher. The other nine required considerable probing for additional information; they responded either monosyllabically or in brief sentences. It is possible that some of the questions invited monosyllabic responses, but in these cases the researcher used probes to get additional information.

Perhaps had the researcher been better known to the students, more informed about the personality of each, more knowledgeable about the student's home and school life, and his current writing experiences, she would have obtained more in-depth information.
Reactions to the Questionnaire: Teachers and School Board Administrators

Teachers. The researcher asked three English teachers, of the students in the study, to evaluate the questionnaire in writing in terms of its strengths and weaknesses, and to suggest ways it could be made more relevant to native students. She also asked them to indicate which questions they felt should be changed, omitted, or added.

The teachers all felt that the strength of the questionnaire lay in the relevance of the questions to the students' concerns, in the clearness and conciseness of the directions, and in the usefulness of the information it could yield to writing teachers.

With regard to the questionnaire's weaknesses, one teacher felt that the students "did not initially know what was expected of them." By this she meant that they may not have been sure how honest they were supposed to be and whether the questionnaire was really "a kind of test." However, she later stated that by the time the students arrived at the end of the questions they were undoubtedly reacting honestly. The researcher asked the other teachers if they felt the students were threatened by the questionnaire and they answered that they were sure the students were not.
One teacher felt that the questionnaire may have been too long, and none of the teachers had any suggestions concerning changes to, omissions of, or inclusions of questions, or ways in which the questionnaire could be made more relevant to native students.

Administrators. The researcher obtained evaluations of the questionnaire from three school board administrators. She reprints each of their written responses below verbatim.

The program consultant for division III in language arts forwarded this evaluation:

1. Strengths:
   a) Comprehensive - gathers a great deal of important data
   b) Well laid out - clear directions easy to follow
   c) Part II - questions 1-69, many checks on the information collected.

2. Weaknesses:
   a) Organization - perhaps questions 14 and 15 in section I should come first. Then the other questions could be tackled.
   b) Detail - Part III asks "Complete the Sentences" but questions 3, 4 and 7 do not allow for a response as directed. Perhaps Question 3 could have been "What I like most about writing is . . . Question 4 "What I don't like about writing is. . . " Question 7 could actually be Section IV.
3. a) Perhaps some suggestions could have been included in question 12.2 in Section I as to how one's native language "gets in the way."

b) Similarly in question 13.2 suggestions could have been made.

In general, this questionnaire is well conceived and should provide a wealth of information.

The program consultant for native education forwarded these comments:

**Strengths:**
1. Generates a lot of valuable data
2. Section II provides for numerous checks on information. Most statements are clear and direct.
3. The three sections provide a well-organized framework for data collection.
4. For the most part, directions are clear and easy to follow.

**Weaknesses:**
1. Questions 14 and 15 might more naturally come earlier in the section.
2. Question 12 in Section I may be a little too vague. Other than the obvious vocabulary problems, analysis of interference of a first language with another may be somewhat sophisticated for most students.
3. In Section II some phrases may cause confusion for the students; e.g. #16 and #43.
4. In Section III all questions do not lend themselves to the kind of response solicited in the direction "Complete the sentences."

Summary. In general this is a well-thought out questionnaire which should generate considerable useful data to aid in developing an understanding of language problems encountered by Native students in schools. It is to be hoped that this will mark the beginning of further research into this vital question.

The consultant for low achievers forwarded this comment:

I think this questionnaire will provide some interesting and worthwhile data about student perceptions. The basic questions posed are very sophisticated and may fall beyond the experiences of many respondents. A statement of purpose for the respondents would be helpful.

Summary

The researcher conducted a pilot study of the questionnaire in order to see how the students perceived the questions. She hoped the ensuing information would indicate which questions to modify, omit, or add so she could make suggestions for the construction of a more effective questionnaire.

The researcher obtained permission from the Saskatoon Public School Board to conduct the study with 50 native students from 3 high schools in the city. The students were
age-grade delayed (whether with respect to age in school or
with regard to writing ability) and were perceived by their
teachers as having difficulty writing English.

While administering the questionnaire the researcher
and the teacher defined those words or explained those
questions the students did not understand. The students had
the most difficulty with the questions in Part III. The
researcher found it extremely difficult to elaborate upon
questions without actually putting ideas into the students' heads.

After reading the completed questionnaire, the
researcher selected ten students who had provided incomplete
or nonsensical responses in the questionnaire for in-depth
personal interviews.

The researcher discovered after the first three
interviews that this group of students felt uncomfortable with
eye-to-eye contact. She found the most successful interview
technique to be one in which she wrote down the students' responses to her prepared questions while she was conducting the interview. The researcher also discovered a number of impediments to collecting additional information through personal interviews: high absenteeism, a lack of commitment to or confusion with the interview process on the part of the student, monosyllabic responding, and, in one case, difficulty in finding private space for the interview.
Teachers' and school board administrators' reactions revealed their views of the strengths and weaknesses of the questionnaire. The strengths consisted of the questionnaire's potential for collection of valuable data, and the questions' clarity, organization, and relevance for the student. The weaknesses consisted of the questionnaire's length, sophistication of language use, difficult phrasing in some questions, and the failure of three questions to allow for responses as directed.
Chapter V

DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA OF QUESTIONNAIRE

Data of Part I

Eleven of the 50 students who completed the questionnaire speak only Cree to their parents; one speaks Sioux to her parents; one speaks Chipewyan to his, one Saulteaux to his, and one Slavey to hers. Five students speak a mixture of Cree and English to their parents and two speak English and Saulteaux to their parents.

Of the 50 students, nine speak either English or Cree to their friends at school and the rest of the students speak only English to their friends. Of the 50 students seven prefer to speak their native language and three stated no preference.

Thirteen sets of parents speak only Cree to each other; ten speak a mixture of Cree and English to each other; four speak Saulteaux to each other; one speaks Sioux and Cree to one another; one speaks Chipewyan to each other; and one set speaks Cree and Chipewyan to one another.

Ten of the 50 students can write in a native language well enough to make themselves understood. One writes a native language very well. Two think in their native language and eleven think in either English or their native language; it depends to whom they are speaking. The others who can speak a native language tend to think and write only in English.

Two students (for whom the question applied) felt that their native language "gets in the way" when they try to write
English; and nine felt they have difficulty writing English.

Half of the students started school at the age of five years; most of the others started at the age of six. Nine do not remember at what age they began school. Eighteen of the 50 students lived in a city before starting school; the others lived in either a small town or on an Indian Reserve. Ten attended as many as ten different elementary schools.

The students range in age from 14 to 20 years. They are in either their first, second, or third year of high school, the majority being in their second year. Twelve boys and 27 girls completed the questionnaire. Forty-five of the students are age-grade delayed (two-three years for most of them); however, ten of these students have been out of school for at least a year at some point in their schooling.

Analysis of Part I

One of the purposes of this study was to determine if there were any relationships between the language background of the native student and his concepts of and attitudes to writing English. Questions 3, 4, 5, 6, 10 and 11 were intended to determine which native students had some native language in their backgrounds and which had none. The questions were generated by the studies of Burnaby (1982) which claim that the less English in the students' background, the lower the academic achievement, and of Ohannessian (1974) and Knachman (1972) which suggest that English learned by parental models
may hinder more than help the native student at school. Although, as the students' responses indicated, the amount of native language in the students' background varied, a response to one of the above mentioned questions which indicated a native language somewhere in the background was felt enough to qualify the student as having a native language background. Actually students with a native language background responded to more than one of the questions. Of the 50 native students in the pilot study, 16 have no native language in their backgrounds (as indicated by the responses to the above mentioned questions) and 34 have some native language in their backgrounds.

The remaining questions in Part I were intended to determine more of the nature of the students' language backgrounds (responses to questions #1, 7, and 8 could indicate something of the amount of exposure to English the student had experienced); education (responses to question #7 could indicate whether the student's elementary education was stable and continuous or disruptive due to much moving and whether this in turn may have affected the student's attitude to learning); age-grade delay (responses to questions #2, 9 and 14 could determine whether the student's age-grade delay was due to factors other than low academic achievement) and self-perception (responses to questions #12.1, 12.2, 13.1 and 13.2 could indicate how the student sees him/her self as a
writer of English). These questions were intended to "fill in" the students' background, to describe the students the questionnaire was concerned with.

It appears that 32 (64%) of these students started life on an Indian Reserve or in a small town; that 40 (80%) changed elementary schools two or more times; that 41 (82%) started school at the age of five or six; that 40 (80%) have not dropped out of school for a year or more, and 45 (90%) are age-grade delayed with regard to year in school. The majority does not perceive any interference between their native language (if they have one) and their writing of English and nine (18%) believe they have difficulty writing English (eight of these latter have a native language background).

Thus it is possible to speculate that the majority of these students has not had as much exposure to English as they would have had in an urban community, have not experienced a stable and continuous elementary schooling; have been held back from one - four years in school, and do not hold the same opinion about their writing skills as do their teachers.

Summary

The responses indicate that English is the language used most often among these students at school, at home with their parents, and between their parents (even for students who have a native language in their background). For those
students who have access to a native language, English is the preferred language, with the exception of seven students who prefer their native language. Few of the students feel any interference between their native language and English and few believe they have difficulty writing English.

The majority of students attended several elementary schools; most attended these schools in a small town or on an Indian Reserve. Most of these students are two to three years age-grade delayed, and most are in year two of high school.

The researcher felt that perhaps because of disruptive schooling and the presence of a language other than English in their backgrounds some of these students have been placed in modified English classes.

Data and Analysis of Part II

The questions for Part II of the questionnaire, and the responses of the students are described and analyzed below according to the following categories: the mechanics of writing; teaching methods and evaluation; writing as self-expression; attitudes about writers; and the purposes of writing.

On the questionnaire these questions appeared in a random order; the five categories were created for purposes of analysis. The findings are described as percentages in
Appendix C, p. 193.

The questions are also categorized according to a "product" or "process" view of writing as described in Chapter III, pp. 60-65. For example, if a student agreed with a question that is classified below in the "product" category it is assumed that he may have a "product" view of writing in so far as the particular view described by that question is concerned. Conversely, in most cases, if he disagreed with the same question it is assumed he may have a "process" view of writing with regard to that particular question.

Some questions appear in more than one category; these are questions that suggest both an implicit and an explicit meaning. For example, a response to #15 ("Teachers should correct every mistake on students' papers.") implies an explicit attitude toward teaching methods and an implicit attitude toward the importance of mechanics in writing.

In cases where over 10% of the students checked the "no opinion" box, the researcher questioned the clarity of a particular question. The researcher included mention of the percentage of the "strongly agree" or "strongly disagree" responses if that percentage was over 10%; she felt that this percentage indicated that the question was eliciting a distinctive concept or attitude to writing English.
The Mechanics of Writing

Questions 3, 4, 6, 7, 9, 15, 17, 18, 20, 24, 28, 29, 32, 33, 42, 45, 53 and 61 of the questionnaire asked students to consider the mechanical aspects of writing.

Summary

Seventy-eight percent of these students (16% strongly) believe that it is necessary to know the rules of grammar in order to write well; 70% (18% strongly) believe that one can learn more about punctuation and parts of speech in grammar lessons and workbooks than by writing; 68% believe that one learns to write by doing grammar exercises; and 56% believe that one learns to write by studying grammar. Seventy percent (18% strongly) believe that one must know the definitions of the parts of speech in order to write well. Eighty-six percent agree that one learns to write by writing. Seventy-six percent believe (12% strongly) that a science teacher should correct the grammar on a student's reports, 80% (18% strongly) that teachers should correct every mistake on students' papers, and 74% (14% strongly) that a student can learn to write only if the teacher corrects all his compositions. A minority (35%) believes that such corrections should result in the loss of a mark per mistake, and 44% that an interest in the topic about which one is writing lessens difficulties with the mechanics of the language.
Eighty-two percent (16% strongly) agree that correct word order and punctuation are the most important parts of writing and 76% (18% strongly) later agree that self-expression is the most important; then later 64% (16% strongly) agree that self-expression is more important than correct English. However, for the latter question 16% were of no opinion. Seventy-two percent believe that in an argumentative paper, spelling and punctuation are the most important part of the paper.

The majority (74%) believes that facts are more important than correct English in a scientific report; however, 76% agree that faulty grammar should be corrected. Eighty-six percent (18% strongly) agree that correct English should be required of all students in composition class. Eighty-eight percent (20% strongly) feel that it is important to write English well.

Analysis

It is difficult to interpret the inconsistencies in the responses to the questions concerning grammar lessons, grammar exercises, and grammar rules in learning to write, but it appears that the majority of the students have a "product" orientation to the mechanics of writing --that a knowledge of grammar rules and of the definitions of the parts of speech are prerequisite to the development of
writing abilities. And although many believe that one learns to write by doing grammar lessons the largest majority believe that the writing process itself teaches writing -- a "process" orientation. Although these views are not necessarily inconsistent -- many students may believe that a combination of both writing practice and grammar knowledge leads to writing development -- a majority obviously believes in the value of writing itself as a means to learn to write. This view is further substantiated by the fact that only 56% believe that studying grammar teaches one to write. It appears that when students are presented with a choice of what is the best way to learn writing, they opt for the writing process itself.

Similarly, many students agreed that correct word order and punctuation were the most important part of writing and later that the most important part was self-expression. However, when correct English is compared to self-expression, 16% are of no opinion. It may be that some students become confused by the comparison; therefore an interpretation of the response to that question is difficult.

The majority of these students are "product" oriented with regard to evaluation. They value the teacher's role as editor and see this role as essential to their writing
development; they do not believe that each error should cost a mark. Their belief that the science teacher should be as concerned with their grammar as with their grasp of facts suggests a "product" concern with correctness with regard to content. To label this question as "product" oriented may not be accurate because the science teacher may be interested in helping the student communicate his findings through correct grammar. The question itself is faulty.

The minority holds a "process" view that interest in the writing topic overrides mechanical difficulties. The "process" approach assumes that interest precipitates a desire to understand and communicate, a process that eventually brings about acquisition of correct writing techniques.

Similarly, the majority's belief that facts are more important than correct English in a scientific report is a "process" view of writing which stresses the comprehension of ideas over correctness, with the view that correctness of form will follow along with the desire to communicate. However, the finding that almost the same number believes that the grammar in the report be corrected may be because the students believe both grammar and facts are important. It may be that the student is being led by the question.
Hence, the majority holds a "process" view that one learns to write by writing, and a "product" view that scrupulous correction of mechanical errors by the teacher is essential to writing development, that the grammar and punctuation are the most important part of writing, and that interest in the topic aids development of writing abilities.

The responses to the questions regarding the science teacher and grammar are not easily definable as "process" or "product." The inconsistent responses to the questions concerning grammar and learning to write and the importance of word order and self-expression in writing are not easy to reconcile. Either the questions failed to make clear enough distinctions by providing the student with immediate choices or clear distinctions between "product" or "process" are difficult to achieve in the abbreviated form that the questionnaire demands. As the students' responses suggest, it may be possible to believe that several factors contribute to writing development, some of which may be "process" factors and others which may be "product" ones. It is equally possible that the student is being easily led by the question or that the student may not be considering deeply enough the range of choices possible for answering the question.

Furthermore, it is difficult to define as "process" or "product" the majority of positive responses to the belief
that correct English be required of all composition students and that it is important to write English well. The questions lack specificity. However, the students' responses do show their beliefs in the importance of mechanics.

Teaching Methods and Evaluation

Questions 8, 10, 11, 14, 15, 16, 30, 34, 35, 36, 39, 40, 41, 44, 50, 55, 56, 58, 68 and 69 concerned students' attitudes to teaching methods and evaluation.

Summary

As many as 52% of the students believe that a single grade is enough to indicate the quality of their composition. The majority (78%, 14% strongly) believes grades to be the best motivator for writing improvement, and 78% that papers written in class should be given grades. Thirty-six percent believe that ideas are more important than or as important as grammar with respect to the teachers' corrections; 28% believe that students should have autonomy in setting grades; and 32% that there should be prizes for the best writer.

Seventy-eight percent (22% strongly) believe that talking is as important as writing; 84% (20% strongly) believe that one's speech should be corrected so that one's writing will improve; and 80% (18% strongly) that teachers should correct every error in a composition. The majority
(78%, 16% strongly) also believes in student-teacher conferences, and 68% that teachers should not mark all students the same way. Fifty percent said that one should "talk out" compositions prior to writing them.

A small majority (58%) believes compositions can or should be read aloud and a minority (42%) believes that reading poems aloud, play acting, and doing word games contribute to learning to write. However, for this latter question 14% were of no opinion. A majority (68%, 34% strongly) believes that native languages should be permitted in the classroom.

Eighty percent believe that students should rewrite papers full of mistakes. Eighty percent (30% strongly) believe that students should choose their own topic, and 88% that choosing one's own topic leads to a more interesting paper. Fifty percent believe that students should choose their own topic every time they write.

Fifty-eight percent believe that all teachers should help students with their writing and 28% that students should grade their own papers.

Analysis

Many of these students hold a "product" view of grades. Grades focus solely on the finished product and bear little relation to the act of composing. The majority holds a
"product" concept that grammar is more important than (or as important as) ideas in a composition. That is, they feel that correctness in the written product should receive the same or more emphasis than the thought process or the act of invention involved in composing. This view is again suggested by their belief that every mistake should be corrected. The students have a "product" concept with respect to setting their own grades. They do not value the self-evaluation component that would be a part of the "process" approach to writing.

The majority has a "process" concept of the relationship between speech and writing. The "process" approach holds that each of these forms of discourse has unique and yet interrelated strategies for expression of thought. However, only half the students feel that "talking out" helps one's composition and this response is suspect because 12% were of "no opinion." It may be that the students did not comprehend what was meant by "talking out" despite the researcher's explanation. The majority also holds the "process" concept that no prizes should be awarded the best writer: prizes reinforce competition, not a factor in the "process" view of writing.

The majority also believes in individualized marking, a "process" view of evaluation. An approach that emphasizes the act of composing must acknowledge that such an act is
individual. The majority also believes in student-teacher conferences -- a "process" concept that recognizes the value of discussion to the writing process.

A small majority (54%) has the "process" belief that compositions should be read aloud; writing is an attempt to communicate which involves sharing one's ideas with others. Sharing writing with others may encourage feedback that suggests revisions to drafts of writing -- a "process" view of writing. It is a minority who believes that "extra-curricular verbal activities" such as reading poems aloud, play acting, and word games are strategies of discourse that contribute to writing, a "process" approach. However, 14% have no opinion; this may be because they do not as yet perceive a relationship between forms of discourse and oral activities, or because the wording of the question is not clear to them.

It appears that students are "product" oriented with respect to revision work in that they believe that papers full of mistakes should be re-written. However, because the question did not specify that "papers" referred to those completed, corrected, and returned by the teacher (revision of such papers constitutes a concern with the product), it is unclear just when they believed revisions should occur -- during the process of writing or after evaluation of the written product.
The students are "process" oriented with respect to student choice of topic; the "process" view of writing includes all the factors involved in the act of composing and that includes the choice of an appropriate topic, a procedure not likely to receive much attention where the emphasis is on the finished results.

A small majority (58%) holds the "process" concept that all teachers are responsible for helping them write; the "process" approach sees writing primarily as an act of communication, a matter of concern for all teachers. The same idea holds true for the inclusion of native languages in the classroom; the "process" view holds that the teacher respects the student's efforts to communicate in his native language and builds upon these efforts to develop further competence in the English language.

Thus the students are "product" oriented to grades, to the idea that grammar is more important than or as important as ideas in a composition, and to self-evaluation. They have a "process" concept of: the relationship between speech and writing, individualized evaluation, student-teacher conferences, reading aloud written work, choice of topic, teachers in all subject areas teaching writing, and the inclusion of native languages in the classroom.

Clear interpretation of responses to questions concerning "talking out" compositions, the role of
"extra-curricular" verbal activities, and composition revision was difficult. In two cases over 10% of students marked the "no opinion" box and in the other the question lacked specificity.

Writing as Self-Expression

Questions 20, 23, 29, 31, 43 and 46 attempted to elicit to what extent the students viewed writing as a means of self-expression.

Summary

Seventy-six percent (18% strongly) believe that the most important thing in writing is self-expression; later 64% (16% strongly) believe that self-expression is more important than correct English. The majority (76%, 16% strongly) believes that personal writing is the most important kind of writing; the minority (48%, 14% strongly) believes that it is important to have some form of private writing in class. Seventy percent (14% strongly) believe that the benefit of learning to write is that it can make one more employable. Seventy percent (12% strongly) agree that garage mechanics have use for writing.

Analysis

Twelve percent of the students change their minds when
self-expression is immediately compared to correct English. Nonetheless the majority agrees that self-expression is the most important thing in writing and that personal writing is the most important kind of writing. These views are essentially "process" ones -- all writing begins in the personal mode and is the foundation for the development of later literacy.

However, later, when expressive writing is compared to writing as a means of increasing employment opportunities, many students change their minds as to the most important function of writing. The majority then holds a "product" approach to writing; the function of writing is not to express feelings but to make one more employable. This is a "product" orientation because it views writing as a means to an end -- the acquisition of skills needed to find a job -- not a means in itself -- a process of growth. The contradictory responses regarding the most important purpose in writing may be due to the students' lack of comprehension of "personal writing," a possibility suggested by one educator (see p. 92).

The majority holds a similar "product" concept of private writing; it is not important. A "product" approach to private writing implies that if a composition cannot be seen it has no value; the "process" concept of writing includes the idea that even private writing is an opportunity
for self-knowledge and expression.

The question regarding a garage mechanic's use for writing does not make clear whether "use" refers to opportunities for self-expression or to something more utilitarian -- writing that is needed on the job. The question needs to be reworded to be specific in its intent.

Attitudes About Writers

Questions 21, 22, 25, 38, 40 and 67 were designed to elicit students' concepts of good writers.

Summary and Analysis

Only small majorities or minorities see good writers in relation to good speakers (56%), avid readers (40%), and as having interests outside the school (52%). This result suggests that many students have "product" concepts that writing is a specialized activity focused on an end result (a good composition) and unrelated to language learning activities in the world outside of school.

But with respect to poor writers and syntax the majority holds a "process" view: seventy percent (12% strongly) believe that poor writers should not avoid long sentences; this implies a belief that one should write not simply to acquire a skill -- an ability to write a long sentence -- but to engage in an act of composing and
discovery that may or may not lead to complicated syntax.

The Purposes of Writing

Questions 5, 10, 23, 26, 31, 46, 47 and 60 concerned students' attitudes about the purposes of writing.

Summary

The responses to questions 10, 31 and 46 have been summarized in preceding sections (the majority believes in reading aloud one's work to others and that the value of writing lies in better chances for employment; the minority feels that private writing is important). Questions 5 and 23 concerned the uses of writing for a garage mechanic but, due to lack of specificity, were considered useless. The responses to questions 26 and 60 revealed that the majority (58%) believes that the only purposes in learning to write was to learn to use correct English. A large majority (70%, 12% strongly) believes that if the teacher does not see one's writing there is no point in writing. A majority (66%, 12% strongly) believes that writing helps one find out what one knows about a subject.

Analysis

The majority holds a "product" view that the only purpose of writing is to learn to write correct English and
to increase chances of employment. A majority also believes the "product" view that writing is that which is done for the teacher and that private writing is not important (although 12% were of no opinion). The majority has the "process" concept that writing can be shared with others (language is shared experience) and that the process of composing helps one discover what one knows about a subject.

Thus the majority are "product" oriented with regard to writing's purpose and the value of private writing. The majority are "process" oriented with respect to sharing writing and writing as an act of discovery.

Final Summary

These students hold a mixture of "process" and "product" views of writing. The division into "process" and "product" is sometimes not clear cut, sometimes contradictory, and this could be the fault of the questions. In their attitudes to grades, mechanics of writing, grammar, spelling, parts of speech, self-evaluation, and the teacher's role the majority is "product" oriented. Almost half of the students view a single grade on their composition as sufficient evaluation and most believe that all papers written in class should be graded. The majority also believes that the teacher must correct every paper in order for the student to learn to write. The majority holds a
prescriptive ("product") view of the importance of grammar and definitions of parts of speech in learning to write. However, many later claimed that writing itself is what teaches one to write which is a "process" concept. Fifty-four percent believe that grammar is as important (or more important than) as ideas in a composition, a "product" view of writing.

The majority holds a "process" view of writing in the belief that native languages be permitted in composition class, that all teachers can help with the communicative aspects of writing, that students should choose writing topics, that student-teacher conferences are valuable, that an interest in the topic overrides mechanical difficulties, that no prizes should be awarded a writer, and that marking should be individualized. Many also hold a "process" orientation with respect to writing's expressive and cognitive value. They believe that self-expression in writing is more important than correct English (although many later claim that the purpose of writing is to learn to write correct English) and that one learns more about a subject by writing about it.

The majority is "process" oriented with respect to the relationship between speech and writing. However, most students hold a "product" concept of writing in the belief that there is little need for private writing in school, and
that the purpose of writing lies in the opportunity it affords students to learn to write correct English and in contributions to making one more employable. They also see it as an activity done mainly in the school, a "product" concept.

The responses to some questions made interpretation difficult and often the questions themselves were to blame. Responses to questions 4, 9, 16, 20, 24, 29, 32, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46 and 53 made it clear that many students were agreeing to contradictory statements. The contradictory responses may indicate that clear distinctions are not possible since several factors may be involved in the issue described by the question. Respondents may need more immediate and obvious choices if they are unfamiliar with the language of the questions or with attitudes related to issues about teaching writing or learning to write.

Responses to questions 16, 29 and 40 had over 10% "no opinion" responses. This percentage may indicate that student did not understand the question and that they may have done so if it had been more clearly and specifically worded. Questions 4, 5, 6, 23, 40, 61 and 68 lacked specificity. With these questions, too, more detail would have clarified them for the students and perhaps have altered their responses.
The Intermediate Questions

The "intermediate" questions were those which did not fit easily into any "process" or "product" category but were intended to elicit from the student information of a personal nature. They were also questions directly implying a "depending on the circumstances" kind of response. The information derived from these questions was to provide some idea of the importance students attach to writing or to a native language, some of the difficulties they may have with writing and some general attitudes they have toward writing.

Questions 1, 2, 12, 13, 19, 27, 37, 48, 49, 51, 52, 54, 57, 59, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65 and 66 were the "intermediate" questions.

Summary and Analysis

A high majority (70% or over) believes that spelling, grammar, corrections to final drafts, correct written English, and teachers' opinions of written work are important. A high majority (78%) also believes that freedom in choice of topic makes writing easier, and 74% that writing is their best means of self-expression.

Fewer students (between 50% and 70%) believe that teachers make them feel they can write well, that teachers feel natives can write as well as non-natives, that long
compositions are better than short ones, that research is difficult and book reports and essays worthwhile, that students should write one paper a week, and that students should have some writing in English every night.

Less than 50% believe that long sentences are better than short ones, that it is important to write a native language well, that good English must be acquired before graduation, and that non-native students can write English better than native students.

These students highly approve of learning to write correct English. At least half of them value nightly writing homework and weekly compositions, book reports, and essays. They also value the teacher's opinion of their writing. Since the students are in a school setting, they may perceive this as part of the teacher's role; the question is likely to be irrelevant. Nonetheless, these findings are not inconsistent with their views (analysed earlier) that correct word order and punctuation are very important in writing and that the teacher should correct every mistake on every composition. However, few students value correct writing so much that they feel it should be accomplished in order to graduate.

Though still in the majority, fewer students are as certain of their teachers' opinions of them as writers (16% are of no opinion) and of them as native student writers.
Are some students projecting feelings of inadequacy as writers or do teachers intimate a lack of confidence in the students as writers? Only 58% claim that teachers make them feel they can write well, and as many as 24% believe that non-native students can write better than they can.

Few students feel that learning to write a native language is important. Perhaps they see their native language as essentially an oral language.

It is encouraging to see that few students believe that long sentences are not necessarily better than short ones; however, many still believe that long compositions are better than short ones. This belief could reflect teachers' concerns about assignments that are incomplete, that lack detail, and about which more could be written. That the majority of students feels that to choose a writing topic is easier than to have one assigned may indicate that the choices offered to them fail to contain topics that are culturally relevant, and are therefore unmotivating.

Sixty-two percent find research the most difficult part of writing and 26% state that, for them, finding a good idea is the most difficult part of writing. The findings concerning research are consistent with the majority response that choosing a writing topic is easier than having one assigned.

The fact that 74% feel that writing is their best means
of self-expression suggests that writing is important to many of these students.

Comparison of Responses of Native Students with a Native Language Background and Those with an English Language Background

One of the purposes of this study was to ascertain whether any differences existed in attitudes to and concepts of writing English between those native students with a native language background and those with an English language background. To fulfill that purpose, the researcher considered a student to have a native language background if his responses to at least one of the pertinent language questions in Part I of the questionnaire (questions 3, 4, 5, 6, 10, 11, 12.1) was affirmative. Similarly, a student was considered to have an English language background if his responses to those same questions made no reference to any language other than English.

Furthermore, the researcher considered a variation of over 10% in a response of the two groups to constitute a "difference". Also, when the researcher states that one group feels "more strongly" or "less strongly" than the other, she means that both groups reacted similarly to the question, but one group had over 10% more of the "strongly
agree" or "strongly disagree" boxes checked. (The differences in responses, expressed in percentages, is given on p.196, Table C-2).

For purposes of brevity, the researcher refers to students with a native language background as "group 2," and those with an English language background as "group 1." Also, because the researcher has already explained in the preceding pages why she categorized certain responses as a "product" or a "process" orientation to writing, she has omitted similar explanations in the following summaries.

The Mechanics of Writing

More students with a native language background than with an English language background tend to hold a "product" view of writing mechanics: 20% more group 2 students believe that it is necessary to know the definitions of parts of speech and 14% more the rules of grammar in order to write well. Eleven percent more believe that the most important thing in writing is correct word order and punctuation. Thirty-six percent more group 2 students also believe that writing is learned by doing grammar exercises. However, they are similar in agreement to group 1 that "studying grammar" teaches one to write; (although twice as many group 1 students had no opinion); yet group 2 students appear to make a distinction between "studying grammar" and doing "grammar
exercises" -- 53% agree that one learns to write by studying grammar and 80% agree that one learns to write by doing grammar exercises. Perhaps the word "exercises" made the concept clearer. Group 2 students also agree, but less strongly than group 1 students, that it is more important to express feelings in writing than to write correct English.

Perhaps group 2's stronger approval of mechanics is due to an "interference" (as expressed, for example, by difficulty in using correct verb tense) between their native language and English; that is, an interference might encourage them to believe more strongly in the need to learn the mechanics of English.

Twenty-eight percent more group 1 students believe that interest in the topic overcomes mechanical difficulties. Although both groups agree almost equally that self-expression is more important than correct English, 22% more group 1 students checked the "strongly agree" box, but 14% more group 2 students were of "no opinion". Perhaps group 1 had had more experience with English and hence more confidence in their capacity to express themselves.

Teaching Methods and Evaluation

Fourteen percent more group 2 students believe that grades can motivate one to write. This response is difficult to interpret. They are also less adverse (by 16%) to the
idea of reading compositions to others and 19% more feel that "talking out" is a worthwhile prewriting activity. Do these students lack confidence in their oral English and feel a need to practise it? Yet 15% fewer students in group 2 feel that talking is as important as writing. Does this response contradict the earlier responses about "talking out" or is this response a result of a question that is too general?

Twenty-six percent more group 2 students have the "process" concept that ideas are more important than grammar in a composition and 18% more believe that students should choose their own topic every time they write. Do these students lack confidence in their grammar and prefer that the teacher pay more attention to their ideas? Do they feel that if they had their own choice of topic they would do better?

Both groups disagree almost equally that "outside verbal activities" influence writing but 19% fewer group 2 students disagree as strongly. Perhaps this is because they have less experience with these activities and therefore less confidence in their opinion. Fourteen percent fewer group 2 students also believe that their speech should be corrected so that their writing may improve. Perhaps some of these students feel they do not speak English well and do not wish to have attention brought to their speech. Also, 13% more group 1 students believe that students should grade their own papers. Again, does this group of students have more
confidence in their evaluative judgements?

**Attitudes to Writers**

Thirty-three percent more group 1 students see a relationship between good writers and avid readers. Do they have more experiences with reading and are therefore more inclined to believe that reading can influence writing? Yet 21% more group 2 students feel that good writers are good speakers. Do group 2 students feel that they are not good speakers and if they were they could be better writers? Both groups disagree that poor writers should not attempt long sentences, but group 1 disagrees more strongly. Does group 1 have more confidence with writing English?

**The Purpose of Writing**

Again, group 1 holds the stronger views in situations where both groups are similar in their views; that is, both groups have the same "product" or "process" orientation to an issue but group 1 checked more of the "strongly agree" or "strongly disagree" boxes. Is it because group 1 has more experience with English and hence a better comprehension of such issues? Thirty-one percent more group 2 students hold the "product" view that the only purpose in learning to write English is to learn to write it correctly. Again, do these students feel a need to improve their skills because of an
interference between their mother tongue and English?

**Writing as Self-Expression**

Both groups hold similar views about writing as self-expression; however, group 1 holds stronger views about this issue. More group 1 students strongly agree that the most important thing in writing is self-expression and that it is more important to express feelings in writing than it is to write correct English; however, 17% more group 1 students feel that personal writing is the most important kind of writing. Is it because group 1 is more familiar with these issues? Do they have a better grasp of English and therefore a better comprehension of what they feel writing should be? Does their experience with English lead them to believe that self-expression helps one to think through what one wants to say or to discover meanings for themselves? Or is it because group 2 is simply more concerned with the mechanics of writing?

**Final Summary**

Native students with a native language background believe more strongly than do those with an English language background that one needs to learn the definition of the parts of speech and the rules of grammar in order to write well. More of them also believe that the purpose of writing is to learn to write correct English. The researcher wondered if there was any interference between their mother
tongue and English that would encourage these students to value more highly the mechanics of writing and to view grades as approval of their accomplishments in writing.

More native students with a native language background object to their speech being corrected although more believe in the value of "talking out" compositions, and reading them to others. The researcher wondered if these students feel their English is not standard and resent correction. She also wondered if their greater approval of "talking out" their writing and reading it to others reflected a desire either for more practice in speaking or more help with writing. However, fewer of these students state that they feel talking is as important as writing. This last view is either contradictory, and therefore invalidates the earlier concerns for "talking out", or it may reflect a lack of understanding of a question they felt was too general; some students may have been confused by the different connotations of "talking" and "talking out."

Although native students with a native language background feel similarly to those with an English language background about writing as a means of self-expression, they do not feel as strongly about the issue as does the latter group. In fact, in situations where both groups hold similar views, the group with a native language background, in most cases, holds less strong views. This view is consistent with
their greater concern for learning the mechanics of writing. That there are differences between the two groups cannot be denied. The researcher speculates about whether the differences are significant even when they are considerable, or merely coincidental, whether they are due to the existence of another language in the student's background or are not related at all.

**Differences in Responses to Intermediate Questions**

Over 30% more group 2 students than group 1 students feel that there should be nightly homework in writing English, and that essays are worthwhile. Twenty percent more agree that there should be more compositions per week. Over 20% more group 2 students feel that good English is needed to graduate, that book reports are worthwhile, and 10% more feel that long compositions and sentences are better than short ones.

Twenty-eight percent more group 2 students feel that teachers believe native and non-native students to be equally good as writers, and 12% more value the opinion of their writing teachers.

Few students in both groups feel that writing a native language is important, but group 2 students feel less strongly about it. More group 1 students (19%) claim that teachers make them feel good as writers. Both groups agree almost equally that it is important to write English well, but group 2 students feel more strongly about it.
Analysis

Does the fact that more group 2 students feel more strongly that one should do nightly writing in English, more weekly writing in school, and feel more strongly than group 1 that book reports, essays and long compositions and sentences are worthwhile reflect a desire for more practice in writing English? Could this desire be related to a perception of an interference between their native language and English? Do fewer native students with a native language background feel strongly that writing a native language is important because they already have one, or because they feel that having one creates problems with English?

It is difficult to speculate upon why as many as 28% more group 2 students than group 1 students believe that teachers see native and non-native students as equal in writing abilities, and yet 19% fewer group 2 students feel that teachers make them feel that they can write well. The responses to the questions seem to be contradictory.

Data of Part III

The open-ended questions in Part III were intended to elicit the students' affective concepts of and attitudes to writing English. Some of the students were more articulate than others in responding to the questions. From these
students the following information emerged:

Question: "Some writing teachers I really like because . . . ."

Response: Seven of the students liked writing teachers who help them with their work. Four claimed they like writing teachers who explain things. Two said they like writing teachers who let them choose their own writing topic. Two explained that they like writing teachers who "don't pile work on," and two liked those writing teachers whose handwriting is legible. Some of the other reasons given concern teachers who are "nice or easy to talk to," "don't complain," "understand," "express themselves well," or "give good ideas." One student said he likes writing teachers who "make me feel like writing;" two others said they like writing teachers who "let you know when you do a good job."

Question: "Some writing teachers I do not like because . . . ."

Response: Again, most of the students described writing
teachers they do not like in terms of personality or behavioural characteristics. The descriptions used were "lazy," "bossy," "never looks at my work," "complaining," "mean," "yells too much," and "a jerk." Four said they dislike writing teachers who give too much homework. Two stated that they dislike writing teachers whose handwriting is illegible; four noted that they dislike writing teachers who do not provide enough explanations, and one said he dislikes writing teachers who do not provide enough time for assignment completion.

Question: "Write a comment telling what you like most about writing."

Responses: Six students claimed that the possibility of skill improvement is the factor they like more about writing; five of these students have a native language in their background. Others' answers varied -- spelling mistakes, an opportunity for vocabulary enrichment, "to read work to others," "to find ideas about what I want to "write," and "to express feelings," "to write neatly," "to communicate." One student said he likes writing
because of "the feeling you get out of it," and another noted that writing skills can expand employment opportunities.

Questions: "Write a comment telling what you like least about writing."

Responses: Six students objected to punctuation and grammar. Other responses to this question varied from "difficulty with vocabulary, spelling, sentence writing, handwriting," to "dislike of writing book reports, and essays, and getting marks." Two students commented that they dislike writing because they get sore fingers or arms. One student disliked showing his work to others.

Question: "I wish writing teachers would teach me more . . . ."

Responses: This question received either vague responses or no response at all. From the articulate responses the following ideas emerged. Four students desired more teaching about nouns and verbs, and the other responses varied from "research skills," "my own language," "to express your feeling,"
"handwriting," "about love of nature and mankind,"
"useful things," "poems and spelling," "to write
good letters and essays," to "spelling and to
write a sentence."

Question: "A good writer is one who . . . "

Responses: Ten students stated that a good writer is one who
knows about punctuation and grammar; three claim a
good writer is one who can express feelings well;
four noted that good writers are clear about the
purpose of their work; ("a good writer is a person
who knows what they are gonna write before they
start . . . "); five claimed the good writers are
ones who can read; three felt that good writers
"write a lot," and one described a good writer as
one who "can fill a page in a few minutes." One
student stated that a good writer is one who can
"spell well" and two others suggested a good
writer is a legible handwriter. Other definitions
included "is really fast," "is very famous,"
"follows all the steps," and "writes good."

Question: "What question(s) do you think this questionnaire
should ask? If you like, answer them."
Responses: Of those students who objected to questions, one gave a reason for the objection. The questions objected to were #'s 1, 2, 5, 14, 50, 64 and the whole first page (see Appendix A). The two students who objected to the whole first page failed to see the reason for it. One student wrote "I don't know my own language and I am ashamed of it, when I tell people who ask me." Two students felt that the questionnaire should have asked questions about the students' feelings about school and teachers. One student wrote "What (sic) are we writing this test? To learn to write a little better."

Some of the responses in Part III were either not clear or unintelligible; some responses indicated that the students had not understood the question. Examples of vague, unspecific responses were:

1. Some writing teachers I really like because "Because they don't write that much."
2. Some writing teachers I do not like because "Some of them I don't like . . . I like my teacher from the old school."

An example of an unintelligible response was:

2. Some writing teachers I do not like because "Some
teacher I don't like them don't give you are most of work." (Perhaps the student is complaining of the work load.)

An example of a response which indicated a misunderstanding of the question is:

4. Write a comment telling what you like least about writing. "Most of these questions are too strong and it is straight to the point." (The student may be attempting to answer #7.)

The students' impressions of the questionnaire also vary. Three claimed it was "interesting." One felt this way because to her the questionnaire "sort of helps you to know how other people might think about writing." Another felt it was interesting because "they don't say anything about racism or chauvinism." One felt the questionnaire was a "good idea" because it "showed me how I feel about English." Three felt the questionnaire was helpful. One gave the reason that its helpfulness lay in the fact that it gave the student an opportunity to express his thoughts about writing. "I think its very important for someone to know about your expressions in writing." She added that not often does someone ask about the student's side of the story. Two felt the questionnaire was good because it was easy to understand.

One student disliked the questionnaire because he found it "too long and boring," and another one because the
questions were too hard to understand.

One student made the poignant comment that she disliked the questionnaire because "I think they shouldn't be writing about native Indians. They make native Indians feel sad."

Analysis of Part III

The questions in Part III which dealt with attitudes to writing English were questions #3 ("Write a comment telling what you like most about writing."), #4 ("Write a comment telling what you like least about writing.") #5 ("I wish writing teachers would teach me more . . ."), and #6 ("A good writer is one who . . . "). Question 7 ("What question[s] do you think this questionnaire should ask? If you like, answer them.") was intended to supply additional information as volunteered by the student and for that reason to provide further insight into the students' impressions of writing.

On the whole the articulate responses to questions number 3, 4, 5 and 6 were varied. The majority of responses to question 3 concerned the possibility of skill improvement as the factor the student liked most in writing. Of the six students who responded this way, five were those who had a native language in their background (as defined in Part I of the questionnaire). The majority response to question 4 concerned punctuation and grammar; all six responses of this
sort came from students with a native language in their backgrounds. The majority response to question 5 concerned a desire that teachers teach more about nouns and verbs. Of the four students who responded this way, three came from students with a native language background. Ten of the responses to question 6 concerned the definition of a good writer as one who is good in punctuation and grammar. Seven of these responses again came from students with a native language background.

That most of these responses mentioned above came from students with a native language background may be due to the fact that it was this group which formed the majority in answering the questionnaire. But these responses may also suggest that there is a relationship between a student's language background and his perceptions of writing difficulties (or lack of them) in English.

At any rate the majority of these students, from either background, was concerned about grammar, punctuation, and parts of speech. The majority also perceived a good writer as one who is proficient in these skills. Very few of these students saw writing as a means to express feelings or an opportunity to know oneself and others. It appears from the responses in Part III that these students have been trained to write within a traditional paradigm that stresses that products of writing are more important than the writing process.
The fact that many of the students did not respond to one or more of the questions, or responded incompletely or inadequately, indicates several possibilities: the students did not understand the question concerned despite the researcher's explanation; the students could not express their thoughts accurately in writing, with regard to the question concerned; or the question was unfamiliar; that is, the students may not be accustomed to expressing opinions about writing, writing teachers, or writers. Indeed, during the pilot test of the questionnaire and during some of the interviews, the researcher learned from the students that they were genuinely surprised or confused at being expected to have an opinion about writing English.

On the whole, the generally short length or lack of the responses in Part III, and the apparent haste with which some of the questions were answered (from the researcher's vantage point) indicated that most of the students were either not interested in the questions to provide more thoughtful answers or were uncomfortable with the questions themselves or with writing in general.

The majority of responses to questions 1 and 2 indicated that the factor that most students appreciate about a writing teacher is helpfulness and a willingness and an ability to explain. The majority disliked teachers who are inattentive or overattentive ("bossy", "complaining"). Only
one student claimed that she liked her writing teacher because "what they teach, is interesting and makes me want to do assignments."

Twelve students volunteered impressions of the questionnaire. Of the nine students who provided a reason for their feelings, two provided the perceptive comments of the sort given to Miller (1983) in her study of teachers' perceptions of writing. Some teachers commented that Miller's study made them aware of their own and others' real feelings about writing. One student said that the questionnaire "sort of helps you to know how other people might think about writing," and another student said, "I think it's very important for someone to know about your expressions in writing."

That one student was saddened because she felt some racism in the questionnaire is testimony to one of the difficulties encountered when attempting to undertake a study in a culture not one's own.

Of the students who objected to certain questions only two gave explanations for the objections. The researcher concluded that some of these students do not enjoy expressing their thoughts in writing.
Summary

The articulate responses to Part III were varied. Students described writing teachers they did or did not like in terms of behavioral characteristics; most described a good writing teacher as a helpful one. When responses were given, punctuation was mentioned as the least attractive feature about writing and a good writer was described most often as one who knows about punctuation and grammar. The wish for a writing teacher to teach more about parts of speech was the response that was repeated most frequently. Few students responded to #7 in which they were asked to object to or create and answer a question. Personal reactions to the questionnaire were few and varied.

The researcher wondered if the inadequate responses to some of the questions were due to the students' lack of comprehension of the question.

Data of Personal Interviews

The researcher personally interviewed ten of the students who gave incomplete or vague responses to the questions in Part III of the questionnaire. She hoped that an interview could unearth more in-depth responses.

Nine of the ten students interviewed claimed they enjoyed writing. The student who responded negatively added
that he found it difficult to put his thoughts together and could not spell well. Three of the students claimed that they enjoyed writing that involved a certain amount of research; one of these students said that he enjoyed using the encyclopedia. Two students stated that they enjoyed creative writing ("made-up" stories); one student enjoyed writing about people and another about her family; one liked to write about things he does after school; one liked to write about "life and feelings," and one said he did not care what he wrote about.

Six of the ten students believed their teachers gave them enough choice of writing topic. Four of the students felt otherwise.

The favourite part of the English class for four students was activity involving reading rather than writing. Four students preferred writing to reading and two students specified writing in their journals as the activity they enjoyed most in English class.

Four students claimed that their favourite part of the writing process involved research; two students enjoyed polishing the final draft; two students enjoyed the actual writing of it (the "putting it all together" part); one student responded that he did not mind either research or writing but strongly disliked the "polishing part." One student claimed that he did not enjoy writing at all.
Two students said that if they were writing teachers they would give more assignments that involved reading (research); one said he would let the students choose their own writing topics more often; two said that they would help students more during the writing process ("I'm too much on my own"); two expressed satisfaction with their writing teacher as she/he was. Two students said they could not think of any appropriate response.

Six students were of the opinion that students (and they included themselves) had the most difficulty with punctuation (one included grammar as well). The students did not use the word "punctuation;" they spoke of periods, commas, question marks, quotation marks and capital letters. Three students claimed spelling to be the most difficult problem for them and others; one student stated that he had difficulty writing sentences.

With respect to which aspect of their writing they felt needed improvement three replied punctuation; two replied that they would have to improve their spelling; two said that "everything" about their writing needed improvement; one said that he would have to "read more" to improve his writing.

Four students named their favourite author; Janet Lunn, Judy Bloom, and S.E. Hinton were named. Two students claimed that these stories about teenage life are what they enjoyed and one added that she enjoyed the way the author wrote; one
student said he enjoyed Hinton because he explains everything; another said he liked adventure stories if the authors explain everything step by step. Two students noted their enjoyment of science fiction. Three said that they did not have a favourite author.

Two students said that a good writer is one who "works hard." Other definitions of a good writer included one who is "interesting," "has good handwriting and a sense of humour," "makes a lot of books," and "is smart."

Analysis of Personal Interviews

The purpose of the interviews was to give those students who failed to respond in writing a chance to give their opinions verbally. The type of responses obtained in the interviews do not differ markedly from those obtained from the uninterviewed students. Of course, this is not surprising since the questions themselves were not remarkably different. The same high degree of individuality of response is present as in the written responses to Parts III of the questionnaire. Thus what the analysis must focus upon is not so much the responses themselves as upon the manner of response.

The researcher had difficulty in obtaining more than a monosyllabic response to the questions from most of the
students. Although the students did not appear threatened, perhaps the researcher encountered the situation described by Labov (1969): monosyllabic responses of subjects may be defensive reactions to what they perceive as threatening situations. It is important to mention that the responses described above were obtained after considerable probing. In some instances, there is a question whether the student's response reflects his opinion or whether the researcher had guided his thought through her probing.

The researcher is further aware that the questions themselves may be part of the difficulty. Open-ended questions can be threatening to students who have become accustomed, in their schooling, to questions that seek a "yes" or "no" response or that have right or wrong answers rather than opinions. Had the researcher confronted a group of white students from the same English classes she may well have been met with similar monosyllabic responses.

Summary

The dominant response to the open-ended questions revealed that of the ten students interviewed 90% of the students enjoy writing; 40% enjoy research and 40% enjoy writing about people, feelings, or activities. Sixty percent of the students enjoy writing more than reading and 40% vice-versa. Forty percent choose research as their favourite
part of the writing process.

Sixty percent of the students believe that most students, including themselves, have the most difficulty with punctuation; and 30% find spelling the most difficult part of writing.

Thirty percent believe that to improve their writing would mean to improve their use of punctuation and 20% said the same about spelling. Twenty percent said that everything about their writing needs improving. The responses to why their favourite authors or books were their favourites varied as were their definitions of a "good writer".

The researcher suggested that the students' monosyllabic responses may be due to the students' defensive reactions or to questions that are too unfamiliar to them.
Chapter VI

SUMMARY, INTERPRETATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

SUMMARY

The researcher has described and analyzed the development and pilot test of a questionnaire designed to discover the concepts of and attitudes to writing English of native high school students perceived by their teachers as having difficulties writing English.

The researcher felt that, because the drop-out rate and the age-grade delay of native high school students (as documented in Indian Conditions 1980) were greater than for non-native students, because these factors were most widespread at the high school level, and because writing English was (and is) a major task required of native students in high school, knowledge of students' attitudes to and concepts of writing English could help teachers prepare writing programs that make learning to write a more worthwhile and enjoyable experience and more likely to lead the students to higher academic attainment. Furthermore, the researcher discovered in reviewing the literature a dearth of research related to native high school students' perceptions of writing English.

The researcher adopted the rationale that learning to write English can be one way to create cognitive and psychological growth and bring about literacy in the sense
used by Freire -- to be literate is to use language creatively and in a critically reflective way. She reviewed the philosophies of language theorists Piaget, Vygotsky, and Bruner as a way of examining the interrelationships between language and cognition. Bruner and Vygotsky do not agree with Piaget about the relationship between language and thought, in terms of which influences which, but neither would deny that language reflects cognitive development.

The researcher recognized in her review of literature that there were cultural factors responsible for the failure of many native students to attain academically on a par with many non-native students in the dominant culture's schools. These factors included native students' language background (including exposure to oral English), home environment and value systems that may conflict with those of the dominant culture, self-concepts that might invite discrimination, the different degree of importance that native people attach to writing, and the ways that teachers teach writing. She discussed the fact that different cultures have different uses for writing and, in the case of some native people of Canada, different cognitive approaches to organizing experience. All these factors influence the way native students perceive themselves and are perceived by others within the schools of the dominant cultures.

The researcher felt that an effective means of making
apparent the students' concepts of and attitudes to writing English would be to design a questionnaire that defined the learning of written English in terms of a "product" or "process" paradigm. The assumption that became implicitly formulated in the rationale and the discussion concerning the philosophy of the paradigms is that a lack of balance in the teaching paradigms, especially in cases where the "product" approach to writing is emphasized, could deny the students, who would benefit from many opportunities to write, an opportunity to focus on the writing process which contributes most to personal and intellectual growth.

The researcher developed the questionnaire by studying other questionnaires dealing with attitudes to writing. Because there were no existing questionnaires which focused on native students' attitudes to writing per se, she studied those that were designed to elicit the opinions of non-native college and high school students and teachers, and questionnaires to identify attitudes of native students to other issues. Some of these studies included discussions of the development of the questionnaire. The researcher studied books regarding the development and pilot testing of questionnaires and attitude surveys. She also researched the works of writing theorists concerned about the paradigm shift in the teaching of writing, such as Moffett (1968), Britton (1970) and Dixon (1976).
The researcher took the first draft of the questionnaire to educators, both native and non-native, of native students for criticism. Their critique led to a shortened second draft which was then examined by another group of native and non-native educators of native students. She presented the final draft, revised according to the criticisms of the two groups of educators, to the consultant for native education at the Saskatoon Public School Board, who made suggestions for the pilot test of the questionnaire. (During this whole process, the researcher had Part II of her questionnaire, the attitude-scale, evaluated by a language arts teacher as to the categorization of the questions as "process" or "product". No specific changed resulted.)

Mostly as a result of the educators' reactions to her questionnaire, the researcher became aware of the difficulties of creating a questionnaire, in general, and for another culture in particular. The researcher confronted the problems of length, focus, relevance, ethics and appropriate wording of questions -- questions that contained assumptions, "leads," or would lend themselves to subjective interpretations. With regard to cultural factors, the researcher confronted the issues of knowing and understanding a culture not one's own, particularly with regard to elementary school and early language experiences. The researcher also dealt with some educators' confusions with
the exploratory nature of her research.

However, it was during the process of pilot testing the questionnaire with the students themselves that the strengths and weaknesses as to the suitability of the questionnaire with the subjects under study became most apparent.

INTERPRETATIONS

The researcher's interpretations of the effectiveness of the questions in terms of the data of the pilot test and the purposes of the study, and her recommendations for changes, are reviewed here under the headings: Part I, the Language Background of the Respondents; Part II, the Attitude-Scale, questions which lacked specificity, questions which created contradictory responses, "intermediate" questions, and useful questions; and Part III, Personal Opinions about Writing English. Recommendations for changes and further study conclude the chapters.

Part I of the Questionnaire: Language Background of the Respondents

Of the questions in Part I of the questionnaire (3, 4, 5, 6, 10, 11, 12.1 and 12.2) that were intended to provide
data to answer one of the selected purposes of the study ("This study will describe and analyse any relationships between language background and concepts of and attitudes to writing English of native students.") most, except 12.1 and 12.2 did provide a description of the students' language background. If the results of the analysis of the data of Part II of the questionnaire regarding the differences between native students with a native language background and native students with an English language background are accepted as the students' perceptions of writing English, there may be reason to think that the existence of a native language in the background of some of the students in this study influences the way they perceive the writing of English, or perhaps the way they are perceived by the teachers of writing who teach accordingly.

As one of the Saskatoon School Board educator's responses suggests, questions 12.1 and 12.2 concerning the student's perception of a language interference may be too "vague" or "sophisticated" for most students. The educator suggested that the students be provided with examples of responses. The researcher felt that providing examples of responses might lead the student to select an "interference" which he might never before have considered. That two students who claimed they did feel an interference existed but did not explain the nature of the interference suggests
the difficulty or vagueness of the question. The researcher suggests eliminating the question entirely.

Questions 1, 2, 7, 8 and 9 were intended to indicate indirectly the nature of the student's language experiences in terms of early experiences in schooling. The researcher considered these questions generally useful because they indicated that the majority of the students in her study did not experience a stable elementary education, did not have much exposure to English, and did not drop out of school for a year or more during their early schooling. This information suggests that age-grade delay resulted from grade repetition. The researcher concluded that the students in her study need writing programs that make writing more personally meaningful as well as teach the writing mechanics the students appear to desire.

Responses to questions 13.1 and 13.2 which elicited the students' opinions about the difficulties they have with their writing indicated that most of these students feel they do not have difficulties. This finding conflicts with their teachers' evaluation of them as being suitable for this study. Are teachers making the students feel positive about themselves as writers? Perhaps. However, in Part II of the questionnaire only 50 to 70% of the subjects believe teachers make them feel they can write well. Since the students who did feel they had difficulties did not describe the nature of
their difficulties, perhaps the question was too vague. The researcher resists the suggestion that examples of difficulties be provided because they could lead the student into choosing difficulties he does not have. The researcher suggests the question be eliminated.

The researcher did not use the data from question 15, regarding the student's sex. This question could be eliminated; however, for other researchers who might be interested in discovering if there are any differences between native boys' and girls' perceptions of writing English, the question would be important to include.

Summary

The researcher considered questions 3, 4, 5, 6, 10 and 11 useful; they provided a description of the students' language background. She recommended that questions 12.1 and 12.2 be eliminated; they were either too vague or too difficult.

The researcher considered questions 1, 2, 7, 8 and 9 as useful because they offered more, although indirect, descriptions of the students' language background. The researcher recommended that questions 13.1 and 13.2 be eliminated because they were either too difficult or too vague. She suggested that question 15 be eliminated, because it was not useful to the present study, although it could
offer suggestions for further research.

Part II: the Attitude Scale

The interpretations of these questions are categorized according to the headings: questions which lacked specificity, created contradictory responses, were "intermediate," and were useful. Recommendations for changes to each question are included.

**Questions which lacked specificity.** Chart 1 displays the questions concerned.

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<th>CHART 1</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Question 4</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Question 23</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Question 40</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Question 61</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Question 68</strong></td>
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Question 4 was difficult to define as "process" or "product" because the science teacher may be interested in correcting grammar so as to help the student communicate his facts better -- a "process" concern on the teacher's part. Perhaps the question should read, "In a scientific report, the student should not lose marks for incorrect grammar if he has reported all the facts in the experiment accurately."

Question 5 provides no useful information for the purposes of this study. The question was intended to determine if students saw writing skills as important for everyone, whether employed in a trade or a profession. And in that case the question, or a more specifically worded one, should be categorized as "intermediate." As it stands, it should be eliminated.

Question 6 fails to make clear when (by the end of the term?) or how often. Perhaps the question should read, "Correct English should be required of all students in composition class every time they write a composition."

Question 23 was intended to determine whether the student felt a garage mechanic (someone in a trade that stresses functional rather than expressive writing) had any need for personal writing at any time in his life. The question should read "A garage mechanic, whether on the job or not, does not need to use writing as a means of self-expression."
Question 40 provoked an even split in agreement and disagreement, with 14% having no opinion. This suggests that the question may have been either beyond the language experiences of students in this study, or worded badly. Perhaps the question should be eliminated, or reworded to say "Taking part in plays, reading poems aloud, and doing word games do not help a person to learn to write well."

Question 61 is too general. It begs the question "how important?" Perhaps the question should read, "It is more important to learn to write English correctly than it is to learn to express feelings in writing." Because this rephrasing is similar to question 29, question 61 can be eliminated.

The researcher intended question 68 to be "product" oriented; therefore the question should have read, "Students should rewrite papers after the mistakes have been corrected and the papers returned." As the question stands, it is not clear when the students, who agreed to the question, felt the revision should occur. If they felt it should occur during the writing process, then they have a "process" orientation to writing.

Questions which created contradictory responses. Chart 2 displays the questions concerned.
Question 9 - "The most important thing in writing is correct word order and punctuation."

Question 16 - "Students should often talk out their compositions before writing them."

Question 20 - "The most important thing in writing is self-expression."

Question 24 - "Students learn to write by studying grammar."

Question 29 - "It is more important to express one's feelings in writing than it is to write correct English."

Question 32 - "It is necessary to know the rules of grammar in order to write well."

Question 42 - "A student learns to write by writing."

Question 43 - "Personal writing is the most important kind of writing."

Question 44 - "Talking is as important as writing."

Question 45 - "A student learns to write by doing grammar exercises."

Question 46 - "Writing is important not because it helps a student express feelings but because it can help him find a job."

Question 53 - "A student can learn more about periods, commas, nouns, and verbs in workbooks or grammar lessons than by writing book reports or essays."

Question 55 - "The teachers corrections on paper should concern only ideas, not grammar."

Question 24, question 42, question 45, and question 32 are all specific questions concerned about how students learn to write or about what they need to know in order to write well. Yet the percentage of agreement to these questions
varied from 56% to question 24, 86% to question 42, 68% to question 45, and 78% to question 32. One can say that the questions need an immediate comparison to make the students aware that another choice exists; yet in question 53 which does make a choice immediately available to the student, the response of agreement is yet another percentage of 70%. It appears that all these questions either confused the students or the students are not clear about the place of grammar in learning to write, or even about the definition of grammar. (During the questionnaire's administration, many students asked the definition of "grammar.") Perhaps two simpler, but contradictory questions, placed far apart in the questionnaire, would be easier for the students to handle. The questions could be "One learns more about grammar by writing compositions than by studying book lessons about periods, commas and parts of speech," and later "One learns more about grammar by studying book lessons about periods, commas, and parts of speech than by writing compositions."

Similarly, the 64% response of agreement to question 29 not only contradicted responses to questions about the most important thing in writing (82% agreed to question 9 and 76% agreed to question 20) but 16% had no opinion. Perhaps the concept of "self-expression" is not clearly understood by these students. The researcher suggests that question 20 be eliminated and question 29 be reworded to say, "When writing a composition, it is more important to write down your thoughts and feelings than it is to be sure you are using
correct punctuation and word order."

Seventy-eight percent agreed to question 44 yet only 50% agreed to question 16 (although 12% were of no opinion). It may be that question 44 is not comparable to questions 16; that is, the students may see talking in general as important but not necessarily in relation to writing; and it may be that the 12% no opinion to question 16 indicates a lack of comprehension of the term "talking out." Some students may have interpreted "talking out" to mean "talking in school," a forbidden activity. Perhaps question 44 should read, "Talking about a writing assignment to someone is as important as writing the assignment," and question 16 should read, "It helps to talk to someone about the ideas or feelings you will write about in a composition before actually writing them down."

Seventy-six percent agreed to question 43 and 70% agreed to question 46. These contradictory responses may indicate that students believe that writing is both personally important and important as a business skill. Or the responses may indicate that in question 43 students are not clear about the definition of "personal writing," as one educator suggested they might not be (see p. 92). Perhaps the responses to question 46 which compares the two purposes of writing should either be eliminated or reworded to say, "The most important purpose of writing is to describe how you
feel about something."

Eighty-two percent agreed to question 9 and later 36% agreed to question 55. Some of the students answered contradictorily. This suggests that these students were being led by the question. However, because the percentage of contradiction was not great, it appears that most students were sincere in their responses to question 9. Question 55 could remain as a check to question 9. Also question 55 may be difficult to interpret by itself because students who disagreed to it may be saying either that grammar is more important than ideas or that grammar and ideas are equally important.

The "Intermediate" Questions. The responses to the "intermediate" questions were not useful with regard to the "process" or "product" categorization adopted in the study. In that sense they could be eliminated from the questionnaire proper. This would make for a shorter, perhaps easier, questionnaire for the students to answer. However, the questions were useful in that they supported some of the concepts of and attitudes to writing expressed through the other "process" or "product" questions in the attitude scale. Students do value the mechanics of writing, free choice of topic, and teachers' opinions of their writing. The responses also revealed that not a satisfactory percentage, in this researcher's opinion, feel that their teachers have confidence in them as writers. This indication, together with the students' opinions of research, finding ideas to
write about, long versus short sentences or compositions, and the importance of writing a native language, may suggest other topics of research.

The Useful Questions. The remaining questions 3, 7, 8, 10, 11, 14, 15, 17, 18, 21, 22, 25, 26, 28, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 38, 39, 41, 47, 50, 51, 56, 58, 60 and 69 appeared to be clear in intent, easily understood by the students and easily definable as "process" or "product" by the researcher. These questions did not lead to contradictory responses.

Part III: Personal Opinions about Writing English

The open-ended questions in Part III of the questionnaire were all useful in that the manner in which they were answered indicated which students either found writing difficult or did not like either writing or the questions. These responses guided the selection of students for the personal interviews.

Responses to question 3 ("Write a comment telling what you like most about writing."), 4 ("Write a comment telling what you like least about writing."), 5 ("I wish writing teachers would teach me more . . . "), and 6 ("A good writer is one who . . . ") also acted as a check to responses given earlier in the attitude-scale. Students are concerned about punctuation, grammar, and parts of speech, and perceive good writers as ones who are proficient in these aspects of writing. As two educators pointed out, questions 3 and 4
should be reformulated to follow the open-ended format of questions 1 and 2 to remain consistent with the directions.

Question 7 ("What question[s] do you think this questionnaire should ask? If you like, answer them.") appeared to be either too difficult or too uninteresting for most of the students. For this reason it should be eliminated. However, it did provoke a comment from one student who felt the questionnaire was racist (see p. 137). This observation suggests one of the researcher's main concerns about the study as a whole, a concern she discusses on p. 169.

The personal interview process. The researcher discussed earlier (p. 144) a difficulty she experienced in the interview process: getting the students to respond other than monosyllabically. The researcher found it difficult to encourage students to elaborate without leading them.

For the first three interviews the researcher had difficulty maintaining eye-to-eye contact with the student, even in as relaxed and friendly a manner as possible. The best interview technique proved to be one in which she wrote down the students' responses on a sheet before her as she talked with the student. No tape recorder was used.

The brief or monosyllabic responses of the students to the interviewer's questions may have been due either to defensive reactions of the type described by Labov (1969) or,
more likely, to the questions themselves. Most of the questions the interviewer used can be answered monosyllabically or in brief phrases. Probes that encouraged elaboration of responses were part of the interview process which, in this pilot study, failed to encourage either elaboration or reflection.

The researcher's failure to maintain eye-to-eye contact with the first three students suggests either shyness on the students' part or insensitivity to cultural differences of responding to strangers on the researcher's part. It is difficult to interpret this reaction without knowing more about the personality of each student or about the culture itself.
RECOMMENDATIONS

The Construction of a Questionnaire for Research with Native Students

On the basis of educators' and students' reactions to the questions in her questionnaire, the researcher makes recommendations for the construction of a more useful questionnaire. The educators' criticisms that dealt with cultural factors included the relevance and accuracy of questions concerning native students' early education and language experiences (see p. 67). The researcher therefore recommends that a person undertaking a similar study:

a) obtain as much knowledge as possible about the cultural, educational, and language backgrounds of the students in the population to be studied. Some of the knowledge can be obtained by reading the current research literature available on Canadian native people. But by talking with the educators of native students and with the students themselves, more specific knowledge of the local population to be studied can be used to advantage in phrasing appropriate questions. If the researcher can become a frequent visitor to the school he will have more opportunity to talk informally with the students and gain knowledge of their perspectives, of the way they think and react in a
specific setting. He will understand which kinds of questions will be most likely to lead to a comprehensive picture of the students' attitudes, concepts, and behaviours, and

b) obtain an indication of the language level of the students he will be questioning. This knowledge can be obtained in the fashion described above and through a review of standardized language tests the students have written and an analysis of samples of their written work. The researcher will then be able to word questions that students will comprehend easily and that address the kinds of issues such tests and written work reveal.

The educators' criticisms of the questions in general (see p. 67-71) included problems of the questions' lengths, foci, assumptions, and tendency to "lead" the student or to encourage the researcher to make subjective interpretations. The researcher recommends that the person formulating a similar questionnaire present a series of drafts to groups of educators. The refinement of the present questionnaire was guided by the educators' critiques. This researcher attests to the fact that it is difficult to become aware of one's hidden assumptions or one's tendency to make subjective interpretations.

The effectiveness of the questions based upon the students' responses to the questions themselves during the
pilot test have already been discussed (pp. 151), as have the recommendations for creating more effective questions. At this point the researcher states only that it is the pilot test itself that is the most useful means of indicating the ambiguity, difficulty, or usefulness of the questions. She recommends that before the test proper be given to the target population, it first be given to a small group of students from the same population, so such ambiguous or difficult questions can be weeded out and replaced by ones that are clearer in focus and intent.

The Pilot Test of a Questionnaire

Based upon her experiences piloting her questionnaire, the researcher reiterates the advice given to her by the Saskatoon Public School Board consultant for native education (p. 73). If the researcher is not familiar with the students already, the presence of a teacher who knows them well will be reassuring both for the students and for the researcher. Because native students may not be familiar with the questionnaire format or the language used, the teacher will be able to explain words or concepts the researcher may have taken as understood.
The Personal Interview Process

It is beyond the scope of this study for the researcher to make recommendations regarding the native students' high absenteeism from school as a whole. However, with respect to interviewing native students about writing English, as represented by this population, the researcher makes the following recommendations:

1. A researcher will be better informed about the kinds and amounts of writing the students experience inside and outside of school, so that more pertinent questions will be phrased that would lead to more detailed responses. Interviewing the English teachers about their writing programs and methods of instruction, observing the students' English classes, and studying examples of the students' writing will help the researcher formulate such questions.

2. The researcher and the students will be better known to each other so there will be less likelihood of defensive reactions on the student's part or insensitive behaviour on the researcher's part, such as attempting to maintain eye-to-eye contact. If the researcher spends more time in the classroom, as the teacher's assistant or as an observer, he will be a more familiar, less threatening figure, and a more fruitful, relaxed interview might ensue.
3. The researcher will be of the same culture as the students he is interviewing. This recommendation evolves from a concern that surfaced during the interviews. The students might have responded differently had she been a member of their culture. Failure to elaborate upon questions may have been due to the reasons cited. But such a reaction could also be due to (however conscious) feelings of intimidation, anger, or hopelessness on the part of the student who feels that a member of the dominant culture often does not act in the best interests of native people. Perhaps native students who have difficulty writing English would reveal perceptions to a native interviewer that this researcher could not begin to elicit.

FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Based upon all her experiences in designing and pilot testing a questionnaire to discover the concepts of and attitudes to writing English of native high school students perceived as having difficulty writing English, the researcher makes these final recommendations.

1. Work closely with a teacher who is of the same culture as the subjects of the study. Such a person could offer valuable advice on how to design questions or interview
the students, insights not immediately available to a person of another culture.

2. Be a participant observer during the process of developing the questionnaire in order to become sensitive to the students and their personal and scholastic environment.

3. Learn as much as possible about the students' cultural values, their school experiences, their attitudes to education and to the dominant culture, and their use of language and the cognitive approaches they take to experience.

If the studies of Wilson (1978), Schubert and Cropely (1972), Brooks (1978), King (1975), and Koenig (1981) suggest that native people process information differently from white people, then how much were the questions -- their vocabulary, wording, and intent -- at variance with the students' manner of interpreting the written word? In what ways did the actual construction of the questions contribute to the kinds of responses described in the pilot test of this questionnaire? Several factors have been identified that had potential to influence the students' responses. Further exploration of these factors in subsequent studies is recommended.
REFERENCES


Indian conditions. (1980). Published under the authority of the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, p. 47.


Mighty Moose Reading Project. (1977-78). Northland School Division, funded by the Planning Research Branch, Alberta Education, Mr. Don Weaver, Superintendent.


Appendix A

The Questionnaire
Section I. BACKGROUND

Fill in the blanks:

1. Where did you live before you started elementary school?
   ___________________________________________________________

2. How old were you when you started school? _________________

3. What language do you speak to your parents? ________________

4. What language do your parents speak to one another?
   ___________________________________________________________

5. At school which language do you speak to your friends?
   ___________________________________________________________

6. If you speak more than one language, which one do you prefer?
   ___________________________________________________________

7. How many elementary schools did you attend? ________________

8. Where did you attend elementary school(s)? __________________

9. Did you ever drop out of school for a year or more before returning to school?
   ___________________________________________________________

Circle the appropriate responses:

10. I can write a native language
    a) very well
    b) enough to make myself understood
    c) not at all

11. I think
    a) in a native language
    b) in English
    c) in either

   (Answer number 12 only if it applies to you)

12.1 My native language "gets in the way" when I try to write English.
    a) Yes
    b) No
12.2 If "yes" can you describe how it "gets in the way" when you write English? ____________________________________________________________

13.1 Do you have difficulty writing English?
a) yes  
b) no

13.2 If "yes", in what way do you have difficulty? ____________________________________________________________

Fill in the blanks:

14. Age __________
    Year in school ______________

Check (√) correct response:

15. I am _______ male
      ______ female

Section II.

Please place a check (√) in the appropriate square. There is no right or wrong answer.

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<th></th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>No Opinion</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Spelling is important</td>
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<td>2. Grammar is important</td>
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<td>3. When writing to persuade someone to your point of view, spelling and punctuation are the most important part of the writing.</td>
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<td>4. In school the science teacher should correct a student's grammar on a scientific report.</td>
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5. A student who wishes to become a garage mechanic should learn how to write properly.

6. Correct English should be required of all students in composition class.

7. Students should lose one point for each mistake in a composition.

8. Private talks between a student and teacher about the student's writing are useful ways of helping students improve their writing.

9. The most important thing in writing is correct word order and punctuation.

10. A student should never read his/her writing to other class members.

11. A single letter grade tells you enough about how good a composition is.

12. Long compositions are better than short ones.

13. Writing is the best means of self-expression.

14. Grades are the best way to make students want to improve their writing.

15. Teachers should correct every mistake on students' papers.

16. Students should often 'talk out' their compositions before writing them.

17. A student can learn to write well only if the teachers corrects all his/her compositions.

18. It is important to know how to define "noun" and "verb" in order to write well.

19. Longer sentences are better than shorter ones.
20. The most important thing in writing is self-expression.

21. People who read a lot are good writers.

22. Good speakers are good writers.

23. A garage mechanic has no use for writing.

24. Students learn to write by studying grammar.

25. Good writers are also good speakers.

26. The only purpose in writing is to learn how to write correct English.

27. It is easier for a student to choose a topic than to have one assigned to him/her.

28. When writing a scientific report, it is more important to get the facts straight than to write correct English.

29. It is more important to express one's feelings in writing than it is to write correct English.

30. The teacher should not mark all students exactly the same way: what is a "C" for one student may be an "A" for another.

31. It is important to have some writing in class that is never seen by the teacher or other class members.

32. It is necessary to know the rules of grammar in order to write well.

33. If a student really wants to say something in writing, he or she will have little trouble with the mechanics.

34. Students should be allowed to write about what they want to write about.
35. A student's speech should be corrected so that his writing may improve.
36. Compositions written in class should be given grades.
37. Students should be made to write at least one composition a week.
38. The more outside interests you have the more interesting (and generally better) your writing will be.
39. All teachers (English, Math, Science) are responsible for teaching students to write.
40. Taking part in plays, reading poems aloud, and doing word games do not make a writer any better a writer.
41. The more freedom a student is given in choosing a topic, the more interesting his/her composition will be.
42. A student learns to write by writing.
43. Personal writing is the most important kind of writing.
44. Talking is as important as writing.
45. A student learns to write by doing grammar exercises.
46. Writing is important not because it helps a student express feelings but because it can help him find a job.
47. Writing helps a student find out what he or she knows about a subject.
48. It is important to write a native language well.
49. Writing essays is worthwhile.
50. Native languages should not be allowed in the classroom at any time, especially in English writing class.
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<td>57. No student should pass or even graduate unless he can write good English.</td>
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<td>58. There should be prizes at the end of the year for the best writer.</td>
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<tr>
<td>59. How the teachers feels about a student's writing is very important.</td>
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<td>60. If the teacher does not see the student's written work there is no point in the student writing it.</td>
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<td>61. It is important to write English well.</td>
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<tr>
<td>62. Teachers make me feel that I can write well.</td>
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<tr>
<td>63. Non-native students can write English better than native students.</td>
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64. Teachers seem to feel that native student can write as well as non-native students.

65. Writing book reports is worthwhile.

66. The most difficult part about writing is finding a good idea to write about.

67. Poor writers should write only short simple sentences.

68. Students should re-write papers that have many mistakes.

69. Students should grade their own papers.

Section III.

Complete the sentences:

1. Some writing teachers I really like because

2. Some writing teachers I do not like because

3. Write a comment telling what you like most about writing.
4. Write a comment telling what you like least about writing.

5. I wish writing teachers would teach me more.

6. A good writer is one who

7. What questions(s) do you think this questionnaire should ask? If you like, answer them.
Appendix B

"Process" Oriented Questions: An "agree" or "strongly agree" response to the below statements indicates a "process" orientation to writing.

5. A student who wishes to become a garage mechanic should learn how to write properly.

8. Private talks between a student and teacher about the student's writing are useful ways of helping students to improve their writing.

16. Students should often "talk out" their compositions before writing them.

20. The most important thing in writing is self-expression.

21. People who read a lot are good writers.

22. Good speakers are good writers.

25. Good writers are also good speakers.

28. When writing a scientific report, it is more important to get the facts straight than to write correct English.

29. It is more important to express one's feelings in writing than it is to write correct English.

30. Teachers should not mark all students exactly the same way; what is "C" for one student may be an "A" for another.

31. It is important to have some writing in class that is not seen by the teacher or other class members.

33. If a student really wants to say something in writing, he or she will have little trouble with the mechanics.

34. Students should be allowed to write about what they want to write about.

35. A student's speech should be corrected so that his writing may improve.

38. The more outside interests you have the more interesting (and generally better) your writing will be.

39. All teachers (English, Math, Science) are responsible for teaching students to write.

41. The more freedom a student is given in choosing a topic, the more interesting his/her composition will be.

42. A student learns to write by writing.
43. Personal writing is the most important kind of writing.
44. Talking is as important as writing.
47. Writing helps a student find out what he or she knows about a subject.
55. The teacher's corrections on paper should concern only ideas, not grammar.
56. The teacher should let students choose their own topic every time they write.
69. Students should grade their own papers.

"Product" Oriented Questions: An "agree" or "strongly agree" response indicates a "product" orientation to writing.

3. When writing to persuade someone to your point of view, spelling and punctuation are the most important part of the writing.
4. In school the science teacher should correct a student's grammar on a scientific report.
6. Correct English should be required of all students in composition class.
7. Students should lose one point for each mistake in a composition.
9. The most important thing in writing is correct word order and punctuation.
10. A student should never read his/her writing to other class members.
11. A single letter grade tells you enough about how good a composition is.
14. Grades are the best way to make students want to improve their writing.
15. Teachers should correct every mistake on students' papers.
17. A student can learn to write well only if the teacher corrects all his/her compositions.
18. It is important to know how to define "noun" and "verb" in order to write well.
23. A garage mechanic has no use for writing.
24. Students learn to write by studying grammar.

26. The only purpose in writing is to learn how to write correct English.

32. It is necessary to know the rules of grammar in order to write well.

36. Compositions written in class should be given grades.

40. Taking part in plays, reading poems aloud, and doing word games, do not make a writer any better a writer.

45. A student learns to write by doing grammar exercises.

46. Writing is important not because it helps a student express feelings but because it can help him find a job.

50. Native language should not be allowed in the classroom at any time, especially in English writing class.

53. A student can learn more about periods, commas, nouns, and verbs in workbook or grammar lessons than by writing book reports or essays.

58. There should be prizes at the end of the year for the best writer.

60. If the teacher does not see the student's written work there is no point in the student writing it.

67. Poor writers should write only short simple sentences.

68. Students should rewrite papers that have many mistakes.

"Intermediate" Questions: Questions belonging to neither category.

1. Spelling is important.

2. Grammar is important.

12. Long compositions are better than short ones.

13. Writing is the best means of self-expression.

19. Longer sentences are better than short ones.

27. It is easier for a student to choose a topic than to have one assigned to him/her.

37. Students should be made to write at least one composition a week.
48. It is important to write a native language well.

49. Writing essays is important.

51. Students should always reread and make corrections to their compositions before handing them in.

52. Students should have at least some homework every night that involves writing in English.

54. Looking for information for an essay is the most difficult part of writing it.

57. No student should pass or even graduate unless he can write good English.

59. How a teacher feels about a student's writing is very important.

61. It is important to write English well.

62. Teachers make me feel that I can write well.

63. Non-native students can write English better than native students.

64. Teachers seem to feel that native students can write as well as non-native students.

65. Writing book reports is worthwhile.

66. The most difficult part about writing is finding a good idea to write about.
Appendix C

The Responses to the Questions
Expressed in
Percentages
KEY TO GRAPHS

Q = question number
SA = strongly agree
A = agree
D = disagree
SD = strongly disagree
NO = no opinion
empty spaces = no responses

Note for Graph 2: The differences in Responses of Students with a Native Language Background

* - questions considered worthy of comment and analysis in section concerning differences between native students with a native language background and those with an English language background

- (e.g. -16%) = instances where students with a native language background had 16% fewer responses than those with an English language background

- (e.g. +17%) = instances where students with a native language background had 17% more responses than those with an English language background
Table C-1

Students' Responses to the Attitude - Scale (expressed in percentages)

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