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The Effect of Portfolio-Based Instruction on Composition Students' Final Examination Scores, Course Grades, and Attitudes Toward Writing

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THE EFFECT OF PORTFOLIO-BASED INSTRUCTION
ON COMPOSITION STUDENTS' FINAL EXAMINATION SCORES,
COURSE GRADES, AND ATTITUDES TOWARD WRITING

by

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B.S., Southeast Missouri State University, 1978
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A Dissertation Submitted in Partial
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the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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AN ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION OF


Title: The Effect of Portfolio-based Instruction on Composition Students' Final Examination Scores, Course Grades, and Attitudes toward Writing.

Major Professor: Dr. John Deichmann

The present study focused on the effects of portfolio-based instruction in the composition classroom on college freshmen's final examination scores, course grades, and attitudes toward writing. The experimental and control groups each consisted of five freshman composition classes on the campus of Southeast Missouri State University during the Spring 1991 semester. Pre- and post-measures of students' attitudes toward writing were obtained. Students in both the experimental and control groups sat for a common final examination which consisted of two impromptu essays.

The researcher investigated the effect of two types of instruction (portfolio-based and traditional process approach) on composition students' course grades and final examination scores. No evidence was found to indicate that a significant relationship exists between the type of instruction students
received and these two outcomes measures. In addition, students’ course grades and final examination scores were not found to vary depending upon their post-attitudes toward writing. Nor did the researcher find an interaction between the type of instruction the students received and their post-attitudes toward writing.

Students’ pre-attitudes toward writing were found to covary with their post-attitudes toward writing. After statistically controlling for students’ pre-attitudes toward writing, students’ post-attitudes toward writing were not found to vary based upon the type of instruction they received in their composition courses. However, the researcher did find a significant relationship between the final independent evaluation of students’ portfolios and their course grades and final examination scores.
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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ABSTRACT</th>
<th>i</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</td>
<td>iii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF TABLES</td>
<td>vii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purpose of the Study</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portfolios in Composition Classes</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As Instructional Tools</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As Evaluation Instruments</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As a Source of Student Motivation</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Composition Students' Attitudes toward Writing</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holistic Scoring</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criticisms Aimed at the Procedure</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. METHODS</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subjects</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informed Consent</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Participants</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course Content</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. Analysis of Variance Summary Table for the Dependent Variable of Course Grades .................................. 79
Table 2. Analysis of Variance Summary Table for the Dependent Variable of Final Examination Scores ......................... 80
Table 3. Means of Dependent Variables ........................................... 81
Table 4. Analysis of Variance Summary Table for the Effect of Post-Attitudes toward Writing on Students’ EN140 Course Grades .......................................................... 82
Table 5. Analysis of Variance Summary Table for the Effect of Post-Attitudes toward Writing on Students’ Final Examination Scores .......................................................... 83
Table 6. Adjusted Analysis of Covariance Summary Table ......................... 84
Table 7. Table of Least Squares Means, Post-Attitude Survey .................. 85
Table 8. Analysis of Variance Summary Table for the Effect of Portfolio Evaluation on Course Grades .............................. 86
Table 9. Analysis of Variance Summary Table for the Effect of Portfolio Evaluation on Final Examination Scores ................ 87
CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

During the past two decades, writing instruction has moved from a product-centered to a process-oriented approach. Prior to the mid-1970s, writing instruction in college composition courses focused on the study of rhetorical models of discourse (e.g., comparison/contrast, analogy, cause and effect, definition) during which students dissected professional essays and modeled their own compositions in response to these "expert" writing samples (Flower & Hayes, 1977). This method of teaching writing was not much different from the way composition was taught in English academies in the seventeenth century (Howell, 1956). The rules of grammar, usage, and mechanics were also emphasized, and students often completed rigorous drills testing their knowledge of these conventions of standard English usage (Flower & Hayes, 1977).

The move away from the product-centered approach described above began with the work of rhetoricians such as Gordon Rohman (1965), who focused on components of the writing process and coined the terms prewriting, writing, and rewriting as three separate but equally important elements of the writing process in which writers engage. At approximately the same time, James Britton (1975), who was studying the development of writing abilities in British school children of 11-18 years of age, also suggested a linear model of
the writing process that emphasized the stages of conception, incubation, and production. Rohman's and Britton's contributions to the teaching of writing as a process-centered activity cannot be underestimated; however, there are definite limitations to the conception of writing as a linear process characterized by the gradual development of the written product without consideration for the composing process of the writer.

The work of Janet Emig (1971) began to focus attention on the internal processes that writers undergo while composing. Emig analyzed the thinking-aloud protocols of eight twelfth-graders. She was the first researcher to empirically support the claim that the "composing process does not occur as a left-to-right, solid, uninterrupted activity with an even pace. Rather, there are recursive, as well as anticipatory, features" (p. 57) exhibited in the composing process. By externalizing the writing process, Emig provided useful evidence for the focus on both the sequential and recursive stages of writing.

In the late 1970s, work by Linda Flower and John Hayes at Carnegie Mellon proposed additional psychological components to the writing process. They viewed writing as a skilled cognitive activity that emphasizes the establishment of strategies and goals in a problem-solving model of the composing process (White, 1985). Flower and Hayes (1981) stated that the "process of writing is best understood as a set of distinctive thinking processes which writers orchestrate or organize during the act of composing" (p. 366).
Troubled by the linear model that mirrored only the growth of the written product and not the inner process of the writer, Flower and Hayes developed a problem-solving model of the writing process. The components of this model include analysis of the task environment (e.g., the rhetorical problem and the text produced thus far), the writer's long-term memory (e.g., knowledge of topic, audience, and writing plans), and the writing process (e.g., planning, translating, reviewing, and monitoring).

Instruction in composition began to mirror the research described above. Analysis of rhetorical models was slowly being replaced by emphasis on the components of the writing process. Teachers required students to complete prewriting activities that included heuristic devices such as brainstorming, concept mapping, freewriting, and outlining. The act of writing was viewed as a recursive procedure that allowed the writer opportunities for revision at any stage in the writing process. Editing was the final—and perhaps the least significant—component of the revising process. The direct teaching of grammar faded as studies began to show that instruction in grammar had no discernible effects on the students' writing abilities (Shaughnessy, 1977).

As writing instruction began to shift toward an emphasis on the process behind the written product, new methods of evaluating student writing also were slowly evolving. In the early 1970s, only two groups—the Educational Testing Service (ETS) and the National Assessment of Educational Progress
(NAEP)--were involved with large-scale essay scoring. Prior to this time, objectively scored multiple-choice tests of grammar and mechanics were used by national testing agencies, by admissions personnel on college campuses, and even by individual instructors in classrooms to make decisions about students' writing ability. However, by the early 1980s, a survey conducted by the College Conference on Composition and Communication found nearly 90 percent of English departments using the holistic method of scoring essays (White, 1985).

Holistic scoring operates under two basic assumptions: a piece of writing viewed as a whole is greater than the sum of its individual parts (i.e., structure, content, correctness); and a trained cadre of readers can reach quick and reliable agreement on students' essay scores. The holistic scoring of student essays still emphasizes the final written product, but the emphasis on grammar, mechanics, and usage is replaced by a concern for stylistic features of writing, including focus, development, organization, and voice.

Although the holistic scoring method was most often used in large-scale assessment projects to determine students' placement into or exit from courses or programs, it began having a significant impact on instruction by the late 1970s. Composition instructors, feeling the pressure of teaching to the standards of such tests, often imposed test-like constraints on writing assignments. The holistic evaluation of writing, however, had limited
usefulness. Critics of holistic assessment complained about the artificial time limits and the prescribed topics that did not allow students to fully engage in the process of writing. More importantly, in many cases inferences about the students' general writing ability were drawn from single samples of student work (e.g., Burnham, 1986; Elbow and Belanoff, 1986a).

In response to these criticisms, portfolios evolved as an alternative to the holistic evaluation of writing for assessment purposes and as a complementary instructional tool for process-centered instruction. Portfolios, which can be broadly defined as a collection of student writing compiled over a period of time, represent a range of the student's writing ability in a variety of genres.

Hutchings (1990) stated that while portfolios can provide an outcomes measure, they can also reveal learning over time, thus providing both assessment and instructional benefits. Valencia also commented on both the evaluative and instructive functions of portfolios and concluded that writing folders represent "a concept--a mental set--that teaching, learning and assessing happen at the same time, that you don't teach Monday through Thursday and assess on Friday... [P]ortfolios can get at the 'ongoingness' of assessment--the continuous monitoring of student progress, growth and learning that happens in the classroom" ("Student portfolios," 1990, p. 8). Dixon and Stratta (1982) argued that portfolios allow students to select their best work written over an extended period of time under supportive conditions: no time
constraints are imposed, and ample feedback with opportunities for revision is given. Burnham (1986) noted that portfolios eliminate the need for writers to become "skillful hurdlers over unrelated assignments" (p. 136). Students in portfolio-based classrooms can focus instead on the development of an awareness of the whole writing process.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to assess the impact of portfolio-based instruction on students in college composition classes. To date, as far as this author knows, there have been no studies which have attempted to analyze the difference in students' writing performance and their attitude toward writing as the result of two different types of instructional methods, the "traditional" process-centered approach and the portfolio-based method. Previous accounts of the use of portfolios in composition classrooms have been limited to anecdotes of a descriptive nature. This study attempts to move beyond the mere description of portfolio-based instruction to investigate its effects upon student achievement as measured by final examination scores and final course grades and upon student attitude toward writing as measured by the Florida Writing Project Student Survey (O'Neal, Guttinger & Morris, 1984).

Five classes of English Composition II (EN140) on the campus of Southeast Missouri State University, a midwestern university with an enrollment
of approximately eight thousand students, served as the control group, which
received "traditional" process-centered instruction as outlined by the EN140
course syllabus. In these classrooms, students completed six to eight essays and
one research project. Instruction focused on the implementation of various
components of the writing process (e.g., generating ideas, drafting, revising, and
editing), the promotion of critical reading skills (e.g., analysis and synthesis of
supplementary reading materials that were incorporated into student texts), and
the development of student writing ability as evidenced by coherence,
organization, style, and correctness. (See Appendix A for a copy of the course
syllabus.)

Instructors in the five experimental sections of English Composition II at
Southeast adapted the process-centered method of instruction as described
above to focus on the compilation of student portfolios. In these experimental
classrooms, instructors complied with the course syllabus; however, each essay
or research project was not viewed as a discrete unit with an imposed time
limit for writing. Instead, the students received feedback on each piece of
writing and had ample time to revise each piece before they handed in a paper
to be graded. Students in the experimental classrooms continued to revise their
papers throughout the semester, applying strategies supplied by the instructors
throughout the course to each paper. Johnston (1983) emphasized this
advantage of portfolio-based instruction when he pointed out that students in
such classrooms are encouraged to continue revising writing samples throughout the course of the semester, incorporating what they have learned throughout this time period into pieces written at various stages during the course. Burnham (1986) stated that by delaying or eliminating grades on individual assignments, student frustration is alleviated. Furthermore, students and instructors alike are relieved of the pressures of a "grade-driven" classroom and can focus instead on "texts, readers, revision, development and potential," according to McClelland (in press). All of these factors--multiple opportunities for revision, a delayed emphasis on grades, and the focus on the writers' developing texts--have been viewed as potential benefits contributing to the effectiveness of portfolio-based instruction.

Prior to the conclusion of the study, teachers who agreed to use the portfolio as an instructional tool reached consensus on features of writing folders which would merit final grades of A, B, C, D, or F. Course grades of students in the experimental classrooms were based on these evaluations of their portfolios and their performance on the common final examination for the course. (All students in EN140 are required to take a common final examination which counts for 10-20 percent of the students' course grades as stipulated by English departmental policy.) Thus, students in both the control and experimental groups received holistic scores on two impromptu essays that constituted the common final examination for the course and were assigned
course grades by their instructors.

After the students' course grades were recorded, the portfolios, generated by students in the experimental classes and devoid of any grades or comments, were evaluated by the researcher and one additional scorer who was not a teacher participant in the experimental classrooms. Using the criteria employed by the experimental classroom teachers, these two readers attempted to achieve an unbiased evaluation of the students' writing ability as demonstrated by their portfolios.

The researcher attempted to determine whether the difference between instructional methods accounted for variance in students' final examination scores and final course grades. Furthermore, the purpose of the portfolios' final evaluation by the researcher and the independent evaluator was to determine if this final evaluation accounted for variance in student achievement as measured by course grades and final examination scores.

The impact of portfolio-based instruction on students' attitudes toward writing was measured through the Florida Writing Project Student Survey, which was administered as a pre- and post-test measure in all control and experimental classrooms. The researcher chose to investigate this additional variable because portfolios have been praised as motivational tools that can affect students' attitudes toward their writing (e.g., Johnston, 1983; Murphy & Smith, 1990; Simmons & Erling, 1986). Johnston (1983) argued that since
scores are not recorded for each piece of writing in portfolio-based instruction, the fear of evaluation is removed. Thus, the use of portfolios is more likely to motivate students to continue writing than does the traditional process-centered approach, with its more conventional scheme of evaluation. Likewise, Simmons and Erling (1986) reported that students in portfolio-based classrooms displayed a more positive attitude toward their writing, which resulted in an increased willingness to revise their work.

Despite the general praise which portfolios have received for their motivational aspects, the literature in the field does not clearly define or limit the motivational utility of portfolios. Portfolios as vehicles of instruction can provide students with motivation to expend more effort on their writing as their attitude toward writing improves. This improved attitude may also be related to the scheme of evaluation that accompanies portfolio-based instruction. Motivation may also be linked to improved student attitude which is fostered in classes using portfolio-based instruction because of the modified role of the teacher and the supportive atmosphere which develops in the classroom as a result. In this study the researcher attempted to investigate the latter possibility by determining whether students’ attitudes toward writing accounted for variance in their course grades and their final examination scores. In addition, the interaction between instructional methods and attitudes toward writing was investigated as a source of variance in students’ examination scores.
and course grades.

It is not within the scope of this paper to resolve all of the issues that revolve around the use of portfolio-based writing instruction and assessment. Rather, this study is limited to investigating the effects of portfolio-based instruction on students' attitudes toward writing, their common final examination scores, and their final course grades. Despite the limited scope of this study, it could provide the basis for additional research in the areas of portfolio-based instruction and evaluation.
Portfolios in the Composition Classroom

A. As Instructional Tools

Portfolios as instructional tools in composition classes provide a variety of benefits. Primary among these advantages are the following: the focus on the writing process and the act of revision, the change of the instructor's role to that of mentor and coach, and the shift in the classroom from a focus on grades to a writing atmosphere controlled by the students. Portfolios are also utilized to introduce students to various types of academic writing. However, despite the positive regard many composition teachers have for portfolios, they are not without problems.

On the positive side, portfolios focus the composition classroom on the process of writing and revision. Elbow & Belanoff (1986b), who provided a model for portfolio assessment within the context of the composition classroom, praised the portfolio system of evaluating writing "in ways that better reflect the complexities of the writing process: with time for freewriting, planning, discussion with instructors and peers, revising and copyediting" (p. 104).

Burnham (1986) advocated portfolio-based instruction because it "incorporates what we know about how students develop as writers by emphasizing process, multiple drafting, and collaborative learning" (p. 126). He went on to state
that portfolios create a writing course as "an organic sequence of assignments, each building consciously upon the one before, and culminating in the development of 'whole,' process-aware writers rather than skillful hurdlers over unrelated individual assignments" (p. 136).

Other instructors have also noted that, in classrooms where portfolios were used, revision was more strongly encouraged (e.g., Matthews, 1989; Smit, Kolonosky, & Seltzer, in press). As portfolio-based instruction was utilized in her classroom, McClelland (in press) commented that students began to value working in peer response groups and getting feedback on revisions as they took control of their writing which "gave students a sense that what they were doing was real; they began to talk and think as writers." Sommers (in press) reminded composition instructors that while the writing process and the emphasis on revision can occur in a class where portfolios are not utilized, "the portfolio itself tends to encourage students to revise because it suggests that writing occurs over time, not in a single sitting just as the portfolio itself grows over time and cannot be created in a single sitting."

The use of the portfolio, in addition to emphasizing the writing process, enhances the role of the composition instructor. The teacher is cast in a different light--that of a mentor or coach, instead of the idiosyncratic authority figure who assigns grades. When using portfolios, teachers are less likely to put grades on papers and instead to focus on comments which students are
more likely to read and follow (e.g., Condon & Hamp-Lyons, in press; Ford & Larkin, 1978; Smit et al., in press; Sommers, in press). McClelland (in press) stated that students begin to view the instructor as another reader of their texts while Burnham (1986) noted that teachers become "respondents . . . rather than error-seeking proofreaders" (p. 126).

Allan Olson, the Executive Director of the Northwest Evaluation Association who is in charge of a collaborative project among U.S. agencies studying portfolio use, found that "through the portfolio process, a high-quality, personal relationship often builds between teachers and students . . . [who] look at growth together" ("Student portfolios," p. 10). Burnham (1986) also noted that instruction in portfolio-based classrooms can become more individualized as the instructor develops responsive skills unique to each student.

The change in the role of the instructor is only one factor which affects the classroom atmosphere in portfolio-based instruction. Students are given authority over their writing to a much greater extent in portfolio-based classrooms. When assembling portfolios, students must assume responsibility for their writing as they make choices about which pieces to include in their portfolios, much like a professional writer decides with discretion which manuscripts to submit to the critical eye of an editor (e.g., Burnham, 1986; Perdue, 1987; Sommers, in press). Burnham (1986) stated that students are
encouraged to show how much they believe they have learned by including particular pieces in the portfolio. This demonstration of cumulative learning is possible through the use of a portfolio, but is not often reflected by the summing of grades on additional assignments, the current practice in most traditionally-structured composition courses.

Some composition instructors have chosen portfolios as instructional tools to minimize the emphasis on graded products and maximize the emphasis on students as developing writers. McClelland (in press) wanted to get out from under the pressures of a "grade-driven" classroom and to focus instead on "texts, readers, revision, development and potential--not on grades." As she implemented portfolios in her course, McClelland noticed that as the workshop atmosphere developed in the classroom, talk shifted from grades to texts and students' choices involved in improving their texts. Students favored being in control of their writing and began to think and talk like writers. McClelland noted that the focus of her class changed from an artificial one demanding a work be started, finished, and evaluated in a week or two to a "real one that allows texts to grow and mature as writers create, explore, risk, fail and succeed over the course of the term." Sommers (in press) reported similar findings: "The emphasis in the course falls not on improving texts as means of improving a grade, but instead falls on developing as a writer, understanding that this development is more important than grades on individual texts."
Critics of the portfolio method may point out that grades are not eliminated in portfolio-oriented classrooms. The grades on individual pieces of writing are merely delayed until midsemester or end-of-the-course evaluations. However, instructors who have adopted portfolio-based methods in their composition courses point out the benefit of delaying grades on students’ early attempts in the course. Such benefits are the focus of the discussion dealing with portfolios as a source of student motivation beginning on page 26 and the section reviewing composition students’ attitudes toward writing beginning on page 31.

Less has been written to support McClelland’s and Sommers’ claims that students in portfolio-based composition classes alter their perceptions regarding the importance of grades. The researcher has found that her students’ comments support these claims. However, future researchers must further investigate student response to portfolio-based instruction. Only students who develop portfolios can validate claims such as those expressed above by McClelland (in press), Sommers (in press), and the author.

Portfolios can also be used to introduce students to a variety of academic writing. At the University of Michigan, students are required to include an argumentative essay and another essay of academic writing in their portfolios because faculty members considered these two areas of student writing to be particularly weak (Condon & Hamp-Lyons, in press). At Lehman College--City
University of New York, portfolios are used to emphasize the need for essay organization, development, the use of supporting materials, and technical correctness, according to Richard Larson (personal communication, March 1, 1990). Gay (in press) reported an innovative use of portfolios at the University of New York--Binghamton. Cooperating with a biology instructor, Gay helped students develop critical thinking, reading, and writing skills via a biology-linked portfolio. Students were enrolled in both a biology and developmental writing course and were instructed on how to write a lab report, research paper, and position paper on biology-related topics, which became the contents of the portfolio.

Portfolios are not without problems in the composition classroom, however. The additional paperload imposed by portfolios was noted by several instructors (e.g., Curran, 1989; Leder, in press; Sommers, in press). Smit et al. (in press) found that faculty reported spending two to eight hours per section reading final portfolios. In contrast, Hileman & Case (in press) and McClelland (in press) refuted this charge of additional work, claiming instead that reading students' final portfolios went quickly because of the instructor's prior familiarity with the contents.

Other criticisms of portfolios are based on the student-centered focus in the classroom and the change in the grading system. Faculty anxiety over the student-centered classroom created by the use of portfolios was noted by Pelz
Curran (1989) reported that faculty expressed concern over the loss of control in the classroom. Delaying or eliminating grades on individual assignments was also a source of faculty concern regarding portfolios (Burnham, 1986; McClelland, in press).

B. As Evaluation Instruments

In portfolios, composition instructors find an evaluative method that is consistent with process-oriented teaching techniques (Bishop, in press). An ETS writing consultant concurred, stating that "portfolios heighten both student and teacher awareness of growth and development in writing and at the same time, refocus attention on the quality of the writing product" ("The student writer," p. 12). Elbow & Belanoff (1986a) noted that because portfolios use a criterion-referenced model of evaluation, instructors can assume that "the ideal end product is a population of students who have all finally passed because they have all been given enough time and help to do what we ask of them" (p. 337).

That the instructional and evaluative functions of portfolios are inextricably linked was noted by Hileman & Case (in press): "Thus the portfolios become both the means by which students develop the writing skills necessary to pass the final exam and the end product by which they earn a letter grade for the course." The same sentiments are expressed by Condon &
Hamp-Lyons (in press) who have stated: "[P]erhaps the most fruitful source of that promise [of the use of portfolios] lies in the fact that portfolios link assessment with instruction, with the result that a portfolio-based assessment aids in strengthening even an already strong writing program by motivating faculty to reach consensus on important aspects of the courses a program offers" (i.e., assignments, evaluation standards, pedagogical approaches).

In contrast with the evaluation of a single piece of writing, portfolios allow teachers the improved ability to assess students' progress over time since the writing can be viewed in several stages of production, according to Simmons & Erling (1986). Hileman & Case (in press) stated that the "most reliable judgments [of student writing] occur when many writings from a given student are read and analyzed together." Portfolios allow for a "comprehensive, systematic method for evaluation of students' progress" (Hileman & Case, in press). This focus during evaluation on the students' process of writing, rather than the sole emphasis on the written product, is a major benefit cited by numerous composition faculty (e.g., Bishop, in press; Burnham, 1986; Camp, 1985; Dixon & Stratta, 1982; Elbow, 1990; Elbow & Belanoff, 1986a; Simmons & Erling, 1986; White, 1989; Wolf, 1989).

Portfolios allow evaluation, which may be discouraging to poor student writers, to be postponed at the beginning of the semester, according to Hileman & Case (in press). One of McClelland's students affirmed this advantage of
portfolio use: "I think the portfolio is great because it takes the pressure out of writing each individual paper. It places more emphasis on writing and the process of writing, rather than placing unnecessary stress on getting a good grade" (McClelland, in press).

Hutchings (1990), a project director with the American Association for Higher Education, has written that much evaluation is unrelated to the daily activity of faculty and students. The use of portfolios, however, is a method which builds on the daily papers and projects of the students. According to an ETS test developer, "Unlike many methods, portfolios tell you not only where the student ends up but how she got there" ("The student writer," p. 7).

Hutchings (1990) also addressed another concern that faculty have with evaluation: "Faculty already edgy about assessment can easily dismiss a test score or survey statistic as invalid, based on a bad sample, irrelevant. But portfolios, because they build on work that students are already doing--work assigned by faculty--are much less likely to be dismissed" (p. 8).

Evaluating portfolios also promotes setting and maintaining standards and provides opportunities for faculty development. Curran (1989) pointed out that faculty who agree to use a portfolio system of instruction are "forced" to establish a generally agreed upon series of writing assignments to identify the kinds of writing students should be doing. At Kansas State University, Smit et al. (in press) stated that portfolios are used to establish uniform grading
standards in more than 130 sections of Composition I and II. At the end of the first year of portfolio use, 88.5 percent of Kansas State instructors felt that the portfolio system helped to establish minimum standards in the composition classroom.

At some institutions, portfolios have been adopted by faculty who are concerned that students' writing skills are declining. Portfolios at Lehman College are used to combat faculty complaints that students completing the basic writing course are not ready for the entry-level composition course. Discussion by faculty of portfolio contents and evaluation has helped to set departmental standards for the course (Larson, personal communication, March 1, 1990). Ford and Larkin (1978) reported that portfolios were used at the Brigham Young--Hawaii campus as a way to combat grade inflation and a decline in students' writing skills. By requiring teachers to comply with departmental standards, portfolios protect the integrity of letter grades.

In some classes, such as the basic writing course at the University of Michigan, portfolios are used to provide a measure of standardization. No detailed written curriculum, syllabus, or prescribed text existed for Writing Practicum, according to Condon & Hamp-Lyons (in press). However, with portfolio-based instruction and evaluation, the faculty agreed upon the number and types of pieces to be included in the students' folders and the grading scheme to be applied in assessing them.
Portfolios have also been adopted by composition faculty to meet statewide assessment mandates. At Christopher Newport College, portfolios were a response to a Virginia state mandate requiring standards be set to ensure "the continuing high quality of higher education in the Commonwealth" (Rosenberg, in press).

When used as an exit examination or barrier to exiting the course, portfolios are also used to set standards. At Stonybrook (Elbow & Belanoff, 1986a), SUNY--Brockport (Curran, 1989) and the University of Michigan (Condon & Hamp-Lyons, in press), portfolios replaced the impromptu exit exams. At the University of Missouri--St. Louis, exiting the developmental writing course is based on both an impromptu essay and the portfolio (Reagan, personal communication, March 13, 1990). At other institutions, the portfolio is viewed as an instructional tool used to help students prepare for an existing barrier exam (e.g., Hileman & Case, in press; Johnson, 1990; Pelz, 1986).

While portfolios can bring faculty together to set and maintain standards, they can also provide opportunities for faculty development. Portfolios within composition classrooms bring teachers together to form a consensus on grading standards for courses, such as in Elbow's & Belanoff's EGC Writing 101 courses at Stonybrook (1986a). Burnham (1986) commented that faculty workshops following portfolio-based instruction often emphasize responding to student writing, conferencing techniques, and standards of
acceptable writing performance. Curran (1989) noted that the use of portfolios can foster the faculty's exchange of ideas, approaches, and criteria for evaluation. Numerous other composition faculty reported the same type of discussion after portfolio adoption (e.g., Dixon & Stratta, 1982; Martin, 1988; Wolf, 1987/1988). Condon & Hamp-Lyons (in press) added that portfolio reading teams at their university formed interpretive communities who agreed to apply shared criteria established by all the portfolio readers.

Portfolios used in such diverse contexts are obviously evaluated in a variety of ways. At the University of New Mexico, students may choose to submit portfolios at the end of the composition class. Without a writing folder, students can earn no better than a C (Burnham, 1986). Curran (1989) noted that if SUNY--Brockport students' portfolios are passing, they are guaranteed a C in the course, but individual instructors determine whether students merit the higher grades of A or B. McClelland (in press) stated that her students at the University of California--Santa Barbara agree upon standards by which portfolios will be evaluated. Students receive an A, B, or C based on their ability to focus, elaborate, and provide correct usage and mechanics. Williams, who is at the University of Indiana and Purdue University, stated that portfolios, which are used throughout the school's writing program, determine students' semester composition grades (personal communication, June 1990).

Finally, portfolios allow for student self-evaluation. Students determine
what they have done well and what needs more work. Condon & Hamp-Lyons (in press) stated that by writing about their own composing process, students can identify their strengths and weaknesses. Hileman & Case (in press) noted that students took responsibility for goal-setting, while in McClelland's class students developed criteria for evaluation and suggested grades for their portfolios (McClelland, in press). Gay's students wrote cover letters to assess their work and set goals based on their progress thus far (Gay, in press).

Despite these advantages associated with portfolio-based evaluation of student writing, problems exist in the evaluation of portfolios produced in composition classrooms. Condon & Hamp-Lyons (in press) noted that problems with plagiarism and authorship exist. When an essay has been extensively revised after peer response group work and conferencing with the instructor, it is difficult to determine that the piece represents the student's own writing ability. This problem was also noted by Holt & Baker (in press).

The problem of authorship is not exclusive to portfolios. The researcher acknowledges that whenever students seek assistance from tutors in a writing center, conference with their instructors, or collaborate with peer editors, the issue of sole authorship is clouded. Because portfolios allow instructors to review multiple samples of students' writing at various stages of completion, plagiarism becomes less--rather than more--of a concern. Instructors are able to compare drafts and trace the development of students' writing skills.
addition, because students receive continual feedback on their writing without fear of grades, they are more encouraged to develop their own abilities and less likely to plagiarize. Still, many advocates of portfolio-based instruction require students to include a timed impromptu piece in their portfolios as one check against this problem (see Condon & Hamp-Lyons, in press; Holt & Baker, in press; Smit et al., in press).

Curran (1989) also pointed out the conflict between portfolio evaluations and assigning a grade for the composition course. Curran questioned how many individual essays must pass for the portfolio to pass. In addition, a problem arises when the student has a series of essays pass, but her portfolio is rejected. These problems with portfolio evaluation must be dealt with by the composition instructor before writing folders can be successfully implemented in the classroom.

Ultimately, instructors must assign students grades for the course. In the researcher's opinion, it is necessary for students to clearly understand at the beginning of the course which system of evaluation will be employed by the instructor to determine final grades. Instructors may choose a variety of evaluation schemes: 1) They may choose to assign a grade to each piece in the portfolio and average these grades for an overall grade; 2) They may read the portfolio holistically to get a general impression of the student's ability to demonstrate certain pre-specified characteristics of "good writing"; 3) They may
trace the student's development from draft to draft or from essay to essay and reward the student for "symptoms of growth" (Sommers, in press). Students should be taught to use the instructor's criteria and system of evaluation to judge their own writing during the class regardless of which evaluation scheme the instructor employs. The researcher believes that in a portfolio-based classroom, students should be allowed to revise all of their writing until the final portfolio is due. This method then allows students to incorporate in each piece of writing what they have learned throughout the course, regardless of when papers are first drafted. As a result, in comparison with traditionally taught composition classes, final grades may be higher. If students have learned the power of revision and the process of writing in a portfolio-based classroom, higher grades, based on students' mastery of their writing tasks, may be the result for students who have finally begun to view themselves as writers.

C. As a Source of Student Motivation

Burnham (1986) noted that "the anxiety and insecurity of many freshman writers can be traced directly to hostile or puzzling commentary from previous teachers. In addition, grading is an obsession with some students and can become a major block in the working relationship between student and teacher" (pp. 125-126). Although the real concern in writing courses should be the improvement of writing skills, grades become the immediate priority for
many students. Portfolios can help to eliminate student concern about grades by postponing summative evaluation. Burnham (1986) concluded that "portfolio evaluation avoids or at least tempers the frustration students feel when they do not succeed in early assignments" (p. 137).

Johnston (1983) stated that such portfolio systems of evaluation as described in the previous section are more motivational than are traditional grading techniques. Since scores are not recorded for each individual piece of writing in portfolio systems, the threat posed by evaluation is removed. Thus, students are motivated to continue writing without fear of failure. The focus then shifts from earning grades to developing meaningful pieces of discourse.

This shift to the writing process effected by portfolio evaluation motivates students to improve their writing and to accept responsibility for their work. Teachers who used writing folders in North York during a 1985-1986 field study reported that portfolios motivated students to improve their writing skills. Depending upon the students' grade level, 79-90 percent of the teachers using portfolios agreed that students' writing skills improved during the time portfolios were used and that students wrote more frequently and more creatively than in traditional writing classrooms (Simmons & Erling, 1986).

Students in a portfolio-based classroom are motivated to assume responsibility for their own work and its quality, since they are not competing with peers but are collaborating with their peers and their instructor to improve
their writing skills, according to Burnham (1986). Condon and Hamp-Lyons (in press) reported the same conclusion:

Faculty regularly report that students bring their awareness of the portfolio to bear, both individually and in peer groups, . . . and that it serves as an individual and group motivator. On the individual level, students are more committed to writing that counts, so they are more willing to put a heavy investment into a piece of writing because they know that, ultimately, this piece of writing may go into a portfolio. . . . In addition, the portfolios give more impetus to collaborative learning situations . . . [because] peer review . . . becomes a real compact between learners who can have a stake in helping someone else succeed and get the same kind of help themselves, without an element of competition interfering in the cooperative effort.

A survey of faculty at Sul Ross State University found that portfolios in basic writing courses motivated students because the folders represented a "visual symbol of achievement" (Hileman & Case, in press). Smit et al. (in press) reported that a student survey at Kansas State University revealed that 93 percent of the students in classrooms where portfolios were used were motivated to revise; 87 percent reported being motivated to consult individually with their instructor outside of class. Johnson (1990) stated that students at San Diego State University who compile portfolios in composition classrooms
report being motivated to take pride in the work that goes into the final writing collection.

In summary, numerous benefits have been noted by instructors who use portfolios in their composition classrooms: The course focuses on the writing process and emphasizes revision; the instructor is viewed as a coach or mentor instead of an authority figure who arbitrarily passes out grades; students are encouraged to focus on developing their writing abilities instead of achieving a grade. Yet instructors admit that portfolio-based instruction may require additional reading time when portfolios are submitted at the end of the course. Faculty and students may experience discomfort over student-centered classrooms and delays in the assignment of grades, both features of portfolio-oriented classrooms.

The evaluation system based on portfolios also provides benefits and disadvantages. Portfolio evaluation is consistent with process-centered instruction. Multiple pieces of student writing are reviewed only after extensive and ongoing revision. Portfolios can function as both a formative measure of evaluation whereby students are given suggestions for improving their drafts and as a summative measure of evaluation for which the portfolio is viewed as the corpus of a student's writing during the course of a semester. Portfolios also allow instructors to delay grading assignments, thus postponing or eliminating student frustration at the beginning of the composition course.
Portfolio evaluation can also be the basis for building acceptable standards among composition faculty, serving as the impetus for discussion of writing assignments, grading standards, and criteria for evaluation. Portfolios also allow for student input in the evaluation process; students may help determine grading criteria or may select pieces to be evaluated in their writing folders.

Problems with portfolio evaluation include plagiarism and uncertainty of student authorship of papers. Conflicts between encouraging evaluations of portfolio pieces and assigning a final grade for the portfolio-based course must be recognized and resolved.

Portfolios influence the motivation of students in the composition classroom. Because grades on individual assignments are delayed or eliminated, portfolios can temper the frustration students often feel over their first assignments. In addition, this de-emphasis of grades allows students to focus on developing their writing skills instead of achieving a grade in the course. Students in portfolio-based classrooms are also motivated to assume responsibility for their own work as they collaborate with their teachers and peers to produce pieces for their portfolios. Finally, students are more likely to revise and to consult with their instructor in a portfolio-oriented classroom, both indications that students are taking pride in their work.
Composition Students' Attitudes Toward Writing

Composition instructors often report the negative attitudes of their students toward writing. Diederich (1974) reported that the negative attitudes of students in his developmental composition class were indicative of effects of teacher grades: "They hate and fear writing more than anything else they have had to do in school" (p. 21). Diederich questioned whether students can develop a positive attitude toward writing when everything they have written has been "slapped down for its mistakes" (p. 22).

Although Diederich may be accused of exaggerating college students' negative response to writing, students' intense negative attitudes towards writing have been noted by others. Deutsch (1988) found that students' negative attitudes toward writing stemmed from low grades and poor performances in previous composition classes. Gay (1983) reported that misconceptions students have about writing also contributed to their negative feelings. Students reported that they believe that writing is outer-, not inner-, directed and that they write to earn a grade and please the teacher rather than to learn.

Students who were extrinsically motivated (by institutional rewards, societal pressures, or gratification of physiological/psychological desires) reported writing for grades, not for pleasure or for self-discovery, according to Williams and Alden (1983). In addition, these students were less likely to
revise their papers and more likely to view writing as unimportant. In contrast, intrinsically motivated students (those motivated by ego, self-image, or curiosity) reported feeling a sense of satisfaction when completing a writing assignment and almost always revised their papers before turning in final drafts.

Studies (e.g., Lefcourt, 1976; Rotter, 1966; Weiner, 1979) have shown that writers' attitudes toward writing affect the quality of their writing: Students who believe they are responsible for choices in their writing perform differently than those who believe someone else is in control. Overbeck (1984), who investigated basic and inexperienced writers, found that as students gain control over their writing, they become more self-critical, their attitudes become more positive, and they take more risks as writers. Students who realize that they have choices within the writing process regarding invention strategies, problem-solving, and revision have greater confidence in their writing ability.

Perdue (1987) urged the adoption of strategies in the composition classroom that would foster students' confidence while "dilut[ing] the concentration of authority in the teacher and giv[ing] students a stake in what goes on both in the classroom and in their own writing" (p. 15). The use of portfolios in the composition classroom is one such method that addresses Perdue's concerns. Several authors mentioned allowing students to assume control over their writing as a benefit to portfolio adoption (Hileman & Case, in
Hileman and Case (in press) reported that basic writers, when describing their writing abilities, were "self-deprecating about their academic abilities" and lacked self-confidence regarding their composition skills. Portfolios helped students to become responsible for their own goals. In addition, 38 percent of the students in classrooms where portfolios were assembled reported an increase in self-esteem as a by-product of portfolio instruction. In light of the previously cited studies (e.g., Lefcourt, 1976; Overbeck, 1984; Perdue, 1987; Rotter, 1966; Weiner, 1979), the researcher believes that students' self-efficacy might have served as a more appropriate outcome variable than self-esteem.

Several composition instructors noted that they chose portfolios, in part at least, to help students take responsibility for their writing. McClelland (in press) adopted portfolios in her classroom in an attempt to de-emphasize students' concerns about "what the teacher wants" and "getting it right." Instead, McClelland noted that portfolios enabled her students to focus on the process of writing, which allowed students to see themselves as writers and their writing as viable texts. Matthews (in press) drew similar conclusions when observing students with negative attitudes toward writing beginning to use portfolios in the composition classroom. The results of her student questionnaire suggested that the use of portfolios "contributes to students' sense of control and mastery, and enhances the writing process experienced by
students." Matthews concluded that "students were generally very positive about the portfolio experience and perceived it as having made a real difference in their writing."

Gay (in press) summarized the effect of portfolios on the students' control over their writing, as well as on their view of writing as an ongoing process:

A portfolio approach, based on the assumption that everyone in the course is a writer at work, a developing writer, seems especially appropriate for basic writers whose negative attitudes often interfere with their development as writers. Asking basic writers to build a portfolio of their work shifts the emphasis from a single writing performance to a collective and encourages them to take increasing responsibility for their development as writers and learners.

Instructors at Western Kentucky University who have taught both the portfolio-based and traditional composition classes agreed that students who prepare portfolios have a much better attitude toward writing than do students in the regular composition sections (Pelz, 1986).

Perhaps the change in attitude toward writing effected by portfolios can best be attested to by students who assembled portfolios. Leder (in press) at California State University--Fullerton cited numerous testimonials from students, two of which are reproduced here:
Before starting the portfolio I thought it would be a waste of time.
However, now that I have completed the work, I feel proud of myself for
doing it. The polishing and editing seemed to take a long time, but it
was worth it.

(Jacqueline R.)

My first thought was--it was hard enough to do the first time, now she
wants us to do it all over again. But what I produced was something I
could take pride in. If I were not forced, I probably would not have
looked over these assignments again. Once the assignment is completed,
a sense of pride is felt. I looked back on all my work and was pleased.

(Richard B.)

Students' attitudes also are reported to improve in classrooms where
writing is viewed as a process (Coleman, 1984; Sannela, 1982), where
assignments are not required to be completed within a compulsory time limit
(placing a further control over the students' writing) (Marshall, 1983; Powers,
Cook, & Meyer, 1979), where evaluation is withheld or delayed (Reed &
Burton, 1981) and where peer response groups or teacher-student conferences
are utilized (Coleman, 1984; Davis, 1987; Smit et al., in press). Portfolio-based
instruction incorporates all of the above-listed techniques. Students preparing
portfolios are introduced to writing as an ongoing and recursive process.
Because assignments are not constrained by artificial time limits, students are
encouraged to revise their work throughout the duration of the course. In addition, students are freed from the fear of immediate evaluation and are able to utilize instructor and peer feedback to thoroughly revise their writing samples before submitting them for evaluation.

Students’ attitudes toward writing are also affected by their level of anxiety. Daly (1978) found that students with lower levels of apprehension wrote more fluently, wrote more words, sentences, and paragraphs, and did better in spelling, punctuation, diction, fragment recognition, and modification. On the other hand, highly apprehensive writers generally displayed lower overall writing ability (Daly, 1977; Garcia, 1977). Their level of apprehension affected their future writing process. Selfe (1984) found that highly apprehensive students did little pre-writing, less planning, and only minimal editing and revising. Bannister (1982), in contrast, noted that students experiencing little or no apprehension took more time for planning than did their counterparts.

Daly and Hailey (1984) noted situational factors that increase anxiety: novel writing tasks; uncertainty about expectations and grading standards; memories of past writing problems or rigid prescriptions about good writing; and anticipation of high standards of evaluation. This anxiety is heightened for non-traditional students who also feel conspicuous in a class of younger students, who face a conflict between their adult identity and the subservience
of their student role, and who experience increased situational anxiety because much is at stake (Gillam-Scott, 1984).

Daly and Hailey (1984) concluded that most students viewed the evaluation of their work so negatively that teachers must somehow counter the students' previous bad experiences with receiving grades on papers. They suggested delaying grades, offering ample opportunities for revision, offering feedback before evaluation, and fostering peer and self-evaluation of texts. Their final suggestion--adopting the portfolio method of evaluation in the classroom--embodies all the previous recommendations. Simmons and Erling (1986), who studied classrooms where portfolios were adopted in a field study in North York, found that students developed a more positive attitude toward writing, accepted criticism of their work better, were more willing to share their revisions with peers, and developed a sense of pride in their work which grew throughout the process.

In summary, composition students often have negative attitudes toward writing. These attitudes reportedly stem from low grades and previous experiences in composition courses and from mistaken perceptions they have about writing. Studies have shown that these negative attitudes affect the quality of students' writing. The use of portfolios is one technique which attempts to counterbalance students' poor attitudes toward writing by giving students control over their work and by fostering students' confidence in their writing ability. Studies have demonstrated that students' attitudes improve in
classrooms where writing is viewed as a process, where assignments are not restricted by artificial time limits, where evaluation is delayed or eliminated, and where response groups or conferences are utilized. All of the above conditions exist in portfolio-based classrooms. In addition, portfolio-based instruction reduces student anxiety, a factor which has been found to be related to students' writing abilities, by offering ample opportunities for revision, delaying grades on assignments, and providing feedback before evaluation.

**Holistic Scoring**

A. Development and Benefits of the Procedure

Elliot, Plata, & Zelhart (1990) offered the following definition of holistic assessment:

To view a sample of writing holistically is to attempt to view the writing as more than the mere sum of its elementary parts. In considering a sample of writing from an holistic perspective, readers do not judge separately the singular factors--treatment of topic, selection of rhetorical methods, word choice, grammar and mechanics--that constitute a piece of writing. Rather, raters are asked to consider these factors as elements that work together to make a total impression on the reader. It is this total impression that is sought in holistic scoring. (p. 17)

The concept of holistic scoring evolved from a study conducted by
Diederich, French, and Carlton for the College Board in 1961. These researchers selected 300 essays written in response to two topics by freshmen at three Northeastern colleges. Diederich et al. asked 53 judges who were educators, businessmen, and journalists to read the papers and assign each a rank from one (worst) to nine (best). No directions or criteria were given for scoring the essays. As a result, 94 percent of the essays received at least seven different scores, and no paper received fewer than five scores. In addition to rank ordering the papers, readers were asked to make annotations to support their evaluations. Taking these 11,018 comments, Diederich et al. conducted a factor analysis which yielded five types of responses. Readers were influenced predominantly either by ideas, form, flavor, mechanics, or wording. The sum of these five factors accounted for 43 percent of the variance in the essays' scores; the remaining 57 percent remained unexplained.

The above-described method employed by Diederich et al. is commonly referred to as "general impression scoring," a precursor of the current system of holistic assessment. White (1985) outlined the major tenets upon which holistic scoring is based. In addition to using a carefully developed writing assignment or prompt, the following constraints must be adhered to in order for holistic scoring to function as an accurate assessment of student writing:

1. The essay reading must occur under controlled conditions. All readers must work in the same location with set working hours and breaks.
These conditions help to eliminate extraneous variables which influence the reading and work to foster an "interpretive community" of readers, as advocated by Fish (1980).

2. Scoring criteria must be explicitly developed prior to the reading session. A numerical scale must be chosen (most commonly used are four, six or nine point scales), and descriptions of papers throughout the range of the scoring scale must be written.

3. Sample papers must be selected for use during reader training. Actual students' essays which are representative of the points of the scoring scale are read and discussed by readers to achieve consensus before the actual scoring session begins.

4. Checks on the reading in progress must occur. Readers belong to a table which is headed by an experienced scorer who attempts to maintain consistency with the scoring scale and fight against "reader drift" (p. 25).

5. Each essay receives multiple, independent readings. Each essay receives two "blind" readings, scorers being unaware of previous scores given the essays. Matching or touching scores are acceptable. Differences of more than one point are considered discrepancies that are adjudicated by the chief reader who is in charge of the scoring session. Fewer than five percent discrepant scores occur in an excellent reading. Average readings have seven to ten percent discrepancies.
6. Meticulous evaluation and record keeping are essential. Data on the number of papers read and discrepancies caused by individual readers determine whether readers are invited to score again or retrained before additional scoring sessions.

The system of holistic scoring described by White (1985) was developed in the early 1970s by the National Assessment of Educational Progress in Denver and by the Educational Testing Service in Princeton, New Jersey, the only two sites of large-scale essay assessment at that time. Although the NAEP went on to develop a more focused system of holistic assessment called primary-trait scoring, ETS refined the holistic scoring procedure and implemented it in evaluating essays written for the Advanced Placement Program and the English Composition Test accompanying select administrations of the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT).

By the early 1980s, a survey conducted by a committee of the College Composition and Communication organization found that almost 90 percent of the English departments responding had used holistic scoring. White (1985) stated that holistic scoring became a standard practice so quickly in a profession slow to acknowledge change because it is linked to recent developments in process-centered composition theory and post-structural literary criticism, both of which "reject the reductionism implied by product analysis and formalism" (p. 18).
Elliot et al. (1990) shaped the concepts of holistic scoring to the structure of Gestalt psychology as proposed by Wethheimer, Kohler, and Koffka. An underlying concept of Gestalt psychology, similar to the basic principle of holistic scoring, is that cognitive processes are not additive and that whole phenomena are greater than the sum of their parts. Gestalt psychology is rooted in the following five principles:

**Organisms organize:** All perceptual fields tend to become organized. Emphasis is on forms themselves and the ways forms develop.

**Relativity and transportation:** Adherence to standards is abandoned in favor of the reality that humans judge phenomena in relation to each other and that these judgments are transposed from one situation to the next.

**Object consistency:** Objects are perceived consistently if the observer knows about changing conditions; if conditions shift and the observer is unaware of the shift, the observer's ability to judge the total situation is reduced.

**Field dynamics:** Fields (dynamic wholes) are shaped by the elements within that field as well as by other fields. Interaction of elements—not their isolation—is significant in perception.

**Isomorphism:** There are similarities of characteristics among
phenomena of different groups, and observers are capable of discovering these characteristics. (cited in Elliot et al., 1990, p. 16)

Elliot et al. (1990) stated that if the five basic structures of Gestalt psychology are applied to holistic scoring, the following advantages of such a method become obvious:

Organisms organize: Holistic scoring enables readers to organize papers according to levels of excellence if the papers are written under controlled conditions.

Relativity and transportation: As the characteristics of papers are discussed during a holistic reading, the hypothetical standards of potential literacy tend to be abandoned by the readers. Instead, the individual evaluation criteria held by readers are blended with criteria evolving from the writers' unique responses to the topic. Judgments are then made according to what exists, not according to what is imagined.

Object consistency: When made aware of the aims and conditions of the assessment, readers using holistic scoring are able to assess reliably the total effect of a writing sample.

Field dynamics: As the variables of topic, writer, and assessment conditions are discussed in training sessions preceding a holistic
scoring session, readers are able to agree on scores given to individual essays.

Isomorphism: If the writing conditions and topics are controlled, similar characteristics of papers emerge, and readers are able to come to agreement on the value of these characteristics. (pp. 16-17)

Elliot et al. (1990) drew a link between Godshalk, Swineford, and Coffman's 1966 study in which readers were asked to make global assessments of papers by reading for a total impression and Kohler's conclusion that "after specific things, groups, events, the self, and so forth, have been recognized as natural parts of the total field, we could make no worse mistake than that of falling back upon atomism..." (p. 189). In their study for the College Board, Godshalk et al. concluded that the best test of writing ability would include both a writing sample to reflect students' generative writing skills and a multiple-choice section which tested students' awareness of atomistic features of the English language.

Breland, Camp, Jones, Morris and Rock (1987) also examined the difference between essays and multiple choice tests in evaluating writing skills. Holistically assessed essays were less reliable in terms of inter-rater variability than multiple choice tests, but multiple essays or a combination of multiple choice tests and essays eliminated this problem. Breland et al. concluded that
combining multiple choice measures with essay assessment provided the best evaluation.

In addition to focusing the assessment of writing on actual samples of students' work, holistic evaluation has received such wide-spread acceptance in part because it has proved beneficial in a variety of settings. Rozakis (1988) noted its usefulness in placing students in extra help or enrichment classes, in evaluating the writing ability of incoming or transfer students, and in regrouping existing classroom situations. Faigley, Cherry, Jolliffe, and Skinner (1985) found the single quantifiable score produced by the holistic scoring procedure to be useful for admissions and placement decisions, as well as tracking students within an institution. Myers (1980) went so far as to state that regardless of the purpose, "one of the most productive ways to assess writing is the holistic scoring of writing samples, using an overall impression to rate a paper on a numerical scale" (p. 1). Elliot et al. (1990) also concluded that in comparison with multiple choice tests, analytic and primary-trait methods, portfolio methods, and measures of syntactic maturity, "holistic scoring is the best choice for institution-wide writing assessment programs" (p. 13).

Nationally, a written essay was added in 1988 to the tests of General Educational Development (GED), which are used to award high school equivalency diplomas; these essays are holistically evaluated (Auchter &
Patience, 1989). Developers of the Medical College Admission Test (MCAT) had previously begun a pilot study in 1985, requiring applicants to write an essay which is holistically evaluated (Mitchell & Anderson, 1986). The College Board announced in 1990 that it will add an essay section to each administration of the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) beginning in 1994.

Odell & Cooper (1980), two leading researchers and authors in the field of composition, noted that holistic scoring is useful in such a variety of situations "to obtain a highly reliable rank ordering of student writing within a reasonably short time" (p. 40). They also stated that such assessment procedures yield "comparatively high predictive validity" (p. 41). Scores obtained on holistically assessed direct measures of student writing correlate "reasonably well with grades students make in freshman English courses" (p. 41). Unfortunately, Odell and Cooper fail to provide a correlation coefficient which would give a more accurate measure of the correlation between students' freshman English grades and holistically scored samples of their writing. Nor do the researchers provide a coefficient to support their earlier statement that holistically assessed essays yield high predictive validity.

Odell and Cooper's statements do reaffirm Cooper's earlier conclusions concerning the usefulness of holistic scoring, however:

Where there is commitment and time to do the work required to achieve reliability of judgment, holistic evaluation of writing remains the most
valid and direct means of rank-ordering students by writing ability. . . . For researchers and for state and national assessors, the possibilities in holistic evaluation are a reminder that they need not settle for frequency counts of word or sentence elements or for machine scoreable objective tests." (1977, p. 3)

Six years after his initial study on general impression scoring, Diederich (1967) stated:

My own conclusion is that the individual approach [to writing measurement] has clearly failed, and there is no reason to suppose that it will succeed any better in the [future]. I see no hope for any significant improvement until the individual approach is abandoned, and measures of four, five, or six most important objectives. . . are prepared, reviewed, revised, administered, scored, reported, and analyzed by cooperative action of departments or teaching teams. (p. 574)

While Diederich was not speaking specifically of holistic scoring, it is clear that his description fits the outline of holistic evaluation provided by White earlier in this section.

In addition to its usefulness in a variety of assessment situations, holistic scoring has been found to be both efficient and economical (e.g., Freedman, 1981; White, 1985) as compared to other direct methods of writing assessment. Cooper (1977) estimated that no more than two minutes per paper is required
for holistic evaluation. In their research, Breland et al. (1987) found the following rate of holistic reading of papers written in different modes: narrative, 33 per hour; expository, 46 per hour; and persuasive, 17 per hour.

Huot (1990) reported that holistic scoring is both more efficient and less costly to use than analytic or primary-trait methods. With holistic scoring Huot found that one paper can be read every 2-3 minutes, whereas analytic and primary-trait systems require 1-2 minutes for each trait being analyzed. Bauer (1981) found that the average grading time per essay in minutes was 4.14 for analytic analysis, 1.08 for primary-trait scoring, and .96 for holistic assessment. The training time required to perform holistic evaluation is also competitive with the other methods. While training readers to perform analytic evaluation required, on the average, 114 minutes, holistic scoring trainers used less than one hour to calibrate readers.

Veal and Hudson (1983), who compared five measures of direct and indirect measures of writing assessment--holistic, analytic, primary-trait, mechanics frequency counts, and multiple choice tests--found the following scoring costs per paper: holistic, $.75; analytic, $2.37; primary-trait, $.58; mechanics frequency counts, $1.06; and objectively scored multiple choice tests, $.53. Based on the cost and the reliability provided by each method, Veal and Hudson recommended holistically scored writing samples. Other researchers (e.g., Bauer, 1981; Faigley et al., 1985) have also noted the cost benefits
provided by holistic assessment. White (1985) pointed out that holistic evaluation is sometimes criticized as being expensive when compared with multiple choice testing. However, when the development of the tests is also considered, holistic scoring is competitive. In addition, the direct assessment gives additional benefits to students, faculty, and curriculum not provided by multiple choice testing.

White (1985) noted the benefit provided by holistic scoring for in-service training and faculty discussion, which can be cultivated as a source of faculty development. In addition, holistic evaluation allows for faculty outside the English department without specific technical writing vocabulary to globally assess students' writing abilities. East Texas State University, for example, adopted holistic scoring in 1984 because it was felt that this procedure would "best enable faculty from across the curriculum to evaluate the emerging nature of student writing" (Elliot et al., 1990, p. 15).

B. Criticisms Aimed at the Procedure

Despite its wide-spread use, holistic scoring has been criticized for a variety of reasons: its emphasis on product rather than process, the lack of information it provides about individual student's writing abilities, the "tunnel vision" it imposes upon readers, and its acceptance of low reliability estimates.

The Committee on Teaching and Its Evaluation in Composition of the
Conference on College Composition and Communication criticized holistic scoring as product-centered, decontextualized, and reductionistic. Because holistic evaluation fails to take into account the writer's purpose, the writer's audience, or the sociopolitical context for the writing act, the group suggested shifting to a process-centered form of assessment which would take into account the goals of the course and the teacher, as well as the background and preparation of students (Roberts, 1983). The committee's report addressed concerns that have been voiced by others repeatedly (e.g., Charney, 1984; Huot, 1990b; Spandel, 1987).

Assessment researchers have also pointed out the necessity of holistic evaluations being tied to classroom instruction. Spandel (1987) identified this as a crucial issue in holistic scoring, stating that it is critical to tie scoring criteria to writing traits that instructors value in the classroom. Earlier, Quellmalz (1984) had advocated that assessment should reflect classroom practice: "An ideal large-scale assessment program would use writing assignments and scoring criteria that also are used by teachers" (p. 32). Quellmalz felt that holistic scoring could be tied to classroom practice under certain conditions:

If we want large-scale assessment methods to relate to classroom evaluation, we must be more aware of the message we send to the classroom when we use a particular rating guide. Guides with two
criteria for text level features (e.g., the essay is clear and well organized) and fifteen criteria for sentence level conventions imply that mechanics are more important than the organization and elaboration of ideas. (p. 31)

A further criticism of holistic scoring centers on the lack of information it provides about students' writing abilities. White (1985) conceded that holistic evaluation provides no meaningful diagnostic information beyond a rank order, a criticism noted by others (e.g., Charney, 1984; Faigley et al., 1985; Huot, 1990b). White (1985) also pointed out that holistic scores do not represent an absolute value; they are only relevant in relation to the group of papers which are scored collectively. Odell and Cooper (1980) stated that holistic evaluation does not allow for the assessment of "students' ability to perform all the activities a writer must be able to perform" (p. 41) because it most often centers around the judgment of a single piece of writing and as a result may lack construct validity.

Holistic scoring has also come under attack because it "alter[s] the process of scoring and reading and distort[s] the raters' ability to make sound choices concerning writing ability" (Huot, 1990b, p. 202). Huot (1990a) further noted that holistic assessment procedures "work to control the natural variability present in the fluent reading of individuals who have had different experiences and therefore possess a range of expectations as readers" (p. 255).
Earlier, Gere (1980) had stated in a similar fashion that a holistic system of evaluation "emphasizes reader consensus. . . [but] gives no direct attention to the communicative function of the writing" (p. 47).

Such criticisms, according to Nold (1978), stem from holistic scoring's basis on an "unquestioning assumption of an underlying text-centered theory of reading," (p. 6) in which the reader receives the text and all readers receive the same text. In contrast, the interactive theory of reading states that "the reader makes meaning from the text; he has an active role in the process. And because of his different experiences and expectations and immediate situation, he may perceive a text quite differently than another reader" (Nold, 1978, p. 7).

White (1985) addressed this charge, claiming that the calibration of readers and the viewing of the text in a similar fashion by a diverse readership were in fact benefits of holistic assessment:

Part of the value of a holistic scoring session . . . depends on the establishment of a temporary, artificial interpretive community, a group of faculty who agree to agree on scoring standards for that particular test. . . . These ad hoc and temporary communities of readers determine the meaning and value of the texts they grade in ways that evoke or even embody Fish's construct [of an interpretive community] and . . . demonstrate the validity of his idea. (p. 98)
White (1985) cautioned against readers being told what to do when they arrive to score. Instead, he urged readers to form an interpretive community which assents to a set of standards and feels ownership of the assessment process.

One other criticism of holistic scoring which centers on the reading session deals with readers applying their own idiosyncratic criteria (e.g., Barritt, Stock, & Clark, 1987; Charney, 1984) despite the standards set forth in the scoring rubric. The University of Michigan reported a problem with consistency in holistically assessing 4000-plus placement essays, despite ongoing discussion of what characterizes effective student writing. Barritt et al. (1987), who analyzed scorers' comments, reported that readers were being influenced by their images of a prospective writer, not the actual writer of the text. They concluded that the "separation of the text from author is a false one. . . . To interpret a text, readers must construct an author whose intention, stated or intuited, provides a focus for interpretation" (p. 323). Furthermore, reading a student's essay should be seen as a "re-creation of the writer's intended meanings," (p. 324) which often results in more than one interpretation of a text.

In addition to their varying perceptions of the text, raters from diverse backgrounds contribute to the unreliability of the scoring procedure, a final criticism leveled at the holistic method of assessment. Huot (1990b) pointed out two possible sources of error in reliability in direct measures of writing
assessment: testing conditions and within-student scoring called "interrater reliability." The latter has been the focus of direct evaluation scholarship. However, Huot claimed that holistic scoring adds an additional source of test-error variance because it is based on two readers' scores, each contributing a margin of error based on background, training, and appreciation of student text.

Earlier, Follman and Anderson (1967) investigated the reliability of grading essays and concluded that the unreliability associated with holistic assessment "may be attributed to raters' heterogeneous experiential and academic backgrounds which may cause different values and attitudes to operate in the essay reading" (cited in Cooper, 1977, p. 19). According to Follman and Anderson, a holistic reading session should provide guided direction in training readers to reach consensus when evaluating the essays to neutralize these individual differences.

Cooper (1977) also commented on the effect of the readers' backgrounds and the results of their subsequent training in holistic scoring:

As emphatically as I can, then, let me correct the record about the reliability of holistic judgments: When raters are from similar backgrounds and when they are trained with a holistic scoring guide—either one they borrow or devise for themselves on the spot—they can achieve nearly perfect agreement in choosing the better of a pair of essays; and they can achieve scoring reliabilities in the high eighties and
low nineties on their summed scores from multiple pieces of a student's writing. (p. 19)

Mellon (1975) noted that holistic scoring procedures have reached much more respectable reliability figures than were originally thought possible when direct writing assessment was first being researched by ETS:

Holistic scoring techniques have been extensively researched over the past twenty years, particularly by personnel of ETS in connection with essay exercises used in various College Board examinations. It is known, for example, that inter-rater reliability correlations (measures of the extent to which raters agree with one another on the rating assigned to a given essay) reach as high as .70 to .80 and above if raters are given special training sessions prior to their work.

Equally high correlations are found between initial ratings and delayed reratings of a given essay by the same reader (after special training), thus verifying intra-rater consistency. . . . [W]e know that trained readers are consistent in their own overall quality ratings and agree with the ratings of other readers about two-thirds of the time. This is a far higher percentage than we initially thought, on the basis of earlier studies of judgments of writing ability, could ever be attained. (p. 23)

In the first recorded study on rater reliability, Stalnaker (1934)
demonstrated an increase in rater reliability from a range of .30 to .75 to a range of .73 to .98 after training (cited in Cooper, 1977). Godshalk et al. (1966) found a reading reliability of .92 if students wrote in response to five topics, and each was rated by five readers. While it is unrealistic to expect students' essays to be evaluated by five separate readers, later studies focused on the reliability rates found when each essay was read by two raters. Carlson and Bridgeman (1986), ETS research consultants, found reliability figures ranging from .80 to .85 in their study analyzing the holistic scores given by two readers on the Test of English as a Foreign Language and the Graduate Record Examination. Mitchell and Anderson (1986) studied the holistic scores given the pilot essays of the Medical College Admission Test (MCAT) in the spring of 1985. They investigated several sources of variance: reader, essay batch, scoring day, subject within essay batch, interaction of day with essay batch, interaction of day with reader, interaction of reader with essay batch, and interaction of subjects within essay batch. They found interrater reliabilities of .84 and concluded that 71 percent of the variation in scores was due to the level of differences between the essays themselves while the remaining 29 percent was due to other factors.

Diederich (1974) stated that for program evaluation, reliability of holistic assessments should reach .80, while .90 is necessary for measuring individual growth. While assessment personnel have rarely claimed to have achieved
reliabilities of .90, tremendous strides have been made since Diederich, French, and Carlton's 1961 study which found inter-rater reliability of .31, using no specified scoring criteria and without training readers.

While Charney (1984) conceded that holistic scoring is generally highly reliable, she noted that this system of evaluation may depend on "characteristics in the essays which are easy to pick out but which are irrelevant to true writing ability" (p. 75). Huot (1990b), who also noted Charney's objections, recommended that the theoretical basis of holistic scoring be further explored through a series of studies which would systematically investigate the objections which have been leveled against this procedure. While such studies are being conducted to research the criticisms leveled against it, holistic scoring continues to be used by national testing agencies, at state and local levels, and by individual classroom instructors as the predominant method of assessing students' writing samples.

In summary, holistic scoring evolved in the 1970s to meet the needs of large-scale essay assessment and has become increasingly popular in the decades since as a quick and reliable method of evaluating students' writing. Unlike the previously used objectively scored multiple-choice tests, holistic scoring focused assessment on actual samples of students' writing. It has proven to be both an efficient and economical system of evaluation. Finally, the adoption of holistic scoring can serve to foster faculty discussion of curriculum, course goals, and
Critics of holistic scoring identify several weaknesses in the system. Holistic evaluation has been condemned because it emphasizes product rather than process and because it fails to provide specific information about the individual student's writing abilities. Both of these criticisms, however, are unfounded in the opinion of the researcher. Holistic scoring was not developed to provide diagnostic information about individual student writers; rather, it aims to rank order students' performances on a single impromptu sample of their writing. Developers of this evaluative system never claimed that this scoring procedure focused on the process of student writing; clearly, the product is the emphasis. Critics who condemn holistic scoring on these grounds need to be reminded that prior to the advent of holistic assessment, students' writing skills were judged by objectively scored multiple-choice measures which did not call for students to generate even a single sentence of their own writing.

An additional criticism of holistic scoring centers on the artificial consensus which it requires readers to reach. This charge is based upon the assumption that the evaluative criteria are externally imposed upon the community of readers. In contrast, holistic scoring is based on the principle of community-devised standards which are formulated after scorers read sample papers and discuss how the evaluative criteria are demonstrated in the actual
student papers. Holistic scoring fosters faculty discussion of and agreement on characteristics which good writing displays. The researcher does not view this process as either artificial or restrictive, as some critics do.

Finally, the reliability of holistic scoring has been the topic of much criticism. Errors in reliability occur due to testing conditions, interrater reliability (different ratings given the same sample by different readers), intrarater reliability (drifting standards within the same reader), and variance contributed by various readers' different backgrounds, training, and appreciation of student text. While the reliability of holistic scoring has improved substantially since the first recorded correlations between two readers' scores, this area of scholarship needs to be the focus of additional research. Each source of variability mentioned above needs to be the focus of further systematic investigation and evaluation in the future.
Subjects

Subjects were students in ten sections of EN140, English Composition II, on the campus of Southeast Missouri State University during the Spring 1991 semester. Students had already completed at least one additional three-hour composition course, EN100. In addition, approximately thirteen percent of the students had also completed the developmental writing course EN099, Writing Skills Workshop. The majority of students enroll in EN140 during the second semester of their freshman year or the first semester of their sophomore year.

One hundred twenty-four students comprised the control group. Fifty-two (42 percent) were males, and seventy-two (58 percent) were females. One hundred twelve students (90 percent) were eighteen to twenty-three years old, while twelve (10 percent) were at least twenty-four years old. One hundred twenty-one students (97.5 percent) reported their national origin as American; three (2.5 percent) were non-Americans.

The experimental group contained one hundred and one students. Males numbered thirty-nine (39 percent), females sixty-two (61 percent). Ninety students (89 percent) were eighteen to twenty-three years old; eleven (11 percent) were twenty-four years of age or older. Ninety-nine students (98 percent) stated their native country was America, while two (2 percent) came
from foreign countries.

Students in the control group were selected through the method of cluster sampling, by which five classes were randomly selected from the total number of EN140 courses offered. Students in the experimental group were not selected randomly. Because these students were exposed to a different instructional method that necessitated teacher cooperation with the research study, the researcher invited all full-time faculty scheduled to teach EN140 during the Spring 1991 semester to participate in the project. Of those who volunteered their classes as potential subjects and themselves as instructors, the researcher randomly selected five classes.

Informed Consent

All subjects read and signed the statement of Informed Consent. (See Appendix B for a copy of the control and experimental versions of this form.) Subjects in the control group were informed that if they agreed to participate, they would be asked to complete the Florida Writing Project Student Survey at the beginning and at the end of the course, sit for the common final examination required of all EN140 students, provide demographic information about themselves, and allow the researcher access to their final examination scores and course grades.

Subjects in the experimental group were informed that if they agreed to
participate, they would be asked to complete the Florida Writing Project Student Survey at the beginning and at the end of the semester, sit for the common final examination, provide demographic information about themselves, and allow the researcher access to their final examination scores and course grades. In addition, they were advised of the format of portfolio-based instructional procedures.

Both groups were informed that all data they provided would be used for this study only and would not be used in any way to evaluate their performance as students in EN140. In addition, students were assured that the information they supplied would be kept in a locked file and destroyed upon completion of the study.

**Teacher Participants**

Four of the five control group instructors had completed doctoral degrees, three of whom had attained the rank of professor and one of assistant professor. The final control group instructor had completed a master of arts degree and was an assistant professor. Similarly, four of the five experimental classroom teachers had completed doctoral degrees, one attaining the rank of professor and three of associate professor. The fifth experimental group teacher was an instructor who had completed a master of fine arts degree.

Teachers of control groups reported having twenty-three to thirty years
of experience in the college composition classroom and reported teaching an average of seventy-three EN140 courses during their careers at Southeast Missouri State University. Instructors in the portfolio-based classrooms had five to twenty-seven years of experience teaching college composition courses and averaged thirty EN140 classes each.

Two of the control group teachers had previous experience with the portfolio. One reported collecting students’ work in folders and examining it periodically to determine their progress in composition skills, while the other stated that he had used portfolios as the basis of conferencing with students and determining grades. Both admitted that they did not utilize the portfolio as an instructional tool.

Four of the five instructors in the experimental classes had used portfolios in their classrooms before. One reported briefly experimenting with the approach twenty years ago before dropping the technique; another had used portfolios intermittently but stopped when students wanted grades on each assigned paper. One instructor reported using portfolios in all of his developmental courses while the fourth teacher stated that he currently uses portfolios in all of his composition classes as the primary evaluation tool; both evaluate students’ selected portfolio pieces at midterm and at the end of the semester.
Course Content

EN140 is a three-hour class that is required of all undergraduates completing a four-year degree at Southeast. The course has a common syllabus and textbook. Students are required to write 6-8 essays with appropriate revisions and complete one research paper or project.

The course has the following objectives:

1. To develop the student's writing ability as reflected in coherent thought, effective organization, reasonable stylistic force and fluency, and regularity in the grammatical and mechanical conventions generally accepted in educated usage.

2. To encourage understanding and mastery of specific techniques for developing and presenting the student's thoughts in writing.

3. To familiarize students with the techniques of acquiring, assimilating, and presenting information.

4. To promote careful and critical reading as a basis for the student's own development as a writer.

5. To foster in students an appreciation of how writing functions in its social, historical, and cultural contexts, both as a means of expression and as a mode of learning.

(See Appendix A for a complete course syllabus.)

All students enrolled in EN140 sit for a common final examination which
is held on the Saturday morning before the last week of classes. This final examination consists of two parts: For the first portion of the test, students are given fifty minutes to write an expository essay on a pre-selected and field-tested topic. For the second part of the examination, students are given seventy minutes to read a brief packet of supplementary materials, limited to three pages in length, and are asked to write an argumentative/persuasive essay in response to a given topic. These final examinations must count for no less than 10, but no more than 20, percent of the students' course grades. (See Appendix C for a copy of one such final examination.)

The final examinations are holistically scored by a trained cadre of interdisciplinary faculty readers during the Monday and Tuesday of finals week. Students' essays are evaluated by two independent readers using a double-blind procedure: Students' identities are concealed from the readers, and the previous reader's score is hidden from any subsequent reader(s).

Part I essays of students' final examinations are rank ordered on a six-point scale using the following criteria: focus, development, organization, style (diction, coherence, tone), and correctness. A sixth criterion called "references" is added when the Part II final examination essays are evaluated. Papers which are clearly excellent in these categories receive a six; those which are impressive receive a five; a score of four is awarded to adequate essays. These three scores are used to designate competent/passing writing. Scores of three,
two, and one, which are used to designate developing, rudimentary, and incoherent essays, respectively, are awarded to papers which do not demonstrate competent/passing writing. (See Appendix D for a more descriptive copy of the holistic criteria and scoring scales used.)

If the two readers' scores are matching (e.g., a 4 and a 4) or touching (e.g., a 4 and a 5), the scores are averaged (i.e., a 4 in the first example above and a 4.5 in the second example). If scores are discrepant by more than one point (e.g., a 4 and a 6, or a 2 and a 5), the discrepancy is resolved by the chief reader of the scoring session. Students must receive a combined total score of seven--out of a possible total of twelve--on the two essays to pass the final examination.

Procedures

Subjects in the control group were asked to complete the Florida Writing Project Student Survey, a 20-item questionnaire in the format of a Likert scale, which measures students' attitudes toward writing. (See Appendix E for a copy of the Florida Writing Project Student Survey.) Students completed the survey twice--during the first and the last week of the EN140 course. At the beginning of the course, students also provided demographic data, including their gender, age, national origin, previous composition courses and grades, and transfer status. Teachers in the control classes conducted the composition
course in the "traditional" format, using the course objectives outlined above. Students sat for the common final examination described above. Teachers figured course grades, using the scores students received on the final examination, the grades received on the 6-8 essays and one research paper/project stipulated by the course syllabus, and any other relevant measures obtained in the class (e.g., in-class work, grammar exercises, journal entries, etc.)

Subjects in the experimental group were also asked to complete the Florida Writing Project Student Survey at the beginning and at the end of the course. They also provided the demographic information described above. Students sat for the common final examination, a requirement for all EN140 students. Teachers in the course, however, used a portfolio-based method of instruction. Instructors followed the common syllabus and required 6-8 essays and a research project. However, instead of viewing each assignment as a discrete unit to be completed, revised, and graded within a stipulated time frame, they provided feedback on the students' papers throughout the semester but did not attach grades to any assignment.

During the semester, students were encouraged to take advantage of the feedback they received from their teachers and from their peers in class and to use this information to continue revising papers written throughout the sixteen weeks of the course. Students in each experimental section wrote a variety of
essays, some of which drew on supplementary supporting material, an in-class impromptu essay, and a research paper.

At midsemester, students in the experimental classrooms submitted one paper for a trial evaluation by the team of instructors teaching in the portfolio-based classrooms. Two instructors read each paper, using a set of common evaluative criteria based on the holistic scoring criteria described above. These papers were judged as C or not a C, passing or not passing. Discrepancies between readers were resolved by the researcher. Students with non-passing submissions at midsemester were urged to conference with their teachers to discuss the weaknesses displayed in their compositions and how to address the problem(s).

At the end of the semester, students completed an anonymous evaluation of the portfolio method and collected all of their course work and assembled it in a writing folder--the portfolio--to be evaluated by their instructor and one other teacher of a portfolio-based class to determine the students' course grades. Teachers in the portfolio-based classrooms met and reached consensus on features of portfolios that merited grades of A, B, C, D, or F. Revised drafts included in the portfolios contained no grades and were not marked in any way. Similarly, instructors made no indication of the students' course grades on the portfolios. Any such comments or grades were kept separate from the portfolios and their contents. Final examination scores were counted the 10-20
percent toward students' course grades as required by departmental standards.

Independent Evaluation of Portfolios

After instructors in the portfolio-based classes turned in their students' final course grades, the students' portfolios were evaluated a final time by the researcher and one other independent scorer who was not an instructor in a portfolio-based classroom. When evaluating the portfolios, these two readers employed the criteria used by the instructors in the portfolio-based classrooms to determine final course grades. Both readers evaluated all portfolios. Discrepancies were resolved by averaging the two readers' scores. The researcher realized that teachers in the experimental classrooms might have been influenced by factors other than students' work in determining their final course grades (e.g., attendance, participation, personal disposition toward the class or teacher); thus, this final evaluation of the portfolios was necessary to provide the researcher with an unbiased evaluation of the students' writing ability.

Role of the Researcher

During the first week of the Spring 1991 semester, the researcher visited each experimental and control classroom to explain the study and obtain the students' signatures on the appropriate consent forms. At the same time she
collected demographic data and students' responses to the Florida Writing Project Student Survey. She visited all the classrooms again during the final week of the semester to administer the writing survey a second time.

During the course of the semester, the researcher met periodically with instructors in the experimental classrooms to discuss assignments, techniques, and problems. In addition, this group met to evaluate students' midsemester essays and final portfolios. The researcher coordinated these efforts and participated in the evaluation of students' midsemester essays. She did not, however, evaluate students' final portfolios during this joint scoring session since her independent evaluation of all portfolios was conducted immediately after this session.

As the Coordinator of Writing Assessment on the campus of Southeast Missouri State University, the researcher was responsible for selecting the EN140 examination and guiding its administration. She also served as the chief reader during the holistic scoring of all EN140 students' final examinations. Her responsibilities included training scorers, resolving all discrepant scores, and analyzing data. Because the students were randomly assigned test booklet numbers and were not otherwise identified, the researcher was unaware of which essays belonged to students participating in her study.

The researcher also served as one of two independent evaluators of students' final portfolios. The researcher at this time was unaware of students'
examination scores, EN140 course grades, and writing survey responses. Only after instructors had completed all paperwork related to their EN140 sections and the final evaluation of portfolios had occurred did the researcher amass and analyze her data.

Research Questions

In this study, the researcher posed the following research hypotheses and asked the following statistical questions:

Research hypothesis 1: The difference in instructional method will affect students' course grades.

Statistical question: Does the distinction between the control and experimental groups' instructional methods account for variance in students' course grades?

Model: \( Y_{ij} = \mu + \alpha_j + \epsilon_{ij} \)

Ho: \( 1\mu_1 - 1\mu_2 = 0 \)

Research hypothesis 2: The difference in instructional method will affect students' final examination scores.

Statistical question: Does the distinction between the control and experimental groups' instructional methods account for variance in final examination scores?

Model: \( Y_{ij} = \mu + \alpha_j + \epsilon_{ij} \)
Ho: \( \mu_1 - \mu_2 = 0 \)

Where \( Y \) = students' EN140 course grades in the first model above and students' final examination scores in the second model above.

\( \mu \) = the grand mean

\( \alpha_j \) = the treatment effect of the instructional method

\( \epsilon_{ij} \) = the error term

Research hypothesis 3: The difference in students' post-attitudes toward writing will affect their course grades.

Statistical question: Does the difference between students' EN140 course grades vary depending upon students' post-attitudes toward writing?

Model: \( Y_{ij} = \alpha + \beta_j X_{ij} + \epsilon \)

Ho: \( \beta_j = 0 \)

Research hypothesis 4: The difference in students' post-attitudes toward writing will affect their final examination scores.

Statistical question: Does the difference between students' EN140 final examination scores vary depending upon students' post-attitudes toward writing?

Model: \( Y_{ij} = \alpha + \beta_j X_{ij} + \epsilon \)

Ho: \( \beta_j = 0 \)

Where \( Y \) = students' EN140 course grades in the model following research question three above and in the model following research question four
above it denotes the students' final examination scores.

\( \alpha = \) the \( Y \) intercept

\( \beta_f = \) the slope of the regression line

\( X_f = \) the independent variable of students' post-attitudes toward writing

\( \epsilon = \) the error term

Research hypothesis 5: The interaction between the instructional method and students' post-attitudes toward writing will affect the students' course grades.

Statistical question: Does the interaction between instructional methods and students' post-attitudes toward writing account for variance in the students' course grades?

Model: 
\[
 Y_{ijk} = \mu_{..} + \alpha_j + B_kX + \alpha B_{jk}X + \epsilon_{ijk} 
\]

\( H_0: \alpha B = 0 \)

Where \( Y = \) students' EN140 course grades

\( \mu_{..} = \) the grand mean

\( \alpha_j = \) the treatment effect of instructional methods

\( X = \) the effect of students' post-attitudes toward writing

\( B_k = \) the regression coefficient

\( \alpha B_{jk} = \) the interaction between instructional effect and post-attitudes toward writing

\( \epsilon_{ijk} = \) the error term
Research hypothesis 6: The interaction between the instructional method and students' post-attitudes toward writing will affect the students' final examination scores.

Statistical question: Does the interaction between instructional methods and students' post-attitudes toward writing account for variance in the students' final examination scores?

Model: $Y_{ijk} = \mu_{..} + \alpha_j + \beta_kX + \alpha\beta_{jk}X + \epsilon_{ijk}$

$H_0: \alpha\beta = 0$

Where $Y = $ students' final examination scores in EN140

$\mu_{..} =$ the grand mean

$\alpha_j = $ the treatment effect of instructional method

$X = $ the effect of students' post-attitudes toward writing

$\beta_k = $ the regression coefficient

$\alpha\beta_{jk} = $ the interaction between instructional effect and students' post-attitudes toward writing

$\epsilon_{ijk} = $ the error term

Research hypothesis 7: Students' post-attitudes toward writing will be affected by the instructional method they experienced after statistically controlling for students' pre-attitudes toward writing.

Statistical question: Is there a difference in students' post-attitudes toward writing for the experimental and control groups, controlling for
students' pre-attitudes toward writing?

Model: \( Y = \mu + \beta X + \alpha + \epsilon \)

Ho: \( 1\mu_1 - 1\mu_2 = 0 \)

Where \( Y \) = students' post-attitudes toward writing

\( \mu \) = the grand mean

\( \beta \) = the regression coefficient

\( X \) = students' pre-attitudes toward writing

\( \alpha \) = the effect of the instructional method

\( \epsilon \) = the error term

Research hypothesis 8: The evaluation of students' final portfolios will be related to their course grades.

Statistical question: Does the variance in the students' EN140 course grades depend upon the evaluation of students' final portfolios?

Model: \( Y = \alpha + \beta X + \epsilon \)

Ho: \( \beta = 0 \)

Research hypothesis 9: The evaluation of students' final portfolios will be related to their final examination scores.

Statistical question: Does the variance in the students' final examination scores depend upon the evaluation of students' final portfolios?

Model: \( Y = \alpha + \beta X + \epsilon \)

Ho: \( \beta = 0 \)
Where $Y =$ students' EN140 course grades in the model following research question eight above and in the model following research question nine above it denotes the students' final examination scores.

$\alpha =$ the $Y$ intercept

$\beta =$ the regression coefficient

$X =$ students' scores on the final evaluation of their portfolios

$\epsilon =$ the error term
CHAPTER IV
RESULTS

This study investigated the effect of two different instructional methods on English Composition II students’ final examination scores, course grades, and attitudes toward writing. Students in the five experimental classrooms were taught by a portfolio method. Students in these classes were encouraged to revise their work throughout the semester; grades on individual assignments were eliminated until midsemester and end-of-course evaluations; and students received feedback from instructors and peers on multiple drafts of each assignment. Students in the control group were taught by a more traditional process approach to writing. Assignments were completed within time frames specified by the instructors, and individual essays were graded. Students in both classes completed the Florida Writing Project Student Survey at the beginning and at the end of the course and sat for the common final examination which consisted of two impromptu essays.

The students' final examinations were holistically scored by a trained team of nineteen interdisciplinary faculty on the campus of Southeast Missouri State University. The discrepancy rate for scoring Part I essays was 1.02 percent, requiring two third readings from a total of 197 papers. Part II yielded a discrepancy scoring rate of 0.0 percent; no papers from a total of
The students' combined Part I and Part II final examination scores, which could range from two to twelve, served as a dependent variable in the study. Students' grades as assigned by the instructors in the course served as another dependent variable and were converted to a numerical value with A equal to five, B equal to four, C equal to three, D equal to two, and E equal to one.

Students' portfolios generated in the experimental classrooms were independently evaluated by the Director of Freshman Composition at Southeast and the researcher. Portfolios were holistically assessed, using the criteria of focus, organization, development, style, correctness, and use of references. Portfolios were assigned a numerical value ranging from thirteen for an A+ to one for an F. The two evaluators' scores were averaged to arrive at the numerical index assigned to the portfolios.

The present study involved 89 subjects in the experimental group and 108 subjects in the control group. Seventy-one students in the experimental group had scores on all measures; an additional 18 students did not complete all measures. In the control group, 102 students completed all measures; an additional six students did not complete either the pre- or post-attitude survey but had scores on all other measures. These figures reflect an attrition rate of 12 students in the experimental classrooms and 16 students in the control group. The experimental group initially consisted of 101 students: 71 completed all measures; 18 completed part of the measures, and 12 did not
complete the course. One hundred and twenty-four students comprised the original control group. One hundred and two of these completed all measures; 6 completed only part of the measures, and 16 did not finish the course.

The researcher first tested whether there is a difference in instructional methods between the experimental and control groups on students' course grades. The null hypothesis (Ho: \( \mu_1 - \mu_2 = 0 \)) stated that no difference existed between the two groups' course grades. Using the general linear model procedure, an analysis of variance was conducted. The null hypothesis was retained. No evidence was found to support the claim that students' EN140 course grades varied based upon the type of instructional method used (\( F = .50, \text{PR} > F = .48 \)). The researcher did find, however, that students' grades varied as a result of the particular class in which they were enrolled (\( F = 2.28, \text{PR} > F = .02 \)). Table 1 shows these results.

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<th>TABLE 1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>THE ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE SUMMARY TABLE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COURSE GRADES BY TREATMENT AND CLASS</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SOURCE</th>
<th>DF</th>
<th>SS</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Prob. &gt; F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Treatment</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.3951</td>
<td>0.50</td>
<td>0.4819</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class(treatment)</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>14.4896</td>
<td>2.28</td>
<td>0.0241</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td>183</td>
<td>145.3329</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>192</td>
<td>160.2176</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Next, the researcher questioned whether there is a difference in instructional methods between the experimental and control groups on the students' final examination scores. The null hypothesis (Ho: \( 1\mu_1 - 1\mu_2 = 0 \)) stated that no difference existed between the two groups' final examination scores. Using the general linear model procedure, an analysis of variance was run. The null hypothesis was retained. The researcher found no evidence to suggest that students' final examination scores were significantly related to the type of instruction they received (\( F = .30, \text{PR} > F = .58 \)). Again, the students' final examination scores were found to vary based on the particular classroom to which they belonged (\( F = 2.18, \text{PR} > F = .03 \)). Table 2 shows these results.

**TABLE 2**

**THE ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE SUMMARY TABLE**

FINAL EXAMINATION SCORES BY TREATMENT AND CLASS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SOURCE</th>
<th>DF</th>
<th>SS</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Prob. &gt; F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Treatment</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>24.01</td>
<td>0.30</td>
<td>0.5825</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class(treatment)</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1381.94</td>
<td>2.18</td>
<td>0.0306</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td>187</td>
<td>14824.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>196</td>
<td>16229.95</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3 depicts the means of the two instructional groups on both of
these dependent variables, course grades and final examination scores.

TABLE 3
MEANS OF COURSE GRADES AND FINAL EXAMINATION SCORES BY TREATMENT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>EN140 Grades</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Examination Scores</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Experimental</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>3.46</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>7.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>3.51</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>7.91</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The effect of students' post-attitudes toward writing on their course grades was analyzed. The null hypothesis (Ho: $\beta_1 = 0$) stated that students' grades would not vary based on their post-attitudes toward writing. Using the general linear model procedure, an analysis of variance was run, using post-attitude survey*class(treatment) as the error term. The null hypothesis was retained. No evidence was found that students' post-attitudes toward writing were significantly related to their EN140 course grades ($F = .36$, PR > $F = .56$).

The researcher investigated whether the interaction between instructional methods and students' post-attitudes toward writing accounted for variance in the students' course grades. The null hypothesis (Ho: $\alpha \beta = 0$) stated that there is no interaction between students' post-attitudes toward writing and
The effect of students' post-attitudes toward writing on their final examination scores was analyzed next. The null hypothesis (Ho: $\beta_1 = 0$) stated that students' final examination scores would not vary based on their post-attitudes toward writing. Using the general linear model procedure, an analysis of variance was conducted, using the post-attitude survey*class(treatment) as the error term. The null hypothesis was retained. The researcher found no evidence to indicate that a significant relationship

### Table 4

The Analysis of Variance Summary Table

**Effect of Post-Attitudes Toward Writing on Students' EN140 Course Grades**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>DF</th>
<th>SS</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Prob. &gt; F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Post-attitude Survey</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.168</td>
<td>0.36</td>
<td>0.5648</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-att. Survey*treatment</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.115</td>
<td>0.25</td>
<td>0.6329</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-att. Survey*class(treatment)</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3.718</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
existed between students' post-attitudes toward writing and their final examination scores ($F = 1.13, \text{PR} > F = .32$).

The interaction between instructional methods and students' post-attitudes toward writing was investigated as a source of variance in students' final examination scores. The null hypothesis ($\text{Ho: } aB = 0$) stated that there is no interaction between students' post-attitudes toward writing and instructional method. Using the general linear model procedure, an analysis of variance was conducted. The null hypothesis was retained. No evidence was found to indicate that an interaction between instructional method and post-attitudes toward writing existed ($F = .02, \text{PR} > F = .88$). These results are presented in Table 5.

### TABLE 5

THE ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE SUMMARY TABLE

EFFECT OF POST-ATTITUDES TOWARD WRITING ON STUDENTS' FINAL EXAMINATION SCORES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SOURCE</th>
<th>DF</th>
<th>SS</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Prob. &gt; F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Post-attitude Survey</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>90.8</td>
<td>1.13</td>
<td>0.3196</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-att. Survey*treatment</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>0.8832</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-att. Survey*class(treatment)</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>645.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
An analysis of covariance was conducted to determine if a difference in students' post-attitudes toward writing existed in the experimental and control groups when the students' pre-attitudes toward writing were controlled statistically. The null hypothesis (Ho: $1\mu_1 - 1\mu_2 = 0$) stated that no difference would exist between students' post-attitudes toward writing in the experimental and control groups. Students' pre-attitudes toward writing (the covariate) were found to be significantly related to their post-attitude toward writing scores ($F = 241.05$, PR $> F = 0.0001$). There was no interaction between the instructional method and students' pre-attitudes toward writing ($F = 0.04$, PR $> F = 0.84$). Because no interaction was found, this term was dropped from the model. Then, the analysis of covariance question was tested. The null hypothesis was retained. The researcher found no evidence to support the hypothesis that students' attitudes toward writing varied as a result of the difference in instructional method, statistically controlling for their pre-attitudes toward writing ($F = .15$, PR $> F = .70$). Table 6 presents these results.

**TABLE 6**

THE ADJUSTED ANALYSIS OF COVARIANCE SUMMARY TABLE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SOURCE</th>
<th>DF</th>
<th>SS</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Prob. &gt; F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-attitude Survey</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11755.9</td>
<td>250.03</td>
<td>0.0001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treatment</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>0.15</td>
<td>0.7003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>8317.9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>179</td>
<td>20080.8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The adjusted least squares means for the post-attitudes toward writing further confirm the fact that there is no difference between the two instructional groups. Table 7 shows these results.

**TABLE 7**
**LEAST SQUARES MEANS**
**POST-ATTITUDE SURVEY**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Treatment</th>
<th>Least Squares Means</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Experimental</td>
<td>64.342</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>64.096</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Next, the researcher investigated whether the final evaluation of the portfolios accounted for variance in the students' course grades. The null hypothesis (Ho: \( \beta = 0 \)) stated that the students' course grades did not vary depending upon the final portfolio evaluation. Using the general linear model procedure, an analysis of variance was run. The null hypothesis was rejected. A significant relationship was found to exist between students' final portfolios and their EN140 course grades (\( F = 59.33, PR > F = .0001 \)). Forty-two percent of the variance in EN140 course grades can be explained or accounted
for by the scores on the final portfolio evaluation. These results are shown in Table 8.

**TABLE 8**

THE ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE SUMMARY TABLE

PORTFOLIO EVALUATION--COURSE GRADES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SOURCE</th>
<th>DF</th>
<th>SS</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Prob. &gt; F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Portfolio Evaluation</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>34.036</td>
<td>59.33</td>
<td>0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>46.470</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>80.506</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

R-square = .42273
r = .65

Finally, the researcher investigated whether the evaluation of the portfolios accounted for variance in the students' final examination scores. The null hypothesis (Ho: \( \beta = 0 \)) stated that the students' final examination scores did not vary based upon the final portfolio evaluation. Using the general linear model procedure, an analysis of variance was conducted. The null hypothesis was rejected. A significant relationship was found to exist between students' portfolio evaluations and their final examination scores (\( F = 9.03, PR > F = .0035 \)). Ten percent of the students' final examination scores can be explained or accounted for by the scores on the portfolios' final evaluation. Table 9
shows these results.

TABLE 9
THE ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE SUMMARY TABLE
PORTFOLIO EVALUATION--FINAL EXAMINATION SCORES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SOURCE</th>
<th>DF</th>
<th>SS</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Prob. &gt; F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Portfolio Evaluation</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>748.65</td>
<td>9.03</td>
<td>0.0035</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>6800.16</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>7548.81</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R-square = .10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>r = .32</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Summary

The researcher investigated the effect of two types of instruction (portfolio-based and traditional process approach) on composition students' course grades, final examination scores, and attitudes toward writing. No evidence was found to indicate that a significant relationship exists between the type of instruction students received and these two outcomes measures. In addition, students' course grades and final examination scores were not found to relate to their post-attitudes toward writing. Nor did the researcher find an interaction between the type of instruction the students received and their post-
attitudes toward writing.

Students' pre-attitudes toward writing were found to relate to their post-attitudes toward writing. After statistically controlling for students' pre-attitudes toward writing, students' post-attitudes toward writing were not found to vary based upon the type of instruction they received in their composition courses. However, the researcher did find a significant relationship between the final independent evaluation of students' portfolios and their course grades and final examination scores.
CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS

Summary

The purpose of this study was to investigate the impact of portfolio-based instruction on college composition students' course grades, final examination scores, and attitudes toward writing. The researcher hypothesized that the type of instruction students received (portfolio-oriented or traditional process approach) would affect their grades and examination scores. However, the researcher was unable to detect the existence of such effects in her sample.

In addition, she found that students' post-attitudes toward writing were not significantly related to either their course grades or final examination scores. No interaction between the type of instruction students received and their post-attitudes toward writing was found in either their course grades or final examination scores. Finally, the researcher found that when students' pre-attitudes toward writing were statistically controlled, students' post-attitudes toward writing did not vary as a result of the difference in instructional methods.

The final evaluation of the portfolios produced by students in the experimental classrooms was found to be moderately related to students' course grades and slightly related to students' final examination scores. In addition,
the researcher found that students' course grades and final examination scores varied as a result of the particular classroom to which they belonged.

Discussion

Portfolios have been praised because they allow students ample time for rewriting and because they give instructors multiple samples of students' work to use as the basis for evaluation (Burnham, 1986; Elbow & Belanoff, 1986a; Matthews, 1989; Smit et al., in press). The role of instructors in portfolio-based classrooms is also reportedly enhanced. These teachers, who are less likely to put grades on papers and who tend to focus instead on helping the student through successive drafts, are often viewed as mentors and coaches (Burnham, 1986; Condon & Hamp-Lyons, in press; Ford & Larkin, 1978; McClelland, in press).

Advocates of portfolio-based instruction have supported these claims with anecdotal evidence. The researcher herself collected students' comments which support these statements. One student in an anonymous evaluation of the portfolio method stated, "The most prominent [sic] advantage [of portfolios] that stands out is the writer and instructor get to see the advancements and improvements that the writer is making." Another student added, "I believe that I have become a better writer due to having the opportunity to rewrite my papers."
However, some of these claims praising portfolios must be questioned based on the results of this study. Elbow & Belanoff (1986a) stated that when portfolios are used as instructional and evaluative tools, all students ideally pass because they have "been given enough time and help to do what we ask of them" (p. 337). In this study, thirteen students in experimental classrooms (15 percent) failed the course as compared to one student in the control group (less than one percent). While some of these students in the experimental sections quit attending class several weeks before the end of the semester which accounted for their failing grades, five failing grades resulted from students' failure to turn in a final portfolio, complete all writing assignments, or make suggested revisions. Completing the portfolio may present an overwhelming obstacle for some students. Other students may procrastinate when definite deadlines for assignments are not set.

Previous studies report an improvement in students' attitudes toward writing when the following conditions are present in the classroom: writing taught as a process (Coleman, 1984; Sannela, 1982); no specified time frame for assignments (Marshall, 1983; Powers, Cook, & Meyer, 1979); delayed or withheld evaluation (Reed & Burton, 1981); peer response groups or conferences (Coleman, 1984; Davis, 1987; Smit et al., in press). Although the instructors of experimental sections in this study operated under all of the above conditions, students' post-attitudes were not found to be significantly
different than attitudes of students in the control group.

Despite the researcher's inability to detect a significant difference between students' attitudes in the two instructional groups, students in the experimental classrooms praised the use of portfolios and often mentioned their changed attitude toward writing. One student stated that the portfolio "gives students a felling [sic] of accomplishment." Another student commented that he "felt more confident in what [he] wrote." The classroom environment created by the portfolios was also noted as one student wrote that the portfolio method "provided a more relaxed atmosphere for me to write in."

Other students focused their evaluation of the portfolio method on the corresponding change in the grading system. "I think the portfolio method helps students out. Instead of receiving a bad grade on a paper a student has a chance to revise their paper," stated one student. Another added that the portfolio "made it so that everyone should've never gotten below a C..." A third student wrote that she liked the portfolio because "we weren't graded by the first [draft] we handed in."

These comments are not unlike statements which appear in Chapter II made by the students of McClelland (in press) and Leder (in press). These comments also suggest that portfolios eliminate some of the negative feelings students have about grades (Burnham, 1986) and previous composition courses (Diederich, 1974).
The evaluation of portfolios has been both criticized as a time-consuming task which is only vaguely defined and praised as an impetus to faculty development. Portfolio evaluation has been criticized as creating an unreasonable paperload at the end of the semester (Curran, 1989; Leder, in press; Sommers, in press). Others have refuted this charge, claiming that because instructors are familiar with students’ prior drafts, the final evaluation of portfolios is a relatively quick procedure (Hileman & Case, in press; McClelland, in press). The Director of Freshman Composition and the researcher were not familiar with students’ previous drafts when they holistically assessed students’ final portfolios; however, each was able to read 84 portfolios, containing from two to four papers each of which ranged from two to eleven pages in length, in less than eight hours.

Other criticisms of portfolio evaluation center around the ill-structured nature of the task. Portfolios by definition contain multiple samples of students’ writing, often of varying length and in different genres. These differences often contribute to unreliable evaluations of portfolios and speculation about the most appropriate method of evaluating portfolios (Sommers, in press).

Instructors in the experimental classrooms who evaluated portfolios at midsemester and again at the end of the course did not experience these problems. These teachers met several times prior to the beginning of the Spring 1991 semester and continued to meet throughout the course to discuss
grading standards, standards of acceptable writing performance, and class assignments. The benefits of such faculty development have been noted by others who have used portfolios (Condon & Hamp-Lyons, in press; Curran, 1989; Elbow & Belanoff, 1986a).

As a result of these meetings, an interpretive community of readers formed. At midsemester, the instructors in portfolio classrooms met to evaluate one writing sample from each student. Ninety students' papers were evaluated by two instructors other than the students' teachers. Readers assigned one of three ranks to papers: pass with distinction (of A quality), pass (at least a solid C but no better than a B+), or fail (not a solid C). Third readings were required for nineteen papers which were evaluated as passing by one reader and failing by a second evaluator. (Nine of these discrepancies occurred because students in one section turned in outlines instead of drafts. One reader evaluated the outlines' writing quality while the second reader failed all outlines as unacceptable submissions.)

For end-of-the-semester evaluations, all 84 students' portfolios were read by two instructors who disagreed when making pass/fail distinctions only three times. Instructors agreed to use a system much like that in place at SUNY--Brockport where final portfolios are evaluated by the instructor and one other reader. If the portfolios are judged passing by both evaluators, then students are guaranteed a C in the course; however, instructors may give an A or B to
those students who merit higher grades (Curran, 1989).

The independent evaluation of student portfolios by the Director of Freshman Composition and the researcher supported an earlier claim by Hileman & Case (in press) which stated that reliable judgments of student writing occur when multiple drafts are read and analyzed at the same time. The two evaluators, reading independently and using the previously described thirteen-point scale, awarded matching (the same score) or touching (adjacent) scores for 75 of the 84 portfolios; the remaining nine portfolios all received scores separated only by two points.

Furthermore, the independent evaluations correlated .65 with instructor-assigned grades in the course, which were based on the portfolios. Odell & Cooper (1980) had previously stated that holistic scores on student writing samples correlate "reasonably well with grades students make in freshman English courses" (p. 41) but had not provided a correlation coefficient.

In addition, this independent portfolio evaluation used holistic scoring in a way which addresses some of its critics' concerns. When holistic scoring is used to assess portfolios, instead of impromptu essays, the claim can no longer be made, as has frequently been the case in the past, that the focus of holistic scoring is on product, not process (Charney, 1984; Huot, 1990b; Spandel, 1987). Rather, portfolios allow readers to view multiple samples of students' work and multiple drafts of assignments; their holistic evaluations can then take
into account both product and process, a benefit noted by many portfolio advocates (Bishop, in press; Burnham, 1986; Camp, 1985; Dixon & Stratta, 1982; Elbow & Belanoff, 1986a; White, 1989; Wolf, 1989). Portfolios also allow holistic assessment to be more closely tied to classroom instruction, a concern voiced by Spandel, 1987; Quellmalz, 1984; and Simmons & Erling, 1986.

In summary, using portfolios as an instructional and evaluative tool in college composition courses is feasible. Instructors in the portfolio-based classrooms noted that students responded positively to the use of portfolios and that a relaxed atmosphere developed, possibly as a result of delayed evaluation and the shift in the teacher's role from judge to mentor. The instructors also found that despite the multiple drafts students produced for each assignment, the paperload was not overwhelming. The multiple samples of writing produced by each student also allowed for a more comprehensive evaluation of students' writing at the end of the semester. Despite these positive outcomes noted by instructors in portfolio-based classrooms, the effectiveness of using portfolio-based instruction has not yet been established empirically.

Limitations of the Study

The following are noted as limitations of the study:

1. Students could not be randomly assigned to treatment conditions.
2. An uneven distribution of subjects occurred in the two groups. In addition, three times as many students in the experimental classrooms (18) as in the control group (6) did not complete all measures under investigation.

3. Subjects were restricted to those students in select college composition classes on the campus of Southeast Missouri State University during the Spring 1991 semester.

4. Instructors in the experimental classrooms were not selected randomly from the pool of EN140 teachers.

5. The same set of instructors was not used in both instructional conditions.

6. Instructors in some experimental and control classrooms actively worked to prepare their students to write the impromptu essays which comprised the final examination. Other instructors gave little or no emphasis to preparing students for this outcomes measure.

7. The criteria of the study were confounded to a degree because one of the dependent variables, students' final examination scores, was taken into account when instructors assigned students' grades in EN140. The holistic assessment and the instructors' assessments of the final examination essays occurred independently; however, both judgments were based on the same writing samples.
Recommendations for Future Research

Previous studies targeted particular groups of students who might benefit from conditions in a portfolio-based class: students with high-anxiety (Daly, 1978; Daly & Hailey, 1984; Selfe, 1984); non-traditional students (Gillam-Scott, 1984); basic writers (Hileman & Case, in press; McClelland, in press); and extrinsically motivated students (Williams & Alden, 1983). Although this study did not investigate whether portfolio-oriented instruction benefited such students, the researcher's review of the literature, as well as students' comments concerning their reactions to receiving portfolio-based instruction, led her to conclude that an aptitude-treatment interaction should be investigated in future portfolio studies. Cronbach (1967) hypothesized that the relationship between instruction and learning may depend, at least in part, upon student variables. He believed that such interactions should be actively sought: "Specifically, we ought to take a differential variable we think promising and design alternative treatments to interact with that variable" (p. 32). Using portfolios to assist the development of writing skills in particular groups of students may have more impact than other instructional approaches. The effect of portfolio-based instruction on non-traditional, externally motivated, highly anxious, and developmental writers should be investigated.

Because the researcher found that students' course grades and final examination scores varied as a result of the classroom to which students
belonged, the instructor should be further investigated as an effect in subsequent studies conducted in composition classrooms. The teaching style and/or personality of the instructor may have contributed to this unexpected finding.

Finally, the relationship between students’ impromptu writing samples and their complete portfolios should be investigated. Portfolios which are produced in process-centered classrooms emphasize multiple revisions created over an extended period of time. Holistically assessed impromptu samples often do not provide students with the opportunity to revise, receive feedback, or collaborate with peers. This tension between instructional and assessment procedures needs to be further addressed. While the researcher found only a modest correlation of .32 between students’ holistically assessed final examination essays and their portfolio evaluations, the degree to which these very different types of writing relate should be further studied. The holistic assessment of portfolios should also be more explicitly described in the literature. A "how-to" book, similar to White’s *Teaching and Assessing Writing* which deals with holistic scoring, is needed for large-scale assessment of students’ portfolios.


Central Writing Center Association, Youngstown, OH. (ERIC Reproduction Service No. ED 294 183).


writing ability. New York: College Entrance Examination Board.


Murphy, S., & Smith, M.A. (1990). Talking about portfolios. The Quarterly,
12(2), 1-3, 24.


Rotter, J. (1966). Generalized expectancies for internal versus external control
of reinforcement. Psychological Monographs, 80(1), No. 609.


Appendix A

EN140 Course Syllabus
I. CATALOG DESCRIPTION--Focus on effective written expression in the context of a liberal education; emphasis upon critical thinking and the research paper. Three hours.

II. PREREQUISITES--EN-100 or advanced placement.

III. PURPOSES OR OBJECTIVES

A. To fulfill the nine objectives of the University Studies program, as noted below.

B. To develop the student's writing ability as reflected in coherent thought, effective organization, reasonable stylistic force and fluency, and regularity in the grammatical and mechanical conventions generally accepted in educated usage (Objective 3).

C. To encourage understanding and mastery of specific techniques for developing and presenting one's thoughts in writing (Objectives 2 and 3).

D. To familiarize students with the techniques of acquiring, assimilating, and presenting information (Objective 1).

E. To promote careful and critical reading as a basis for the student's own development as a writer (Objective 2).

F. To foster in students an appreciation of how writing functions in its social, historical, and cultural contexts both as a means of expression and as a mode of learning (Objectives 4-9).

IV. EXPECTATIONS OF STUDENTS

A. To participate in class discussions and activities.

B. To do the required writing and reading assignments.
V. COURSE CONTENT

A. Focus and development, 5 weeks.

The emphasis in this portion of the course is on rhetorical analysis, both of the writing of others and that of the students.

1. Understanding the writing process
   a. Generating, organizing, and focusing ideas
   b. Shaping a draft
   c. Revising
   d. Editing and proofreading

These are activities that writers at any level of development must engage in, and as such they inform the entire course. A useful classroom activity with which to begin the course is to have the students reflect upon and write about their own writing processes. This writing can then form the basis of class discussion as well as serve as an introduction to the kinds of activities the class will be engaging in throughout the term.

2. Writing to be read
   a. Analyzing audience
   b. Anticipating responses and questions

Sample assignment: Using either Martin Luther King, Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" speech or John F. Kennedy's Houston speech, analyze it in terms of how (or how effectively) the speaker has dealt with the rhetorical situation.

This kind of analytical assignment would work with any public discourse, in which audience analysis is a consideration.

3. Writing under pressure
   a. Writing to an assignment
   b. Writing to a deadline
   c. Writing on demand
Assignments here include asking students to produce summaries and critiques of assigned readings or to write brief essays based upon previous reading and/or class discussion.

4. Peer editing
   a. Serving as a reader
   b. Learning from commentators

These activities will occur throughout the course. The idea is to develop students' awareness of themselves as writers and as critical readers of student works in progress (not just of selections in the text). They should begin to learn that they are, whenever they write, engaged in a rhetorical situation with certain identifiable constraints.

B. Writing as communication of researched judgments, 5 weeks.

1. Writing from source
   a. Summarizing
   b. Incorporating quotations and paraphrases
   c. Documenting

A good way to introduce students to writing from sources is to have them do a documented paper using sources in the text; that way, they are freed at first from having to locate their sources, something they will have to do in the longer research assignment. The text makes this sort of paper particularly feasible because the readings are grouped thematically ("The Dawning of the Atomic Age," "The Legacy of the Fifties," "Issues in Education," etc.) and because each section of the text concludes with suggested writing topics calling for students to draw on the readings in that section. Instructors could allow students to choose among the topics or could assign topics or could allow the students to develop their own--as long as the emphasis remains on critical reading, followed by analysis and synthesis of the issues and ideas dealt with in the readings.

For example, after reading the selections in "Issues in Education," a student could write a paper defining
education, in which he or she must draw both on the ideas in the selections and on his or her own experiences and beliefs.

2. The research process

a. Locating and evaluating sources
b. Developing a working bibliography
c. Restricting a topic
d. Formulating a hypothesis
e. Reading and taking notes
f. Drafting and revising

A key premise of this course in written expression is that writing is a mode of learning. Therefore, a major component of the course is the research assignment, during which the students must engage in the activities listed above and those listed in the preceding section. These activities are central to the attainment of a liberal education—not in the sense that memorizing a particular system of documentation is necessary, but in the sense that while engaging in systematic inquiry (in any discipline), students are learning how knowledge is advanced in an academic setting.

C. Writing as persuasion and argumentation, 5 weeks.

1. Reading written arguments

a. Data, warrant, and claim
b. Deduction and induction
c. Logical fallacies

An important aspect of critical reading and writing is the ability to read and analyze arguments. A number of selections in the text afford students the opportunity to engage in discussion and written response; and in this course instructors will give students practice in analyzing argumentative material, either as a separate assignment or as part of a unit on writing with sources. For example, a pair of short essays in the text advance opposing views on the decision to drop the atomic bomb on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. An instructor could ask students to write a paper
analyzing the use of evidence and reasoning in the two essays, or the instructor could use in-class analysis of the essays as preliminary work toward a paper in which the students must themselves choose a side of the issue and defend it.

2. Writing and communicating on controversy

a. Clarifying one's own position
b. Choosing a voice
c. Arguing by authority
d. Using facts and statistics
e. Choosing a method of organization

A topic such as the one noted at the end of the preceding section would be an example of the kind of assignment that would fit in here. The instructor may require that the research assignment deal with a controversial issue; or he or she may use the assignment using sources from the text to introduce argumentation.
Appendix B

Consent Forms: Control and Experimental
Informed Consent Form (for Control Group)

I agree to participate in a research study being conducted by Nancy Baker as part of the requirements for her doctoral degree in the Department of Educational Psychology at Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, Illinois.

The purpose of this study is to examine whether students in composition courses which are taught by means of the portfolio have a better attitude toward writing, receive higher scores on the final examination and/or receive higher course grades than students in traditionally taught composition classes. In addition, portfolio grades will be studied in relationship with final examination scores and course grades to determine whether students whose portfolios are evaluated to be outstanding also receive superior final examination scores and high course grades. (This final part of the study will be conducted only after final course grades are turned in by my instructor.)

Participation in this study will take approximately 10 minutes during class at the beginning and at the end of the semester. I understand that the study will involve filling out a survey at the beginning and at the end of the course. I understand that I will also allow the researcher access to my final examination scores and final course grades. The survey will deal with my attitudes toward writing. An example of the type of question I will be asked is:

I like to write my ideas down. 1. Strongly agree. 2. Agree. 3. Are uncertain. 4. Disagree. 5. Strongly disagree.

I understand that there are no risks or benefits involved in this study.

I understand that participation in this study is entirely voluntary; refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which I would otherwise be entitled, and I may discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which I am otherwise entitled.

I realize that all my answers will be confidential and anonymous since I will be assigned a random number to be used on all pieces of information that will be reviewed by the researcher. I will not be asked to identify myself by my social security number or name. I should be assured that if a list is to be kept which matches the random number to which I have been assigned with my social security number, that it will be kept in a secure location, accessible only to you, the researcher, and will be destroyed upon completion of this study.
All my questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I also understand that if I later have any additional questions concerning this project, I can contact Nancy Baker in the Writing Center at 651-2573 or at home 335-8343. If I am interested in the results of this research project, I can also contact Mrs. Baker for a summary of the group results which were obtained.

This project has been reviewed and approved by the Carbondale Committee for Research Involving Human Subjects. The Committee believes that the research procedures adequately safeguard the subject's privacy, welfare, civil liberties, and rights. The Chairperson of the Committee may be reached through the Graduate School, Southern Illinois University at Carbondale, Carbondale, Illinois 62901-4709. The telephone number of the office is (618) 453-4533.

I have read the material above, and any questions I asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I understand I will receive a copy of this form for the relevant information and phone numbers. I agree to participate in this activity, realizing that I may withdraw without prejudice at any time.

Subject's Signature Date
I agree to participate in a research study being conducted by Nancy Baker as part of the requirements for her doctoral degree in the Department of Educational Psychology at Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, Illinois.

The purpose of this study is to examine whether students in composition courses which are taught by means of the portfolio have a better attitude toward writing, receive higher scores on the final examination and/or receive higher course grades than students in traditionally taught composition classes. In addition, portfolio grades will be studied in relationship with final examination scores and course grades to determine whether students whose portfolios are evaluated to be outstanding also receive superior final examination scores and high course grades. (This final part of the study will be conducted only after final course grades are turned in by my instructor.)

Participation in this study will occur during the sixteen weeks of the Composition II course. I understand that the study will involve filling out a survey at the beginning and at the end of the course, compiling a collection of my compositions written during the course of this semester, and taking the common final examination required of all English Composition II students. The survey will deal with my attitudes toward writing. An example of the type of question I will be asked is:

I like to write my ideas down. 1. Strongly agree. 2. Agree. 3. Are uncertain. 4. Disagree. 5. Strongly disagree.

I understand that there are no risks involved in this study. I understand that the benefits of this study involve my being allowed to continue revising my compositions throughout the course of the semester, employing the suggestions of my teacher.

I understand that participation in this study is entirely voluntary; refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which I would otherwise be entitled, and I may discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which I am otherwise entitled. I may drop the course without penalty until the publicized drop date. Switching to another section is an option during the time period that the university allows students to add classes.

I realize that all my answers will be confidential and anonymous since I will be assigned a random number to be used on all pieces of information that will be
reviewed by the researcher. I will not be asked to identify myself by my social security number or name. I should be assured that if a list is to be kept which matches the random number to which I have been assigned with my social security number, that it will be kept in a secure location, accessible only to you, the researcher, and will be destroyed upon completion of this study. In addition, my name will be removed from any compositions that the researcher will read from my portfolio by my teacher, and my random number will be substituted prior to my work being reviewed by the researcher.

All my questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I also understand that if I later have any additional questions concerning this project, I can contact Nancy Baker in the Writing Center at 651-2573 or at home 335-8343. If I am interested in the results of this research project, I can also contact Mrs. Baker for a summary of the group results which were obtained.

This project has been reviewed and approved by the Carbondale Committee for Research Involving Human Subjects. The Committee believes that the research procedures adequately safeguard the subject's privacy, welfare, civil liberties, and rights. The Chairperson of the Committee may be reached through the Graduate School, Southern Illinois University at Carbondale, Carbondale, Illinois 62901-4709. The telephone number of the office is (618) 453-4533.

I have read the material above, and any questions I asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I understand I will receive a copy of this form for the relevant information and phone numbers. I agree to participate in this activity, realizing that I may withdraw without prejudice at any time.

----------------------------------------
Subject's Signature

----------------------------------------
Date
Appendix C

Sample EN140 Final Examination:
Part I, Part II, and Readings
The complex question of why people smoke can actually be broken down into two related questions: Why do people start to smoke, and what maintains the smoking habit? No one is born craving tobacco, and millions of people have led productive lives without ever smoking. Those who do smoke probably take up the habit for a variety of reasons. The general consensus is that a cluster of factors—peer pressure, the example of parents, the glamorous role models of the media, and the association of smoking with "adulthood"—all play a part.

In an essay of about two pages, discuss why you decided to begin smoking, why you decided not to smoke, or why you did smoke at one time but quit. Be specific in describing and explaining the reasoning behind your decision. Use the rest of the space on this page for any jottings or planning you may wish to do, and then begin writing your essay on the following page. Be sure to give your essay a title.
Sample EN140 Final Examination

Part II Question

Compose an essay in which you must decide whether members of a community (such as the University Community) should or should not be allowed to smoke in public places (such as on campus). In other words, you must decide on a side of this question:

Should smoking be restricted in public places?

Answer the question in an essay of about two pages.

The readings are here to help you answer the question. First, form your own opinion and decide how you will organize your essay. Then, wherever you think it useful, work in references to the readings both to support your opinion and to contrast their statements with your own ideas on the subject. The references may be direct quotations, paraphrases, or citations of data or statistics. Be sure that you do not simply string together references to the readings: your essay must be your own composition presenting your own ideas and not merely a patchwork of others' work and ideas.

Quote directly from at least two readings.

Cite your sources. That is, tell which readings you are getting your information from.

Wherever you think it appropriate, use examples from your own life to help support your opinion.

Use the rest of the space on this page or the back of it for any jottings or planning that you want to do, and then begin writing your essay on the following page.

Be sure to give your essay a title.

In summary, state and develop your opinion on the issue. Refer to the readings as they relate to what you are saying and use the information you find in them to support or qualify your opinion.
Sample EN140 Final Examination

Part II Readings

Read the following selections. You will need them for the writing you will do next. They contain different ideas about the value of smoking. You will probably agree with some of the ideas and disagree with others. In order to prepare for your next writing, think about how these selections compare with each other and whether you agree with them. Since the readings present more than a single side of the issue, not all of them will support your opinion, regardless of the side you take. Nevertheless, in your essay you must make specific references to these readings either in support of your own ideas or in contrast with them. Your essay will be evaluated in part on how effectively the readings are used. If you want, you may mark or write on the readings. Only the essay you write will be evaluated, but the readings must be turned in, too.

1. Smokers sometimes believe they contribute to the economy by supporting the huge tobacco industry. For instance, in 1969 the tobacco industry involved approximately 600,000 farm families which were located mostly in 10 states, six major cigarette companies employing almost 36,000 people in three states, and an advertising and marketing component of millions. In 1974, the total crop was worth over 2 billion dollars and the public spent more than 14 billion dollars for tobacco products. The industry and those working for it paid large amounts of income taxes and stimulated other income-taxed areas of the economy. In short, cigarette smokers support the public with $6 billion a year. How much does the public give to the smokers?


2. If the government takes a more active role in discouraging people from smoking, it might influence the attitudes of smokers. However, our information suggests such action by the government would only reach those not currently smoking, such as those who have never smoked, those who have quit, and crusaders against smoking.

Rosenblatt, Daniel, Bernard Rosen, and Harvey Allen. Attitudes, Information and Behavior of College Students Related to Smoking and Smoking Cessation.

3. No one should have to breathe the smoke of other people. If you smoke around others, they have to breathe your smoke. Studies show that in the United States, 5,000 people die each year because they have breathed someone
else's smoke. Therefore, schools, hospitals, sports arenas, convention centers, theaters, banks, and other places where people gather should be off limits to smoking. People should be able to eat in restaurants and have work places that are free from smoke. The Surgeon General of the United States has stated that smoking has taken a heavy toll on the health of the nation. Since smoking is a kind of suicide, then steps should be taken to prevent smokers from committing a kind of secondhand murder as well.


4. If laws are established to prevent smoking in public places, this would give the nonsmoker control over the smoker. It is not possible to enforce such laws without adding to the already strained work load of police and health departments. Also, I cannot see any real proof that secondary smoke poses a threat. Scientists, on three separate occasions, failed to show any real health problem for nonsmokers. All of those who use scare tactics to prevent smoking in public are using fake reasoning. They just do not want people to smoke in public.

Also, keeping smokers separate is expensive. A labor union study estimated that enforcing anti-smoking regulations would cost $265 million a year just for the city of New York. Anti-smoking laws would be expensive for employers as well. "I have my own office at Federal Metal Maintenance, Inc. If I did not, I would have to leave the work space and go to a smoking area everytime I wanted to smoke. That would be a waste of time and money," says the president of Federal Metal Maintenance.


5. Still, smokers are beginning to feel that they are a persecuted minority who do, in fact, have some rights. Says one Boston woman, "This crusade about health spills over into 'I know what's best for you.' So what happens next? Do these experts, in the name of better health, make people eat fish instead of red meat?" Others object to the regulation of smoking on the grounds of practicality. Dividing smokers from nonsmokers at work would be a nightmare for employers, according to the Illinois Chamber of Commerce human resources' manager, Leonard Day. On such grounds of practicality, the Illinois Chamber of Commerce has so far successfully lobbied against a no-smoking bill.

6. Dr. C. Everett Koop declared last December that smokers were hurting not just themselves but their nonsmoking neighbors. The evidence clearly documents that nonsmokers are placed at increased risk for developing disease as a result of exposure to environmental tobacco smoke. Koop stated, "We're sort of on a roll. When we first started talking about a smoke-free society, half the country smoked. Today only 29.9% smoke, and of those, 87% want to quit." Other leaders in the crusade against smoking argue that it is legitimate for the government to become involved in the issue because the health of nonsmokers is at stake. As a result of anti-smoking efforts, commercial airlines began segregating smokers in the early 1970s. The Arizona legislature was the first state to pass a law limiting smoking in public places in 1973. Others have worked to ban the print advertisements of cigarettes or to increase the federal excise tax on cigarettes substantially.

Appendix D

Holistic Scoring Criteria and Scales
EVALUATION OF STUDENT ESSAYS:

HOLISTIC SCORING CRITERIA

In scoring Part I of this test, faculty from across the campus consider five writing traits that contribute to an essay's effectiveness; in scoring Part II of the test, the faculty consider six writing traits, which are labelled A through F. An asterisk in front of trait F indicates that the trait is relevant only to essays written in response to Part II questions.

A. Focus

In order for students to achieve focus in their writing, they must do the following: a) they must address the specific topic presented by the test question, and b) they must present a main point or a clear purpose for communicating.

The writing proficiency test contains two specific questions. Clearly, students who do not write in answer to the questions have no chance of scoring well on the test. However, even students who address the topics will write poorly if they do not limit their main ideas to something they can adequately discuss in the time allotted. This limiting of the topic is often called "focusing" because both the writer's attention and the readers' attention are zeroed in on a particular aspect of a broad subject.

This "focusing" often takes the form of a thesis statement, a sentence that states the main idea of an essay. Generally, the thesis statement occurs in the introductory paragraph. When writers open their essays with anecdotes, statistics, or other attention-getting material, the thesis statement is often placed at the end of that paragraph or at the beginning of the next paragraph.

B. Organization

Once writers settle on their main idea, they must think about the most effective way to organize their materials in order to convince their readers that the main idea is a reasonable one. Thus, the supporting information must be presented in some sort of logical progression. Obviously, if readers cannot follow the discussion, they will have no reason to accept the main idea.

Planned essays are usually divided into three parts: a beginning (introduction), a middle (body), and an end (conclusion). What goes into each of these three parts depends on the main idea to be developed, the evidence available, and the writer's strategy. Whatever plan of organization is used, the materials must be logically ordered and presented, and each step in the plan must be clearly signalled by the appropriate transition words or phrases.
C. Development

When the body of writing is only one paragraph long, the writing is not an essay. Instead, it is one paragraph with its beginning and ending improperly separated from the middle. The middle of an essay will have at least two to three paragraphs, and each of these paragraphs will present one major step in a logical plan.

These middle paragraphs usually open with the main idea to be discussed in the paragraph. (This sentence is usually called the topic sentence.) Without stating their main ideas, these paragraphs are likely to lack organization, and more often than not, they become simply a collection of unsupported major ideas that lead nowhere.

The supporting material in these paragraphs must be specific or concrete details that support the writer’s point of view or main idea. This material, which illustrates or explains the broader topic sentence, must be presented in a logical order.

D. Style

Sentence coherence, diction, and tone combine to compose the element of style. Coherence is a result of sentence patterns; pronoun reference, and transitional connectives. In nontechnical terms, coherence refers to the impression that the writing "flows" and that the whole essay is "of a piece." Diction signifies the appropriate choice of words; the words used must be accurate, appropriate, and effective in conveying the writer’s intended meaning. Tone is the emotional attitude of writers toward their subject and audience. Whatever the writer’s approach to the subject, the tone must be consistent and appropriate to the writer’s overall purpose.

E. Correctness

Correctness covers the areas of grammar, spelling, punctuation, and manuscript preparation. Correctness is important because, without it, the reader may get the wrong information. Because they create the most confusion, the most serious errors are flaws in sentence structure, such as fragments, comma splices and fused sentences, and errors in agreement, such as subject-verb agreement and pronoun-antecedent agreement problems.

Correctness is no substitute for a thoughtful paper; it is better to have clearly stated generalizations that are supported by convincing specific details than to have a perfectly correct paper that makes no point or that does not support the point with concrete detail. Proofreading is an indispensable, but last, step in writing.
*F. References

Writing that makes use of outside source materials is called "referential" writing. In Part II of the proficiency test, students demonstrate how logically, insightfully, and elegantly they can incorporate into their own essays paraphrases of and direct quotations from the outside materials provided during the test.

Every time writers use material that is not their own or that is not common knowledge, they must indicate where they got the information. This is true regardless of whether the writers are paraphrasing or directly quoting the source material. In this testing situation, no particular style of documentation is required although students must document each use of source material in a consistent and accurate manner.
HOUSTON SCORING SCALES

MASTERY SCORES

SCORE 6
Designates a Clearly Excellent piece of expositional or referential writing.

A. Focus: very clearly stated main idea and effectively limited topic
B. Organization: a logical plan signalled by highly effective transitions; the essay's beginning and end are effectively related to the whole
C. Development: all major ideas set off by paragraphs which have clearly stated or implied topics; main idea and all major topics are supported by concrete, specific evidence
D. Style: sentences relate to each other and to the paragraph topic and are subordinate to the topic; word and phrase choice is felicitous; tone is consistent and appropriate
E. Correctness: no major mechanical error (e.g., agreement); one or two minor errors (e.g., spelling)
F. References: source material incorporated logically, insightfully, and elegantly; sources documented accurately, elegantly, and emphatically

SCORE 5
Designates a Still Impressive piece of expositional or referential writing.

A. Focus: clearly stated main idea and clearly limited topic
B. Organization: a logical plan signalled by some transitions; the essay's beginning and end are clearly and effectively related to the whole
C. Development: almost all major ideas set off by paragraphs which for the most part have clearly stated or implied topics; the main idea and all major ideas are supported by concrete, specific detail
D. Style: paragraphs built on logically related supporting sentences; word and phrase choice is consistently accurate; nearly consistent and appropriate tone
E. Correctness: one major mechanical error; a few (four) minor errors
F. References: source material incorporated logically and proficiently; sources documented accurately

SCORE 4
Designates an Adequate piece of expositional or referential writing.

A. Focus: clear or clearly implicit main idea and partially limited topic
B. Organization: a logical plan partially signalled by transitions; the essay's beginning and end are somewhat effective
C. Development: most major ideas set off by paragraphs which mainly have stated or implied topics; the main idea and almost all major points are supported by concrete, specific detail
D. Style: sentences in paragraphs are subordinate to topics; word choice is almost always accurate; tone is sometimes inappropriate
E. Correctness: may have two major mechanical errors; a few (four) minor errors
*F. References: source material incorporated logically and adequately; sources documented accurately for the most part

NON-MASTERY SCORES

SCORE 3
Designates a Developing piece of expositional or referential writing.

A. Focus: unclear main idea and partially limited topic
B. Organization: an attempted plan which the reader must infer; the essay's beginning and end may be ineffective
C. Development: some major ideas are set off by paragraphs which may have stated or implied topics; some major points in paragraphs are supported by concrete, specific detail
D. Style: sentences may not be subordinate to the topic; word choice is generally accurate; tone is often inappropriate
E. Correctness: some (four or more of each) major and minor mechanical errors
*F. References: source material incorporated but sometimes inappropriately or unclearly; documentation accurate only occasionally

SCORE 2
Designates a Rudimentary piece of expositional or referential writing.

A. Focus: unclear main idea and unlimited topic
B. Organization: unclear plan; the essay's beginning and end are not effective
C. Development: few major ideas are set off by paragraphs; few paragraphs with stated or implied topics; supportive detail is imprecise, unclear, or redundant
D. **Style:** sentence relationships at times are confusing; word choice is frequently inaccurate; tone is inappropriate

E. **Correctness:** many (six or more of each) major and minor errors which cause confusion

*F. **References:** source material inappropriately or unclearly incorporated; documentation infrequent

**SCORE 1**
Designates an incoherent piece of expositional or referential writing.

A. **Focus:** unclear subject and main idea; no apparent attempt at limiting topic

B. **Organization:** no discernible plan; no attempt to compose an effective beginning and end

C. **Development:** major ideas are not set off by paragraphs; only one, if any, paragraph has a stated or implied topic; little or no supporting detail

D. **Style:** sentence relationships must be inferred; word choice is often confusing; inappropriate or distracting tone

E. **Correctness:** many varied major and minor errors, making the paper difficult to read

*F. **References:** source material never incorporated or incorporated inappropriately or unclearly; documentation inaccurate

**SCORE 0**
Designates an essay that is clearly not written on the assigned topic or makes no attempt to answer the given question.

* In the above scale, an asterisk indicates a criterion applicable only to Part II of the writing proficiency test.
Appendix E

Florida Writing Project Student Survey
Florida Writing Project Student Survey
Writing Survey Questions

Directions: Below are several statements about writing. There are no right or wrong answers to these statements. Please indicate the degree to which each statement applies to you by circling whether you (1) strongly agree, (2) agree, (3) are uncertain, (4) disagree, or (5) strongly disagree with the statement. While some of these statements may seem repetitious, take your time and try to be as honest as possible. Thank you for your cooperation with this project.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>I write for relaxation or as a hobby.</td>
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<td>2.</td>
<td>I have to force myself to write.</td>
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<td>3.</td>
<td>Writing is one of the activities I like least in school.</td>
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<td>4.</td>
<td>I have difficulty beginning a writing assignment.</td>
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<td>5.</td>
<td>I am a good writer.</td>
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<td>6.*</td>
<td>Good writers spend more time than poor writers in revising their work.</td>
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<td>7.</td>
<td>I share my writing with others.</td>
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<td>8.</td>
<td>I revise my writing to make it better.</td>
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<td>9.*</td>
<td>The teacher is the most important audience for whom I write in school.</td>
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<td>10.*</td>
<td>In general, I like school.</td>
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<td>11.</td>
<td>I save my writing.</td>
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<td>12.</td>
<td>I write notes to my family and friends.</td>
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<td>13.</td>
<td>I write letters.</td>
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<td>14.</td>
<td>I am proud of at least one piece of writing I have written during the last year.</td>
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<td>15.</td>
<td>I am sometimes able to write about things that are hard for me to say.</td>
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<td>16.</td>
<td>I keep a journal or a diary.</td>
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<td>17.*</td>
<td>I enjoy reading.</td>
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<td>18.</td>
<td>I have good ideas, but I can't put them down on paper.</td>
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<td>19.</td>
<td>I make too many mechanical errors when I write.</td>
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<td>20.</td>
<td>At least one teacher I have had during my years in school has told me that I am a good writer.</td>
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</table>
21. In class, I share what I write with other students. 1 2 3 4 5
22. I am embarrassed by my writing. 1 2 3 4 5
23. I have many stories I would like to tell in writing. 1 2 3 4 5
24.* Writing will probably be a part of the job I plan to hold in the future. 1 2 3 4 5
25. Writing is an important way for me to express my feelings. 1 2 3 4 5

* These statements were eliminated from the final analysis. When this attitude scale was validated, these items did not achieve high inter-item correlations. As a result, the researcher chose to eliminate these statements from her study.
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